SWIMMING AGAINST THE TIDE: TRACING AND LOCATING CHINESE LEFTISM ONLINE

By

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B.A., Simon Fraser University, 2004

THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

In the School of Communication

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SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
Summer 2006

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Abstract

This thesis explores the resurgence of Chinese leftism online, its historical rationale, characteristics, scopes of influence, space for survival, contributions and limitations, and prospective implications. Through documentary analysis, participant observation and interviews, it identifies, describes and analyzes Chinese leftism’s contradictions and shifting characters since 1976, during which capitalist restoration and rightwing market authoritarianism have accelerated economic reforms, diversified social contentions and complicated the leftist heritage of the postrevolutionary state. Continual resistance from an increasingly united front of leftists at elite and popular levels has elevated and renewed China’s suppressed ideological debates online, notably since 2003. Their rapid growth and increasing support notwithstanding, online leftists’ involvement in cybersphere alone does not fully unlock much emancipatory potential. Yet their persistence indicates the intensity of struggles within the allegedly socialist country whose government has attempted to wave goodbye to its revolutionary legacy and support of the counter-bourgeois publics that made its governance possible.

Keywords: leftism, neoliberalism, Internet, history, China
For my admirable Grandparents, the most complete human beings I have known; for the convictions that led the young them to trek hundreds of miles to Yan'an in November 1937; and for the 67 years they had since spent together sharing those convictions.
Beginning and end are like a circle. Growth and decay are the succession of transformations. Where there is end there is the beginning.

The Chuang-tzu
Acknowledgements

I have too many debts, and I hope that at least some of them are repayable. I thank everyone who contributed to the completion of this thesis, whose faults are mine alone.

All my committee members deserve deep respect and appreciation. My utmost gratitude goes to Dr. Yuezhi Zhao. Without her boundless guidance, inspirations, encouragement and, dare I say, charisma, I would not have been in graduate school. Nor would I be able to work on this topic with so much confidence and passion. Her contributions to this thesis are enormous, and I have to thank her for putting up with me. I am seriously indebted to Dr. Pat Howard. Her writings inspired me as a student and as a person, and so did her her creative style of teaching as well as her career and life experiences, to which I look up. Her efforts in editing and providing suggestions for this thesis are beyond my expectations. I could not have asked more from her. My thanks also go to Dr. Timothy Cheek, whose works and attitude set the standard. His challenging questions and constructive suggestions compelled me to rethink many of my implicit assumptions throughout this thesis. Special thanks to Dr. Alison Beale for being my defence chair and for kindly offering her advice.

At the School of Communication, I thank Neena Shahani, Monique Cloutier and Lucie Menkveld for their assistance, support and patience. My undying appreciation to my friends at Simon Fraser University, including Abu Bhuiyan, Arthur Martins-Aginam, Guoxin Xing, Gill Jin, Amy Li, and JJ. I am indebted to Zhang Xiaobo, a true hero and a
caring comrade, for the help and knowledge he always provided and shared. Many thanks to my lads John, R and Sonny for lending their financial support. Words cannot express my gratitude to those unnamed individuals who took the time to speak with me about their work.

BDBB’s devotion and tolerance as well as Blue’s care and support saved my life.

I owe my family more than I am able to know. Thank you, Mom and Dad, for your love. Thank you, waigong, gugu, zuzu, nainai, and dajiu, for giving me a very memorable childhood. Sadly, the five of you passed away during my years in Canada. I dream of you often, and will owe you always. Finally, I owe my younger self a product, my older self a record and my present self an inspiration before I advance once again to the mythical university of lulin. May this thesis be at least one of them.
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Preface

As I sit alone typing these words in my apartment atop Burnaby Mountain in suburban Vancouver days before my 23rd birthday, my grandfather, one of the last veterans of the Chinese Revolution, is in his final struggle with Thanatos in a hospital in Beijing. He was young once. Before becoming a community school lecturer, he was a passionate tennis player who loved European literature and sculpture. But days before his 23rd birthday in 1937, something inspired him and my grandmother to leave Huaiyin, his hometown, to trek for five months to Yan'an, the cradle of the Communist Revolution, where they studied, taught, married and lived. Unlike those who joined the Revolution because it was their only available choice, my grandparents had other—perhaps better—options. What motivated them to choose the more dangerous path? Natural youth radicalness or a genuine faith? These questions have never intrigued me so much. It has been 70 years since their journey. Was their effort worth it? I remember the last time I saw them together. My grandfather was watching an imperial costume television drama by my grandmother’s deathbed. He stared at the screen for minutes, and sighed repeatedly: “Nonsense!” Was this what he had in mind when he joined the Revolution? Was he as ambivalent as I now am?

My father, whose high school education was disrupted by the Cultural Revolution, was in university studying English literature when he turned 23 in 1977. He and my mother have been two of the most fortunate among “the generation of the
eighties.” Otherwise, I would not have been here in Canada. What more could I ask for being a young male urban beneficiary of the post-Mao reforms? Why would I research into matters critical of the “reform”? Why was my mother, a dedicated Party member, so shocked when I told her about my thesis topic? Why does she keep telling me that it is impossible to tell others in her circle about my work? What makes her so embarrassed and so afraid? Was this what my parents had in mind when they sent me abroad in 2000? Was their effort worth it?

Was my own effort worth it? Thanks to my family, I too have many promising options. But at the turn of the century, I was somehow motivated by the same readings on the debate of the nature of Chinese society that changed my grandfather in the early 1930s. Looking back, I remember giving a speech in my boarding school on May 9, 1999, trying to stop other students from marching toward the U.S. Embassy and throw rocks. I remember the online discussions since then by students like myself on issues that are so challenging to our survival but rarely addressed by the media. I remember my Language Proficiency Index essay in March 2001. The topic was to record an imaginary conversation with a historical figure. I did not hesitate a second to write down mine with Mao on conviction. “Please answer me, Chairman,” I asked, “where does change come from?” “Poverty begets the hope for change” (qiong ze si bian), a slogan that was once used to stimulate the post-Mao reforms, immediately came to my mind, and so did people’s everyday lived experiences of social injustice.

It is the 30th year since Mao’s death. Only some Chinese have become rich. For the average citizen, the disenfranchised rural resident and the frustrated college student alike, poverty still begets the hope for change—only in a different manner, as a negation
of the prior negation. The governing rightwing elites could no longer respond to the question "Why haven’t the majority of our population become rich?" by simply saying that the lower classes are of “low quality.” It is no longer possible because the “capitalist” versus “socialist” ideological debate halted by the Party to deepen the reforms has resurfaced. This debate is so prevalent, so intense, so historical and yet so current, that the entire reform process is brought to a clear-cut standstill.

The following is a documentation of the resurgence of Chinese leftism online as one side of this ongoing lop-sided debate. It is not a mad man’s diary, much less a diary for the mad man. I try to contextualize “actually existing Chinese leftism” as a manifestation of Louis Althusser’s notion of an “overdetermined contradiction.” This overdetermination of structural forces incorporates five broad variables, which are inherent throughout the entire text: generational politics, belief systems, institutions, technology, and globalization. None of these variables is truly outside the others. Nor are any of them outside my personal position in this thesis. On the one hand, I am a privileged, transnationally based youngster who was born and raised as my family’s only child in a postrevolutionary state, which still claims to be “socialist” but has actively introduced and promoted capitalist policies and models in opposition to its own ideology. On the other hand, I am a grandson of the Revolution who experiences the very domestic injustices and class conflicts as well as global imperialism that triggered and justified the Revolution itself, and who strives to use my privileges to recall once again the meanings of the past to analyze the present. In this renewed quest, I use the Internet, which has been increasingly colonized by capital and state as sites of capital accumulation and political manipulation, as a site of critical social communication and political identity.
formation. Hence, the pages that follow are as much about and for me as they are for anyone who have experienced and are experiencing China’s transformation both within and outside Chinese borders. The significance of this topic may still seem weak at this stage. But that is only natural. What is perceived cannot at once be comprehended. Only what is comprehended can be more deeply perceived.
Introduction

Beijing 1973. Mao Zedong was 80 years old, busy, ill, and worried. Even when everything had seemed to be going smooth, the August 1970 Lushan Conference of the Central Committee turned out as a surprise. Disrupting the conference agenda, Lin Biao, Chen Boda, and Wu Faxian’s unexpected proposal of the addition of a provision to the new Constitution extolling Mao as a “genius” was concurrent to both their proposal to appoint a State Chairman and critique of Zhou Enlai’s domestic and foreign policies.\(^2\) Lin’s proposal and talk were quickly brought to subsequent discussions. Seeing it as an attempt to utilize the cult of himself against his own pre-Cultural Revolution (CR) Party policies at the time,\(^3\) Mao halted all discussions around the proposal. The blame was soon set on Chen, who was expelled in 1973. In his self-criticism, Wu wrote: “Someone has manipulated Chairman Mao’s great humbleness to depreciate Mao Zedong Thought.” Mao was not satisfied. On October 14, he annotated: “What great humbleness? On questions of principle, [I] have never been unobtrusive. [We] must dare to go against the tide. Going against the tide is a Marxist-Leninist principle.\(^4\) On Lushan, my attitude was one such manifestation.”\(^5\)

Now, twenty-two months later, with the fall of Lin Biao and the Party’s eventual acknowledgement of his ignominious death, these words of Mao were incorporated into the new Party Constitution during the 10\(^{th}\) National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC) in late August. To quote Wang Hongwen’s Congress report:
We must have the revolutionary spirit of daring to go against the tide. Chairman Mao pointed out: Going against the tide is a Marxist-Leninist principle. During the discussions on the revision of the Party Constitution, many comrades, reviewing the Party’s history and their own experiences, held that this was most important in the two-line struggle within the Party...When confronted with issues that concern the line and the overall situation, a true Communist must act without any selfish considerations and dare to go against the tide, fearing neither removal from his post, expulsion from the Party, imprisonment, divorce nor guillotine.7

Our inquiry into contemporary online Chinese leftism begins here. This is not because 1973 or 1970 birthed Chinese leftism. Rather, officially conceptualizing “going against the tide” as characteristic of the CPC is itself an ultimate expression of the nature of two-line struggle of not only the CPC after the founding of the People’s Republic of China (PRC), but since its very formation. It reflects the nature of two-line struggle in the Chinese revolution as a whole and implies the very contradictory, complex, and often misinterpreted orientations of CPC, the Chinese state, and Chinese leftism. “Going against the tide” arguably defined Chinese leftism, the historical development of the CPC and, in a broader sense, Chinese development in general over much of the past century. It is therefore not only dissenting intellectuals that perceived “China’s revolutionary struggle running counter to the fundamentals of human nature (humans are by nature greedy and selfish), but swimming against the tide of History (modernization and capitalism along rational Western lines is inevitable, and also desirable)”;8 at one point in history, the CPC itself in fact said very much the same thing of the latter—i.e., that going against the tide (of capitalism) is “a Marxist-Leninist principle,” as the 1973 CPC Constitution explicitly asserted.

Two-line struggles between Left and Right, however arbitrary and distorted, long predated the PRC.9 Leader of the infant CPC in the earlier 1920s, Chen Duxiu refuted to engage with and mobilize the peasantry, as he was reluctant to consider their
revolutionary potentials. Whereas Li Dazhao, Qu Qiubai and other early Party leaders were intrigued by Marxism only to the extent that it could be merged with the various forces in Chinese society as a revolutionary cause,\(^1\) Chen Duxiu’s acceptance of Marxism was “based on an explicit and complete rejection of Chinese traditions.”\(^11\) He was thus incapable to “conceive that the most backward element of society\(^12\) could play a significant role in the modernization of China.”\(^13\) This was perhaps best exemplified two years into the quite unexpected eruption of militant peasant movements throughout the country. Chen and many Communists responded to the peasant revolution by labeling it *ultra-leftist:* “the peasant movement has developed the disease of left-deviation everywhere. Either the slogans are extreme or action is excessively left-inclined.”\(^14\)

One of the earliest appearances of such terminologies as “the disease of left-deviation” and “excessively left-inclined” in the CPC, the extent to which this understanding deviates from the actual experiences of the revolution in the decades that followed, as well as from our contemporary knowledge of CPC and the Chinese state, is indicative of the complexity of the origins of Chinese leftism. In February 1927, Chen Duxiu was harshly taken to task by Qu Qiubai, who argued that: 1) Peng Shuzhi, head of propaganda and Chen’s disciple, was idealist, empiricist, Menshevik, and reductionist; 2) his views reflected a dangerous trend in the Party leadership, which tended to neglect the peasantry, women and youth, and 3) the existence of inner-Party factionalism is undeniable.\(^15\) This critique was immediately followed by the unexpected nationwide purge of Communists in late April, and the arrest and persecution of Li Dazhao.\(^16\) Yet breakdown is not the primary reason that 1927 became and remains, although merely in name, the legacy of the CPC and the Chinese revolution. Indeed, the contradictory,
disorganized and chaotic impulses that inspired the early Chinese Communists had suddenly become clear with their tragic failure in that year. But failure was only one side of the story. 1927 changed the future of both CPC and Chinese development essentially because of the August 1st Nanchang uprising, after which Zhu De and Mao, refusing to take the Central Committee’s orders, led their defeated armies to the Jinggang Mountains of Jiangxi province. 17 Although August 1st (bayi) and the Jinggangshan “base area” (genjudi) have since been hyper-symbolic of the army, it is only because they foreshadowed the Revolution that was to take place. Much less emphasized are Zhu and Mao’s outright objections to the Party leadership, through which they succeeded in ways earlier Communists did not even anticipate. This legacy was ultimately inherited by the Long March, the single most dramatic and legendary scenario of the Chinese revolution, in which it was Mao’s triumph against the dominant Moscow-trained, Comintern-backed “twenty-eight Bolsheviks” and Chinese Communism’s simultaneous political, institutional and ideological independence from and outright defiance of the Soviet Union 18 that gave it value and that preluded the myth and victory of the Chinese Communists and the founding of the People’s Republic.

“Going against the tide” was fundamental to CPC, but the concept was not new. It was a product of the May 4th Movement and Chinese leftism, which emerged concurrently. Lu Xun, a most famous representative of the movement and co-founder of the League of Left-wing Writers (zuoyi zuojia lianmeng), summarized his struggles in a poem named “In Mockery of Myself” (zi chao), in which he wrote:

Fierce-browed, I coolly defy a thousand pointing fingers,
Head-bowed, like a willing ox I serve the children. 19

8
It is the first line that distinctively put forward the notion of "going against the tide" in the historical development of Chinese leftism. Mao referred to these lines in 1942, insisting that they be the Party's motto. For him, "The 'thousand pointing fingers' are our enemies, and we will never yield to them, no matter how ferocious." Mao iterated this in his own poem at the 1959 Lushan Plenum, during which he broke with Peng Dehuai, whose surprising attacks on the Great Leap Forward were considered part of Party elites' pro-Soviet agenda. In "Ascent of Lu Mountain" (Qǐlì dēng Lushan), Mao noted, following Lu Xun's tradition, that:

Cold-eyed I survey the world beyond seas,
A hot wind spatters raindrops on the sky-brooded waters.

It has been quite some time since all these things occurred—so long, perhaps, that it is difficult to even imagine that they ever happened. Yet since they did, we must locate them historically in relation to today's Chinese leftism online. The character of Chinese leftism has always been reflexive of the complex configurations of Chinese society, and its analysis should not be reduced to a discussion of factionalist politics. That said, contradictions and struggles are prevalent in all periods of Chinese leftism and constantly interplay with the broader social forces in which they are situated. Only through a detailed evaluation of such factors can we gain a critical understanding of how Chinese leftism and their rightist opponents have been pushed to their polarized extremes of today.
Three decades later

On February 10, 2003, nine days before the U.S. invasion of Iraq, 28 Chinese scholars drafted and co-signed “A Statement Opposing U.S. War Plans against Iraq” (*Fandui Meiguo zhengfu dui Yilake zhanzheng jihua de shengming*), and launched an online petition campaign. Posted on http://www.fanzhan.org,24 the statement and responses swiftly spread through numerous Internet forums.24 By the 18th when four organizers25 submitted the petition to the U.S. Embassy in Beijing,26 some 500 people had signed. In a country where the government actively promoted nationalism while cautiously watching for open criticism of the U.S.-led war in the media, and where applications for civil protests against the invasion were tactically rejected,27 the Internet became not only the one remaining open communication channel, but also a public medium for urban Chinese to address their concerns. Coming at a time when both the density and intensity of debates regarding the nature of the coming invasion skyrocketed, the antiwar petition brought precisely the level of attention its initiators anticipated.

Contradictions arose immediately with the antiwar petition. On the one hand, when the white-collar newspaper the 21st *Century Business Herald* became the first mainland Chinese paper to report the incident,28 it branded the majority of signers “leftist scholars,” when many of them were in fact either neoliberals or simply active Internet participants such as university students.29 In voicing their individual concerns, the signers, the number of which totaled 3,480,30 formed an awfully loose alliance under the theme of opposing the war. Although it was presented as such,31 the campaign never intended to be the voice of an organized collective. None of the 28 initiators hosts a participation-based communication channel such as an Internet forum, let alone a “leftist” one.32
Under the dominance of "apolitical" neoliberal discourse in a market-friendly state and socialist administration that has vigilantly practiced a systematic erasure of its own revolutionary legacy, the leftists are left with no set collective base, no stable political entity, and no established presence among the elites. However, economic, political and social contradictions did not end with the introduction of neoliberal discourses in the mainstream and its ideological conflation with revisionist authoritarianism. Still visible, to rephrase Marx and Engels, is specter of a leftist opposition "going against the tide," a specter that is haunting China. On the other hand, at least until the spring of 2003, Chinese neoliberal elites had exercised considerable hegemony online, and their Internet forums were and are rarely censored. On February 20, two scholars on the Far Right, Yu Jie and Xu Jinru, felt obliged to respond. This laggard response was the ill-named "Statement by Chinese intellectuals in support of the U.S. government destroying Saddam's dictatorial regime" (Zhongguo zhishifenzi guanyu shengyuan Meiguo zhengfu cuihui Sadamu ducai zhengquan de shengming), which appeared simultaneously on Xu's column at Boxun and the popular neoliberal forum Maoyan kanren at Kaidi Community. The two also launched an online petition campaign. Only two other people signed, however, before the campaign was brought to an end.

Worth mentioning is the fact that Maoyan kanren had been until then at the forefront of China's Internet petition movements initiated by the neoliberal Right. Their efforts were illustrated in protest campaigns against Beijing's regulations on website management and the manifesto of netizens' rights in 2002 (the combination of which collected about 200 electronic signatures), and the petition for Liu Di's release in early 2003. Both were publicized in the western media; neither sought to protect Chinese
national interests from increasingly powerful foreign presence or to voice dissent with the
U.S. instead of the Chinese government. The antiwar petition did both. “Leftist” or not,
the antiwar petition marked a radical turnaround from the rightists who had been leading
online protests and petitions in China. A comparison of the two petitions is striking:
3,480 against four.

As if this was not enough, another neoliberal professional was eager to publish a
piece of his mind. On April 5, Jiao Guobiao, former associate professor of
Communication at Peking University, wrote a poem titled “To the American Soldier”
(zhi Meiguo bing). Published on Maoyan kanren, the poem stated:

...If you fell down, humanity would lose the back of justice / If your country
collapsed, humanity would return to the barbarism of the Middle Ages / ...My
heart yelled out at the faraway battlefield time and time again: “Fire at me! Fire
at me!” / American Solider, allow me to call you “Brother!” / If there are
volunteer recruitments, please inform me at once! /...If I’m destined to die in
war / Then let me be a dead soul taken by American precision-guided bombs.

Even a piece as paranoid (both emotionally and ideologically) as this was strongly—
and very much blindly—supported by neoliberal discussants. This poem, online
discussions around which peaked the 2003 Left/Right debate, ultimately revealed the
shifting atmosphere in the century-long wrestle between the two camps that were so often
ill defined in China. However it and the earlier online debates may have occurred and
were presented as a mere farce symbolic of China’s equally dramatic development, what
really happened at the core was perhaps a transition from rest, quantitative change to
conspicuous, qualitative change, a change where its quantitative state had reached a
culminating point and began to give rise to the dissolution of the thing itself.
This change marked the shift in influence in the invariable struggles between neoliberal rightism and Chinese leftism in their loose yet firmly polarized positions. From that point on, the neoliberal mainstream has been harshly contested by an amazingly fueled alliance of popular Maoist and intellectual leftist discourses that were forced to remain underground during the Deng and Jiang regimes. The transformation unfolded in a strikingly bizarre and complex manner beyond explanation within the frame of the simplistic and problematic notion of Han Chinese nationalism, which Chinese elites have strongly advocated to their own end since 1978.

Interestingly, prior to 2003, a similar open letter had been delivered to the public by 20 scholars, 11 of whom later signed the antiwar petition. Written in 2001 to the Wall Street Journal, the letter critiqued one of its October 9 articles that called for a revival of colonialism in response to 9/11. The letter was a failure. It was never published by any media, American or Chinese. Neither did it ever become a subject of meaningful online discussion. No public debate followed. Five years later, Li Minqi, one of its two primary initiators, could not even locate the whereabouts of the letter’s English draft. Why is it that the open letter, written at a time of unprecedented hostility to the U.S. government even greater than in spring 2003, for a purpose that was fundamentally similar to the antiwar petition in seeking both to protect Chinese interests and voice dissent with the U.S. mainstream, never accomplished its goal in 2001?

The thesis derived initially from the attempt to answer this very question. It now seeks to do more. The thesis explores the resurgence of Chinese leftism online. A majority of the effort is dedicated to identify, crystallize and analyze aspects of the issue in much as detail as possible in the available space. Some time is spent explaining the
interaction between the Party, the State and elite politics; key attention, however, is allocated to Chinese leftism’s scope of influence, space for survival, contributions and limitations, and the implications for change.

As many and deep as they may be, most academic works on China are not satisfactorily up-to-date. This is in essence an invariable shortcoming of academia. Professional academic studies not only respond to real-world events at a much slower pace than those online, but are also much less active.⁴⁸ That said, existing literature on Chinese leftism will be reviewed at some length. Most studies examine an extremely narrow, elitist or partisan leftism in the offline context and dismiss its online component as merely nationalist or populist, notions which fail to explain the historical causes of past social movements and current consciousness among different class, as well as the complexity of Chinese society.

This thesis is a preliminary⁴⁹ attempt to fill this gap. It investigates the field of online Chinese leftism, which has been defined largely by its rivals. It is not intended to objectify or essentialize any given position or tendency it presents. Since exposure to the issue has been limited and shallow,⁵⁰ the thesis seeks to bring to light no more than the renewed need to critically analyze Chinese leftism in cyberspace and how it constantly reshapes and is reshaped by ongoing struggles within China, the significance of which extends well beyond its geopolitical borders in the alleged consumer-driven world where the majority of consumer products are made in China by Chinese whose names are never known and whose voices are until recently rarely heard.

The analysis begins by defining leftism in relation to rightism and how the two developed hand in hand in China. Some review of line struggles within the Party was
offered above; more is provided in chapter 1. This is reviewed chronologically by recapping a number of interrelated key events that led to the successive and systematic purge of leftists in favor of the new leadership’s rightwing agenda. The chapter assesses the background and process of the “reform and opening up” (gaige kaifang), shifting power relations between and definitions of Left and Right in the 1980s, and ways in which revisionist marketization since the 1990s has brought about astonishing economic development (and with it, pervasive neoliberal dominance) at the cost of “social vulnerable groups” (ruoshi qunti), who make up roughly 70 percent of the country’s population today. In light of all these, what has gradually become evident is that while China’s neoliberals stress exclusively the autonomy of the “apolitical” market and the formation of a civil society, both of which seem far from what Chinese experience has suggested, it is most notably those labeled as “leftists” who are constantly addressing issues on behalf of the masses from below, who are perceived as having been ruthlessly exploited during the three decades of economic reform and have no reason to welcome further privatization. Again, insofar as many serious discussions over social security can be and are regarded as “far-ranging critiques of neoliberalism,” they are at the same time persistently considered “leftist.” Such a sociopolitical background is the very rationale of leftist resurgence—“When there are too many mice to think of the cat is natural.” (Laoshu duo le, jiu xiangqi le mao) Also mentioned is the theoretical paradigm by which the re-emergence of Chinese leftism online is framed. This originated in Lenin’s notion that a state in the earlier stages under communism will still be “a bourgeois state without a bourgeoisie.” Mao responded in practical terms by launching the CR, thereby attempting to sustain such a class society under proletarian
dictatorship. His dramatic failure prompted an immediate radical restoration of state revisionism via market authoritarianism, thus transforming "an all-round dictatorship over the bourgeois" to a near-all-round dictatorship over the proletariat. This theoretical background is significant for understanding how the status of leftist discourse has been demoted, how it departs from orthodox ideologies of the CPC, and how, in particular, the Party has departed from its own legacy of swimming against the tide.

Chapter 2 examines the major camps in Chinese leftism—elite, popular and the in-betweens—and their major players. It defines and distinguishes them, and briefly analyzes why such a divide is systematically necessary. This is followed by an analysis of key elite leftists in China, and how elite leftism has spread to different social spheres. The chapter then discusses their historical constraints and how these led to the revival of popular leftism. The two are not fundamentally different in theory, but are ultimately dissimilar in terms of class stance and political claim. The chapter makes a distinction between the various streams within popular leftism and analyzes their common source of inspiration in Mao. That many contemporary issues in China were repeatedly addressed by Mao, who not only analyzed these concerns and contradictions, but offered a set of solutions on the basis of mass organization, is instructive. In yearning for Mao, popular leftists are not yearning for totalitarian rule (the meaning of which remains ambiguous), as scholars on the Right tend to argue. Rather, it is because popular leftists more or less identify, associate or equate achievements in the Mao period, which have been brutally suppressed by blanket condemnation, with their own aspirations, convictions and lived experiences. The various Maoist forms of grassroots representation have also played a
dialectical role in shaping the ideas of contemporary elite leftists, although some limit Mao’s contribution to their analyses to a mere subtextual level.

Chapter 3 deals exclusively with online leftism. It answers such questions as what it is, who the participants are, what they say, where they say it, whom they try to speak for, and whom they try to speak to. Relying on information empirically gathered over the past few years and interviews conducted within the past few months, the chapter examines the ways in which the current wave of online discussion has not only renewed the framework and scheme of Chinese leftism but also broken through the obnoxious jargon of academia, which the thesis names, after Qian Zhongshu’s renowned novel, “the besieged fortress” (wei cheng).7 The line between elitist and popular leftism has become blurred online, with the latter clearly overwhelming the former. The chapter evaluates the existing scope of and space for survival of online leftism in China. It traces the chronological development and containment of leftist websites, with concise case studies on three representatives of the field. The astounding discrepancy between online participation and offline organization with all such websites and forums is noted throughout the chapter.

The conclusion discusses thematic observations made in the previous chapters and poses the essential problem that derives from the process, i.e., to what extent and under what conditions can the Internet be utilized as a mechanism of effective resistance rather than one of mere self-expression? What use is it if little or no offline resistance can be formed? Or conversely, is the Internet’s contribution to organizing the left-leaning masses on its own sufficient to break through the fortress and develop base areas into liberated zones and initiate mass movements in the conventional sense?
The outburst of online leftism portrays at best a half-complete picture. The other half entails a class division tremendously more clear-cut than in 1989 in a transformed Chinese society. The former is at present a partial reflection and result of this trend. Such a problematic is better understood in the historical context of how Chinese peasants remained underground with the dominant Nationalist government, the residual dissident warlords, and the emerging all-worker CPC that was much more academic than pragmatic, before their astonishing militant movements of 1925 and 1926. A similar scenario is replicated today. Since it is replicated in a different historical period represented by tremendous achievements in communications technologies and neoliberal globalization, struggles in this new episode have been brought to Internet discussion, which not only reflects, but also influences the existing structures of inequality and resistance. The reason we focus on the sudden outburst of online leftism and its rapid development is precisely this. Here is not where the journey begins, and certainly not where it ends.

Notes

1 Chen was then a Politburo member and leader of the former Central CR Group (Zhongyang wenhua geming xiaozu), which existed during the first CR from 1966 to 1969; Wu was People’s Liberation Army (PLA)’s Deputy Chief of the General Staff and Chief of the Air Force.


4 The Chinese of these two sentences reads “Yao ganyu fan chaoliu. Fan chaoliu shi maliezhuyi de yi ge yuanze.” Mao noted elsewhere that the issue reflected the debate among historians and philosophers as to who make history—slaves or heroes, and how human knowledge is acquired—


6 Among other positions, the 38-year-old Wang was elected at the Congress as Deputy Chairman of the Party’s Central Committee.


9 Consider, for example, Wang Hongwen’s 1973 report, in which the history of CPC’s inner-Party struggles was summarized as: “In the early period of the democratic revolution, there were several occasions when wrong lines held sway in our Party. In the later period of the democratic revolution and in the period of socialist revolution, when the correct line represented by Chairman Mao has been predominant, there have also been lessons in that certain wrong lines or wrong views were taken as correct for a time by many people and supported as such. The correct line represented by Chairman Mao has waged resolute struggles against those errors and won out.” Wang (1973). This summary, however subjective, indicates the intense internal struggles since the Party was established.

10 There is an important difference between the Sinification of Marxism to the objective historical situations of Chinese society, which is my point here, and the mere transformation of orthodox Marxism into voluntary populism and Chinese nationalism, which is the perception of China scholars such as Stuart R. Schram, who distinguishes Chinese—most notably Mao—“voluntarism” from Marxist “determinism.” Maurice Meisner, too, passionately argues that a significant departure from orthodox Marxism-Leninism is present in Chinese Communism, and that it is the populist strain of Marxism that was central in giving direction to the Chinese revolution. I disagree with such reductionist observations. See Stuart R. Schram. (1989): 67, 202. The Thought of Mao Tse-tung. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Maurice Meisner. (1982): 60-61, 68, 121, 190-92, 198-99. Marxism, Maoism and Utopianism: Eight Essays. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.


12 That is, the peasantry.


16 Li Dazhao was, in Meisner’s words, “China’s first Marxist.” Meisner (1967): xiii.

17 Zhu De’s troops withdrew to Jinggang first. On September 29, Mao Zedong led his army to Sanwan village of Jiangxi, where he streamlined the organizational system and launched the principle of establishing Party leadership over the army at the company level. Mao joined Zhu in October.


20 Mao (1942).


23 The website was coined solely to solicit online signatures for the statement. It has been inactive since summer 2003.


25 The four are researcher Wang Xiaodong, assistant researcher Han Deqiang, scholar Tong Xiaoxi, and female poet Li Xiaoyu (a.k.a. Li Ning).


27 Tong Xiaoxi and Li Xiaoyu submitted a demonstration application on March 25, 2003, stating that 500 people were to be gathered for five and a half hours for a demonstration against the war. Their application was accepted by the Beijing municipal public security bureau security administration team (Beijing shi gong anju zhi'an guanli zongdui), which not only cut the protest to forty minutes with 100 people, but repeatedly interfered and sabotaged information circulated in the following days. After a final inquiry on the 29th, during which the police asked for even further compromise, the organizers were forced to cancel the demonstration. See Li Ning and Tong Xiaoxi. (March 30, 2003). “Why did we decide to cancel this demonstration?” (Women weishenme jueding quxiao zheci youxing shiwei?) From Mao Zedong Study (Mao Zedong xuexhui) – Renmin chunqiu electronic journal. (April 15, 2003). Retrieved January 1, 2006, from http://www.maostudy.org/rmcq_larticle.php3?article=2003-04/SS_china.txt.


29 The website was coined solely to solicit online signatures for the statement. It has been inactive since summer 2003.

30 The four are researcher Wang Xiaodong, assistant researcher Han Deqiang, scholar Tong Xiaoxi, and female poet Li Xiaoyu (a.k.a. Li Ning).


32 The article was not a direct report of the statement, but a report of Aljazeera News’ coverage of the statement on February 13. An Ti, the author, is a known dissident journalist, a radical rightist, and according to himself, an “angry Christian.” He opposes the Iraq war, but did not sign the statement as he perceived it to be “leftist.” He is a regular blogger at the known U.S.-based Boxun News. An Ti. (September 15, 2001). “Bring hope to the Chinese nation; give flowers to the murdered Americans.” (Gei Zhonghua minzu yi xiwang, gei linan de Meiguoren xianshang yishu hua) From Works of An Ti (An Ti wenji). Boxun News. Retrieved November 13, 2002; January 1, 2006, from http://www.boxun.com/hero/anti/l_1.shtml; An Ti. (February 15, 2003). “Aljazeera television broadcasts Chinese leftist antiwar statement.” (Banding dianshitai fabu Zhongguo zuopai fanzhan
According to the initiators of the antiwar statement themselves: “...in reporting this event, some media have frequently termed [its participants] ‘intellectuals’ or ‘leftists’, which is highly inaccurate. The signers, of which the so-called ‘intellectuals’ certainly compose a portion, include people from all strata and professions in Chinese society and from virtually all provinces, cities, autonomous regions as well as Hong Kong and Taiwan districts...most are citizens of various social strata and loosely represent a myriad of groups in Chinese society, rather than a small cluster of intellectuals or a given faction among them.” Fanzhan.org. (March 1, 2003). “Clarification regarding the status of participants in the antiwar petition event.” (Guanyu fanzhan qianming huodong canjiazhe shenfen de shuoming) From Protagonist Forum. Retrieved January 1, 2006, from https://host378.ipowerweb.com/~gongnong/bbs/read.php?f=3&i=14740&t=14605.

By April 17, 2003, two weeks before Bush declared American “triumph,” when the initiators discontinued the campaign.

That it was so presented in the mainstream media raises an important question: why?

Widely reported by the Chinese media as editor-in-chief of the U.S.-based leftist netzine China and the World, Tong Xiaoxi left that position three years earlier when he relocated to China. Today’s most comprehensive online archival base of Chinese leftism is New Left League (xin zuolian)’s archival section “People’s Archives Museum” (Renmin ziliao guan) at http://www.chinese-leftists.org/ziliao. Uploaded entirely by volunteers, the archives are an astonishingly wide collection of pan-leftist works from China and overseas (including the works of Antonio Gramsci, Louis Althusser, Michel Foucault, Frederic Jameson, Hardt and Negri, the Frankfurt School and so on). However, its recently-renovated BBS forum New Left League Literature Forum (xin zuolian wenxian luntan), at http://www.chinese-leftists.org has only 339 registered members and 41 posts (as of July 17, 2006). Its moderators are also the initiators of China Revolutionary History Literature Exchange Forum (Zhongguo geming lishi wenxian jiaoliu luntan), a most well-rounded collection of primary documents from 1949-76, at http://www.lswx.org. Both forums are blocked in mainland China.


And much has been reported in the western liberal press when they are censored. In contrast, of the first three sites that the Beijing administration blocked in the infancy of Chinese Internet, two were anti-government sites. And the other? A Maoist site. Michael Robinson, qtd. In Ethan Gutmann. (February 25, 2002). “Who Lost China’s Internet? Without U.S. assistance, it will remain a tool of the Beijing government, not a force for democracy.” The Weekly Standard. Retrieved January 1, 2006, from http://www.weeklystandard.com/Content/Public/Articles/000/000/000/922dgmtd.asp. Many other leftist sites, as shall be discussed in the third chapter, were and are censored in mainland China.

Both are mainland China-based regular bloggers. Yu writes at Boxun under the so-called “Independent Chinese Pen Center” (duli zhongwenbihui), whereas Xu writes at Sina, a most popular gateway website in China. Yu’s blog is accessible at http://boxun.com/heroyu; Xu’s is at http://xujinru.vip.sina.com.

Ten days is, in the Internet domain at least, too long a time to respond.

38 Guo Minghu (1950-), its former editor-in-chief, is an open rightist dissident in China. Guo was also information majordomo of Tianya Community, which holds another influential rightist forum Guantian chashe at http://www15.tianya.cn/Publicforum/ArticlesList/0/no01.shtml, and editor-in-chief of Bailing Community (Bailing shequ) at http://club.beelink.com.cn and Zhongguo siwei at http://www.chinathink.net. He is currently editor-in-chief of Shenzhen Young Writers Club (Shenzhen qingnian zuoji julebu) at http://www.szqnzj.net, the forum of which at http://qm.szqnzj.net/clube was shutdown for ten days in late January 2006 by state officials. Guo's blog is accessible at http://xggm.exblog.jp.

39 Then a psychology student at Beijing Normal University, Liu (pseudonym “stainless rat” - buxiugang laoshu) was arrested and put in prison in November 2002 for her dissenting rightist critiques of the Chinese Government. A 20-day petition campaign for Liu’s release was launched on January 1, 2003. Initiated by rightist forum Haina baichuan at http://www.hjclub.com/showtopic.asp?ID=127073, the petition was primarily circulated in Maoyan kanren and Guantian chashe. It eventually collected 1,852 signatures. Liu was released in November 2003. Her works are accessible from Boxun at http://boxun.com/my-cgi/post/display~all.cgi?cat=liudi.

40 Leaving without prior notice for half a year upon the invitation from U.S. National Endowment for Democracy (NED), Jiao was expelled from Peking University in 2005.

41 Qtd. In Daheiyu. (May 3 1, 2004). “Jiao Guobiao’s ‘To the American Soldier’ revisited.” (Chongdu Jiao Guobiao de “zhi Meiguo bing”) From MediaChina.net. Retrieved November 22, 2004; January 1, 2006, from http://bbs.mediachina.net/index_bbs_show.jsp?b_id=1&s_id=144673. Jiao’s column was removed following heated discussions. This translation of mine is partial and incomplete, yet no other credible versions can be found online. Again, it would be made much easier if Jiao could have translated his own work into English. Why did he not?


43 This is according to my own research. The other nine may have signed under a different name. Those who signed both statements are Mobo Gao, Han Deqiang, Kuang Xinnian, Li Minqi, Shi Mai, Sun Ming, Wang Shaoqiang, Zou Wenli, Tong Xiaozi, Zhang Ruixin, and Hong Zheng.

44 The article, titled “21st Century Piracy—the answer to terrorism? Colonialism,” was placed on A22 of the October 9 edition. Among his many other allegations, the author, British historian Paul Johnson, asserts that “…suppression of well-organized criminal communities, networks and states was impossible without political control…Countries that cannot live at peace with their neighbors and that wage covert war against the international community cannot expect total independence. With…backing, in varying degrees, the American-led initiative, it should not be difficult to devise a new form of United Nations mandate that places terrorist states under responsible supervision.” Johnson also recollects the 1900 Boxer Rebellion in China and the ruthless crackdown by the allied forces immediately following as a classic example of how “the great civilized powers” had to act in response to terrorism. Paul Johnson. (October 6, 2001). “21st Century Piracy—the answer to terrorism? Colonialism.” OpinionJournal, from the Wall Street Journal Editorial Page. Retrieved January 1, 2006, from http://opinionjournal.com/extra/?id=95001283.


46 The other was Zhu Andong.

47 Li Minqi. (January 16, 2006). Email exchange.

The term “preliminary” here is meant in both depth and breadth. It does not imply that there can ever be an ultimate, all-rounded, purely objective assessment of this issue or any other.


China Daily. (February 25, 2003). “Forming farmers’ association.” From China Development Gateway. Retrieved November 19, 2005; January 1, 2006, from http://app1.chinadaily.com.cn/chinagate/opinion/agriculture/opinion/20030225asso.html; Du Runsheng. “We should encourage institutional innovations.” In The Chinese Model of Modern Development, edited by Tian Yu Cao. London and New York: Routledge, 2005: 9. According to Du, “The income of city dwellers is five times greater than the income of farmers...Sixty-three percent of the population produce food for the consumption of 37.7 percent of the population...The average daily income of the whole rural population is lower than US$1.00 (only 6.48 Renminbi); along with the unemployed and part-time working population, they form a large proportion of the low-income nationals who expect social protection and support for the poor...The number of high school students is less than 25 percent of adolescents of eligible age to go to high school.” Indeed, current statistics would suggest a much more balanced population percentage between the urban and rural regions—roughly 42% in the former and 58% in the latter, according to a 2004 official statistic. But these numbers reflect strictly the percentage of urban and rural residents, and neglect the many who live under rural administrations who are not necessarily “rural people” and even more who live under urban administrations—migrant workers and prostitutes for example—who are not permanent urban residents. For this and other factors of inclusion and exclusion in the country’s reformed social structure, Li Minqi argues that migrant workers, the number of which totals anywhere from 144 million to 200 million, are “China’s new proletariat” (Zhongguo de xin wuchanjieji). Li Minqi. (1992). “Chapter 4: China’s New Proletariat.” In Chinese Capitalism’s Development and Class Struggle (Zhongguo zibenzhuyi de fazhan he jieji douzheng). From China and the World. (February 2001). Retrieved March 12, 2006, from http://www.zgysj.com/2001/zs0102b.htm.


Differing only in tone when spoken, mao (cat) and Mao are often used interchangeably here, which expresses at simplest the nostalgic populist perception of the certainties of the past.

In the last two years of his life, Mao made clear on many occasions that although it utilized a commodity system and eight-grade wage system, both intrinsically rooted in inequality, China was nevertheless still a socialist country under the conditions of dictatorship against the bourgeoisie. In his view, this only difference was reflected in the shift in the ownership system, from a bourgeois-dominant to proletarian-dominant system.


Anyone who reviews a history as complex as China’s, particularly its history in the past three decades, inevitably encounters an infinite variation of theoretical approaches, positions, and alleged facts from which an infinite variation of understandings can be drawn. Yet we must start from somewhere, somewhere that presumably represents the one trend that surpassed all others in terms of significance, somewhere that is for this exact reason as contestable and debateable as are the claims for absolute truth and universal history. For the thesis, this privileged “somewhere” is the transition from, at the economic level, collective semi-socialism to market authoritarianism; at the political level, from “exterminating bourgeois thought to promote proletarian ones” (miezi xingwu) to “exterminating proletarian thought to promote bourgeois ones” (miewu xingzi); and at the superstructural level, from all-round egalitarianism to hyper-elitism, nationalist-centered internationalism to representation-centered “reverse” nationalism, utopian experimentalism to absolute developmentalism and, ultimately, from “swimming against the tide” as an alternative leftist construct to “swimming with the tide” of global neoliberalism as a mainstream project.

Each of these reflects a diverse set of dynamic relationships that unfolded across different levels of Chinese society, and even a full list of these relationships and associated discussions is beyond this thesis. To do some justice, scholarly evaluations
concerning different aspects of this issue must be reviewed while at the same time retaining the aforementioned points of emphasis.

**A unified leftism?**

It is both judicious and elemental to first define what is really implicated by the term “leftism” in the Chinese context. The abstract and abused labels of “leftist” and “rightist” were and are arbitrarily invoked, not only in history but also in contemporary interpretation of it, often without acknowledging the general as well as concrete socio-historical factors that were and are tightly interlocked. While a working definition is necessary, the dynamic, volatile legacy of Chinese leftism should be respected. For if all history is indeed contemporary history,¹ this study cannot be definitive of contemporary Chinese leftism online and how it perceives its own historical legacy.

Because leftism and rightism are no permanent realities, but rather complex social constructs, it is the latter that we focus on, in conjunction with how the dominant Chinese Right defines and perceives its adversary. The introduction skimmed through an early scenario of this within the CPC, with Chen Duxiu ignoring the potentials of the peasantry and Qu Qiubai doing the reverse. Chen was accused of leading a right-leaning capitulationist line, which would seemingly make Qu a leftist. However, Qu’s political line was later criticized as “left”-leaning putschist.² This and our previous reviews of the intricate heritage do not point to unknowability, but rather to the recognition that they must be assessed with attention to contention and shifts in perspectives. Moreover, there should be attention to the fact that all available official data and documents have been carefully preselected to “highlight the failures of politically discredited foes charged with responsibility for former policy errors.”³
Leftists overall have been among the primary victims of such political discrediting in China’s years of “reform and opening up.” Yet let us first return to the definition of both our subjects—Left and Right. The conventional partisan distinction with Party conservatives on the Left and active reformers on the Right had become problematic and largely irrelevant by the beginning of the 21st century, when vested interest groups—predominantly those who were historically located and those who locate themselves in the rightist camp—have attained profound social status and wealth under excessive market authoritarianism (i.e., market extremism under omnipresent state supervision) rooted in the domination of neoliberalism, which the Chinese state utilized to overcome its legitimacy crisis. The structure of power in this context has shifted in both contemporary China and the world at large.

The socio-historical roots of neoliberalism in rightwing thinking in China and the west bore most who counter their hegemony in the leftist camp—willingly or otherwise. Any social movement, popular—especially working class—conception, and grassroots resistance to neoliberalism in China hence carries an inherently leftist tendency. A similar observation is made by Wang Hui, who distinguishes between state socialism and “the movement for social self-protection that took place as the new marketization expanded,” the latter of which he sees as naturally tending toward appeals for social equality and justice. This tendency is socialist in that it is influenced by the value system of socialism, particularly within a postsocialist environment.

We shall, not least for the purpose of clarity, substitute Wang’s use of the term “socialist” here with “leftist,” for it better describes the even broader intellectual and popular tendencies toward the notion of social security (which, to be sure, involves both
economic justice and political equality), understandings which separate Right and Left in today's China. This broad differentiation is not merely theoretical, but essentially practical. While today's Chinese Right emphasizes neoliberal conceptions of market fundamentalism, minimal state interference and full-scale privatization, the Left stresses any element that could practically resist them. These elements are intrinsically leftist, but not essentially socialist in the conventional logic. Beginning with the turn of the century, and particularly since 2003, what had been previously known as a narrow, divided intellectual debate among the alleged “New Left” and Neoliberals has become a much broader public discussion from the realms of intelligentsia and mainstream media to the Internet. This expansion is aided in no small part by Internet development in urban regions and simultaneous deepening of social crises in rural areas. The ordinary peasant and worker have become natural allies in the struggle against neoliberal practices propagated by the dominant Right. At the same time, an intellectual alliance of those who see themselves as members of particular streams of leftism and those who do not but are nonetheless labeled as such by the neoliberals for their struggles against certain aspects of neoliberalism has, however unwillingly, begun to take shape.

This wide coalition of leftisms, which is an association of various class fragments and essentially a reproductive relation embedded in the transformative social structure, is not a new phenomenon. The very historical foundation of Chinese leftism is its united front against imperialism in May 1919 and the New Culture movement, which was an elitist cultural revolution against classical Chinese literature and the Confucian state it served. The diversity of standpoints within such a coalition, from utopian idealist to dialectical materialist, liberalist to socialist, romanticist to realist, determinist to
voluntarist, and from elitist to populist, all of which can be found in leftists of the present
day, is vital to understanding what Chinese leftism, which vigorously inspired and
stimulated response from early members of the CPC, really means.\textsuperscript{12} Chinese leftism was
never an ideologically unitary construct, and three respective decades of experimentalist
socialism and market authoritarianism have only reinforced the diversity. Yet inasmuch
as the existence of their common contender cannot be neglected, their joint struggle for
survival under the banner of leftism is at least for now undeniable.\textsuperscript{13} Fredric Jameson’s
thought on Marxism as an Althusserian “problematic,” which better describes western
Marxism than Marxism elsewhere, is perhaps helpful and relevant here:

\textit{[Marxism] can be identified, not by specific positions (whether of a political, economic, or philosophical type), but rather by the allegiance to a specific complex of problems, whose formulations are always in movement and in historic rearrangement and restructuration, along with their object of study (capitalism itself).}\textsuperscript{14}

\textit{“Things turn into their opposites when reaching the extreme”}
As the Marxist dialectic goes, “Things turn into their opposites when they reach the
extreme.”\textsuperscript{15} Such is the prevailing underlying theme of post-Mao Chinese development.
As the years unfolded, the new leadership’s “campaigns against radical interpretations of
the social structure”\textsuperscript{16} discredited its own leftist heritage and revolutionary history. The
party’s promotion of “depoliticized” discourses in favor of full-scale commercialization
under the domestic rhetoric of normative neoliberal development coupled with its
international policy of rejoining the capitalist world “to become a member of the
international community, [and] to become part of civilized society”\textsuperscript{17} gradually generated
the conditions for leftist concerns to be again raised in ways undesirable to the Party. The
fact that the Party itself once did openly purge rightist voices in favor of grassroots leftist representations during the CR formed “a less conscious undercurrent to new directions in Chinese ideology, exercising by its past example a continuing pressure” on the current regime, making more difficult to justify abandoning the tradition that encouraged “citizens to express their private criticisms publicly in the form of big-character posters, struggle sessions, denunciation meetings, demonstrations, and the like.” On the other hand, while newborn domestic elites began to “use external forces to achieve specific domestic policy agendas,” their “wish to do so and their freedom to promote their agendas” are invariably “conditioned by both external forces and internal political contestations,” which helped to neither entirely offset the Party’s predicament nor make complete its neoliberal hegemony.

None of this occurred overnight, of course. As with its recent resurgence, the purge and decline of leftism and simultaneous “capitalist restoration” (zibenzhuyi fubi) since 1976 has been a gradual and severely contested process, rather than a one-time fiasco. Much like Mao’s remark that “Wherever there are masses of people...they are invariably divided into the Left, the middle and the Right,” and that such a division is infinitely fractionable, post-Mao China underwent a piecemeal successive marginalization of Party leftists. The most “left” leftists of the CR were purged soon after Mao’s death, followed by the suppression of more indulgent “leftists” such as Hua Guofeng and the remainders of CR leftists, which prepared the grounds for the removal of the even more endurable leftists in the military, and the eventual isolation of the most soft-core “leftists” within the remaining Party leadership. It was not until 1992—16 years after the end of the Mao period—that the Party’s establishment leftists were collectively marginalized,
which only gave rise to a generation of overseas-trained leftist intellectuals, joined later by popular leftists online and offline. An approximate scale of this historical continuity of Chinese leftism is indicated in the figure below.²⁴

Figure 1 A Continuous Leftist Influence

![Figure 1: A Continuous Leftist Influence](image-url)

Transitions and war: 1976-79

The term "transition," as Wang Hui asserts, is contemporary China’s crucial unspoken premise in discourse. For him, transition "presupposes a necessary connection between the process of current inequality and an ultimate goal. Because of this, to use the existence of state interference as a way to avoid recognizing the hegemony of neoliberalism is completely beside the point."²⁵ What is referred to here is for sure the "transition" from planned economy to market economy, or the transition from the alleged decade-long CR to "reform and opening up," a still-ongoing period that did not begin with the Third Plenum of CPC’s 11th Central Committee in 1978, yet has been widely propagated as such by the neoliberal elites who equate Deng’s rise to power with the economic successes of the reform, and indeed their own fortunes. The term "transition"
did not originate from Deng. Mao’s entire post-1958 project was a transitional one, one in which class struggle persisted, and one that, partly for this reason, resulted in a China “neither recognizably capitalist nor genuinely socialist.”

With Mao’s death in September 1976, the nationalist-centered internationalism that had until then governed Communist China faded. The Chairman’s portrait remains flanked by the inscriptions of “Long Live the People’s Republic of China” (Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo wansui) and “Long Live the Solidarity of the People of the World” (shijie renmin datuanjie wansui) over the gate to the Forbidden City. But it serves little pragmatic purpose other than serving as “a visible past, a visible continuum, a visible myth of origin,” which reassures Party leftists and the average Chinese about the nation’s outspoken revolutionary end.

Mao had explicitly wished to be cremated; shortly after his death, however, Hua Guofeng, the assumed successor, announced on October 8 plans to construct an enormous mausoleum, where Mao’s body would be forever preserved in a crystal box. As with Louis Bonaparte’s notorious rise to power in the name of the old Napoleon in 19th Century France, the new Chinese leadership “had not only a caricature” of Mao, they had Mao himself, “caricatured as he must appear” in the so-called “second period of emancipation” under a leftist cloak. Three days before Hua Guofeng’s announcement, Mao’s rebellious character was betrayed—and inherited, in some respect—by Hua and Ye Jianying’s coup d’etat, after which Zhang Chunqiao and Wang Hongwen were arrested and jailed by Hua and Ye during an emergency meeting of the four-member Standing Committee of the Politburo (SCP). Jiang Qing, Yao Wenyuan and some others were jailed immediately after. The next day, Ye, now the only other member left
of the SCP, to become Chairman of the Party and the military. For Ye, to arrest and jail Mao’s wife, nephew, daughters and the rest of the “Gang” was merely to “inherit the unfulfilled wish of Chairman Mao” (jicheng Mao Zhuxi de yizhi). People’s Daily exaggerated further in stating “This is a great success of the Proletarian Cultural Revolution, a great success of Mao Zedong Thought” on October 15. Yet to all others, the fall of the so-called “Gang of Four” symbolized the official end of the Maoist era. Major CR leftists were once and for all eliminated. “Swimming against the tide” as an alternative construct turned into an awkward and short-lived mainstream project under Hua Guofeng’s leadership, and was then replaced by Deng Xiaoping’s vision of “swimming with the tide” of global capitalism.

Ironically, the Maoist legacy of an alternative modernity became a mainstream project when Hua declared the Party’s commitment in February 1977 “to support whatever policy decisions were made by Chairman Mao” and “to unswervingly follow whatever instructions were given by Chairman Mao,” which became known as “the Two Whatevers” (liang ge fanshi). A much more “relaxed” leftist than the “Gang of Four,” Hua’s reform initiatives, which departed little from Deng’s during 1975, were carefully implemented with a continual emphasis on Mao’s vision of “persistent revolution” without paying tribute to Deng, who made his official return on July 21. A month later, Hua declared:

...after 11 years, China’s first Proletarian Cultural Revolution was brought to a successful end marked by crushing “the Gang of Four.” Yet this is certainly not the end of class struggle, and certainly not the end of persistent revolution under the dictatorship of the Proletariat. We must conform to the instructions of Chairman Mao and carry through persistent revolution under the dictatorship of the Proletariat to the very end.
In 1978, this claim was added into the revised Constitution, the preface of which suggested: "the successful end of the first Proletarian Cultural Revolution has moved China’s socialist revolution and construction into a new phase of development." Hua was about to shift China to realizing the Four Modernizations (sìge xiàndàihuà, a.k.a. "sìhua"). Nevertheless, the new emphasis on development and capitalist modernity came only with the removal of Hua and the ill-named "whateverist" school of leftists. Meanwhile, by November 1978, the Party had eliminated all labels of "rightists" of the Maoist era. The Central Committee also announced the removal of class designations of former exploiters, "who have, over the years, abided by state laws and decrees, worked honestly and who have done no evil, and to grant them the same rights as enjoyed by rural people’s commune members."

The rightist Party modernizers had gained popular momentum, so it seemed, as the leftist revolutionaries were falling downhill. But the extent of that assumed popularity was contested by the Democracy Movement in late 1978, when people began to put up big-character posters (dàzìbāo) on a stretch of brick wall near Tian'anmen that became known as Democracy Wall. Collective discussions of these posters soon turned into political demonstrations around downtown Beijing.

With grassroots dissent growing in its heartland, the Third Plenum of CPC's 11th Central Committee was held in mid-December. By this time, Hua had already lost power in significant terms to Deng, who criticized the "whateverists" with a slogan rephrased from Mao against his handpicked successor: "Practice is the sole criterion of truth." (Shíjiàn shì jiànyàn zhènlì de wèiyì biàozhùn) On May 10, an article with that name, edited and approved by Hu Yaobang, Deng's firm supporter, was published in the Central Party School's Theory Trend (Lìlùn dòngtài). It was then published by Guangming Daily.
and reported by Xinhua News Agency the next day and People's Daily and PLA Daily the day after. Hua was visiting North Korea when Guangming Daily published the article. When he returned, Hua and Wang Dongxing, now the only other CR leftist in the five-member SCP, saw the article as opposing Mao and the Central Committee and spent time meeting with elite propagandists. But their defeat was already settled. From August to November, 35 leaders from 32 of China’s provinces, municipalities and military regions sequentially published articles or made public statements in support of Deng’s critique of the “whatever faction.” What was said to be a discussion of the criterion of truth never was an academic or philosophical discussion as such. It symbolized the ideological turnaround of Party leadership from moderate CR leftist to normative liberal rightist. That turnaround was to be concluded at the Third Plenum of CPC’s 11th Central Committee, the legacy of which continues to this day.

On December 22, the communique of the conference stated for the first time that the CR, regardless of its intent, should be seriously revisited. In addition, Deng’s 1975 work was praised; the Central Committee’s documents concerning the Anti-Rightist Campaign were officially withdrawn; the Maoist observation of class struggle was called off; the Party’s latest emphasis was a renewed vision of socialist modernization, which now meant to subordinate all considerations to economic development; Deng’s most prominent “rightist” supporters took the seats of the departing CR leftists. Deng became at last “the Core of the 2nd Generation Leadership.”

The implications of the Plenum were profound, not only internally, but to international audiences as well. Time magazine’s “Person of the Year” in December 1978, Deng made Sino-U.S. relations his top priority. Once again, the rightist leader hid
his “commonplace repulsive features,” which would be revealed in the events that followed in the next year, “under the iron death mask” of Mao, whose efforts at prompting and bettering the conditions for Sino-U.S. diplomacy were said to have been inherited by the new “core” (hexin). Mao’s China was characterized by an international isolation imposed by her First World adversaries, which was now ridiculed by neoliberal elites as a result of Mao’s backward, close-minded, stubborn and ignorant character. In any event, Maoist China’s self-reliance was “a virtue born of necessity.” The strategy was thus to unite with the Third World and the nonaligned countries, who shared much of the same situation. This policy directly brought about the PRC’s restoration of all lawful rights in the United Nations (UN) and, quite ironically, Nixon’s 1972 Beijing visit within two years of Mao’s May 20, 1970 statement, which claimed: “In the world of today, who actually fears whom? It is not … the people… who fear U.S. imperialism; it is U.S. imperialism which fears the people of the world.” Deng’s inheritance of such diplomatic emphasis on the advanced capitalist countries, particularly the U.S., came with the earsplitting promotion of the post-Mao “brand-new epoch of the reform and opening up” (gaige kaifang de xinjiyuan), the roots of which were set in the Mao period, and the gradual decline of aid to and cooperation with the Third World.

This did not come without a price. Deng’s visit to the U.S. in late January 1979 following the two countries’ establishment of diplomatic relations was remarkable in diplomatic and indeed economic terms, yet no less remarkable was what occurred directly afterwards. On Valentine’s Day, the Central Committee issued “Notice Concerning a Self-Defense Counterattack against Vietnam, and Battle to Protect the Frontiers” (Guanyu dui yue jinxing ziwei fanji, baowei bianjiang zhandou de tongzhi).
Vietnam had been a traditional ally of Chinese Communism; China sent 300,000 PLA soldiers to fight alongside the Vietnamese National Liberation Front against U.S. imperialism.\(^5\) In 1977, the Vietnamese government signed a “Vietnamese-Soviet Friendship Treaty of Alliance and Mutual Assistance” and invaded Beijing-backed Cambodia. But this still cannot fully explain going to war against a longtime comrade, without taking into consideration the profound shift in Sino-U.S. relations at the time. The U.S.’s welcoming of Deng and China’s war against Vietnam both served as a rightist greeting card to the global market and the U.S. edition of capitalism against the state revisionism of the Soviet Union in the grand context of the Cold War, which many history texts conveniently neglect. In Wang Hui’s words, “The war itself was a true beginning of China’s amalgamation into the American-led economic order, and from another perspective it revealed the historical links between marketization and violence, as well as between the national opening up and the global power structure.”\(^5\)

After just one month of fighting in Vietnam, the PLA withdrew from major combat. The war meant to “teach Vietnam a lesson” achieved only its symbolic purpose under the national themes of revisionist transformation and rightist revival. Chinese casualties were extremely high. But border conflicts and small-scale operations between the countries would continue until 1990.

**Transformations, struggles and repressions: 1979-80**

With the war, Deng’s paramount control over the military was consolidated. The next move before launching large-scale reforms was naturally to eradicate all remaining CR leftists from the political scene. To do so would require first and foremost a new reading of the CR, which was until then seen as an essentially benign 11-year project that brought
about enormous setbacks in the process, yet somehow successfully ended with arresting
the ultra-leftist "Gang of Four." A first attempt in reversing this conception came in
March 1979, when Deng remarked that China had "gotten rid of the ten years of turmoil
created by Lin Biao and the Gang of Four, thereby achieving a stable and united political
phase." \(^{52}\) Breaking with all former Party interpretations, the framing of the CR as
meaningless and deviant is still entrapped in the present ideology, much of which persists
from the Deng era. \(^{53}\) The dichotomist view of stability-turmoil, order-disorder and
cohesion-chaos is a classic manifestation of the new leadership's shift towards the
normative project of neoliberalism. This shift was further intensified by Deng's
subsequent assertions that "stability overrides all else" (wending yadao yiqie), the Party
should "discourage contention" (bu gao zhenglun), and that "development is the solid
principle" (fazhan shi ying dao) during the "political turmoil" of 1989 and in the face of

Another important component of contemporary CPC ideology was also articulated
by Deng around the same time. By 1980, the "four great freedoms" (sida ziyou)—the
right to "speak out freely, air views freely, hold great debates, and write big-character
posters" (daming, defang, da bianlun, dazibao)—had been in the State Constitution for
five years following Mao's recommendation. \(^{54}\) Responding to the rising Democracy
Movement, Deng's demand for the abolition of the "four greats" (sida) was realized in
August 1980. Also deleted was the Constitutional clause granting workers the right to
strike. \(^{55}\) In place of the "four greats," Deng proposed in 1979 "the Four Cardinal
Principles" (sixiang jiben yuanze): "Upholding the socialist road, the dictatorship of the
proletariat, the leadership of the Communist Party, and Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought."\(^56\)

It is essential to provide some historical context for the Deng era reforms and reevaluations of the CR. So often are the brutality and violence of CR iterated from then till now, that the entire venture of explaining individual experiences during that period has been overshadowed by and restructured according to "the prevalent framework of discourse" \(^57\) of the present era, which relies heavily on condemning the anarchist character of the CR to legitimate its own rightwing "socialist legal system with Chinese characteristics." When active participants of the Democracy Movement were being sent to newly established labor camps in the tide of "socialist democratization," \(^58\) little was comparatively mentioned of the policy of "cutting prisons and releasing prisoners" (kanjian fangfan) during the CR, under which the number of labor camps reduced phenomenally. \(^59\) The Supreme People's Procuratorate (zuigao Renmin jianchayuan), the Supreme People's Court (zuigao Renmin fayuan) and the Ministry of Internal Affairs (neiwubu) were altogether dismantled in December 1968. Many cadres from public security organs, procuratorial organs and people's courts (a.k.a. gongjianfa) at both provincial and municipal levels were laid off. \(^60\) In an extreme case, Hubei province reduced the number of gongjianfa cadres by 90% in 1968 alone. \(^61\) Besides, the harshly critiqued labor education system (LES, laojiao zhidu), juvenile detention (shaonian guanjiao) and forced labor (qiangzhi laodong) systems were discarded from 1966 to 1970. \(^62\) As soon as Deng and the rightwing leaders reassumed power, however, judicial policies returned step by step to their pre-CR configurations, and continued to expand in major ways in normative orientations. The Supreme People's Procuratorate was
reestablished in late 1978, followed by the Ministry of Justice (sifabu) and the Ministry of Supervision (jianchabu), both dismantled in 1959. In 1980, Central Political and Law Committee (zhongyang zhengfawei) was constituted. A grand-scale expansion in prisons, labor camps, judicial institutions and personnel began simultaneously.63

The Deng reforms, the restoration and expansion of the pre-CR judicial system, the reassessment of the CR, the elimination of the “four greats” and the right to strike all occurred in the context of the official rhetoric in “crushing” (fensui) the “Gang of Four,” which the new Party leaders utilized to legitimate the October 1976 coup. Immediately following the coup began a nationwide campaign to “expose, critique, and liquidate” (jiefa, pipan, qingcha, a.k.a. “jiepicha”) the so-called “Lin Biao and Jiang Qing Anti-Revolutionary Groups” (Lin Biao, Jiang Qing fangeming jituan). By 1982 when the “Anti-Revolutionary Groups” were brought to trial, hundreds of CR Rebel leaders (zaofanpai lingxiu) were sentenced for “actively following the Lin Biao and Jiang Qing Anti-Revolutionary Groups and engaging in criminal activities” (jiji zhuisui Lin Biao, Jiang Qing fangeming jituan, jinxing fanzui huodong) during the initial phase of the CR in 1966-67, a period in which the two “Anti-Revolutionary Groups” were not yet existent, and a period in which it was the Party Central Committee, of which Deng Xiaoping was a core member, that advocated and supported the Rebels!64

Imprisoning tens of thousands of people from one province to the next, the two-year movement proved but a new round of “cleansing class organization” (qingli jiejidi duiwu) initiated by the rejuvenated rightwing Party rulers.

With ostensible “depoliticization,” most leaders of the Democracy Movement were suppressed in the name of law,65 a theme that governed the next decade paradoxically

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known as the decade of market reform. Little public discontent followed, since political radicalism, it seemed, had been swept into the dustbin of history as with the “Gang of Four” and the “tide of ultra-leftism” that were damned for all bad deeds during “the decade of turmoil.”

In 1979, major changes were brought to the economic reform that promised to better people’s material lives, particularly the peasantry at this stage, whose individual interests and benefits were said to have been suppressed in previous decades. In April, the government introduced responsibility systems on an experimental basis. A reward system with its basis on the family displaced the commune system, which was gradually abandoned over the next four years. Eight pilot projects aimed at reforming state enterprises was launched in May. Two months later, Guangdong and Fujian’s proposals of implementing special policies to open up their economies by installing “special economic zones” (SEZs) were endorsed by Beijing. Such measures, combined with the price adjustments to the perceived failure of the fixed price structure, support Wang Hui’s claim that “1979 marked the true start of the reform.”

While reforms at the economic level were taking place, political struggles persisted. All remaining CR leftists in the Party core were purged in 1980, among them Wang Dongxing and Chen Yonggui, both much less militant leftists than the “Gang of Four,” but nonetheless the most “left” within the new Party leadership. Wang assisted in the arrest of the “Gang” in 1976, yet lost favor to the rightwing regime thereafter. Chen Yonggui, peasant leader of the Dazhai Brigade who had been handpicked by Mao in a radical representation of CPC egalitarianism as vice premier, Politburo member and Central Committee member, was dismissed from office in August. Not only was Chen
discredited through a systematic campaign, but the collective agriculture that he and the Dazhai model represented “was to come under attack as soon as policies were adopted for the privatization of agriculture.” All of a sudden, the Dazhai model was critiqued as “ultra-leftist” and discouraging agricultural development. Moreover, it was purported that the “ultra-leftist line” (jizuo luxian) implemented in the Study Dazhai Movement during “the decade of turmoil” resulted in the abnormal deaths of 141 individuals, 140 of whose cases were now redressed under the new regime.

To the general public, however, the important events remembered of the year were Deng’s statement that the CR’s purge of Liu Shaoqi as a rightist “traitor, agent provocateur and scab” (pantu, neijian, gongzei) was “the biggest frameup our Party has ever known,” and the announcement of China’s boycott of the Moscow Olympics with her newfound capitalist allies, whose boycott was on the basis of Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. The rightwing regime’s own war of deliberate flirting with new capitalist allies continued.

Agricultural reforms, resistance and nationalism: 1981-84

By 1981, the term “leftist” was redefined to roughly “include any lack of enthusiasm for the new regime’s reformist economic policies.” The national economy during the CR, Deng now claimed, was brought to “complete chaos” (wanquan luanle). All problems of the past and present were officially blamed on the CR. It was unfortunate, a People’s Daily article argued, that “quite a few cadres are still under the influence of leftist ideology.” The term thus represented in China not only a negative, conservative attitude towards reform and even the material well-being of the masses, but a reactionary line of thought against modernity, progress and development.
A systematic removal of leftists from the lower-ranks of the Party bureaucracy, mislabeled as “residual poison of the Gang of Four” (sirenbang yidu), was deemed essential for the Deng regime before larger reform projects could be initiated. The “Resolution on Certain Questions in the History of Our Party since the Founding of the People’s Republic of China” was released in June 1981. Carefully preserving Mao as a symbol of nationalist legitimacy, the Resolution severely condemned his last two decades of rule as a mixture of grave left errors, economic catastrophes, and various attempts to realize unscientific ideals against his own thought. Removed from public display was Mao the leftist rebel, twice damned for departing from both Marxism and Mao Zedong Thought; maintained and consolidated was Mao the normative authority, who symbolized the legitimacy of the Party and the Chinese revolution without recalling his rebellious efforts. An exploitable revolutionary continuity was hence sought with the market reforms, which was purported to concentrate solely on economic construction (yi jingji jianshe wei zhongxin) to realize the great dream of “Four Modernizations” (i.e., “modernization” of agriculture, industry, technology and national defense) laid forth by Zhou, Mao and the earlier revolutionaries.

This was exactly what followed. The reforms brought about enormous successes economically—or at least statistically. The rich reviews of China’s economic successes during that decade alone require another paper. Without falling into the trap of intensive economic analysis here, noteworthy is the observation that even statistical measures can prove a variety of interpretations; political indicators of success and failure of the reform are always controversial and multifaceted. On the one hand, immediate reform policies, including rising incomes and encouragement—in some cases enforcement—of private
entrepreneurship, resulted in steady increases in agricultural production, and were
generally welcomed. On the other hand, however, these were accompanied by systematic
preparations of judicial repression under the reassumed rightist logic of normative
development, implications of which were not readily apparent. In the face of widespread
decollectivization, decentralization and privatization, the Central Committee’s 1981 call
for the nationwide “Strike Hard” (yanda) Campaign against crime was to have deep
impacts on stability and deviance.82 This was compounded by the abolition of the village
militia, which was simultaneous with a radical cut in the number of the standing army,
and the establishment of the large-and-continually-expanding armed police force in
1982.83 Seeking to further professionalize the state bureaucracy, these efforts, all of
which led to much higher administrative costs than in previous decades, did not lead to
their projected outcomes. Chinese criminologists today contend that the PRC has
witnessed four (some say five) crime peaks. It is said that whereas “the previous three
occurred before 1978 in the planned economy period, during which China’s crime
occurrence rate was kept around 0.005 percent,”84 crime case totals of the fourth one in
the 1980s were twice the sum of the previous three.85

More importantly, the jiepicha movement’s “cleansing of class ranks” in the
aftermath of CR was deepened and carried on to a national level by a three-year Party
rectification project beginning with the 12th Party Congress in October 1983. “Three
types of people” (sanzhong ren)—namely, “Rebels who succeeded by following the Lin
Biao and Jiang Qing Anti-Revolutionary Groups, people who have strong factionalist
tendencies, and ‘Beat, Smash and Grabbers’” (zhuisui Lin Biao, Jiang Qing fangeming
jituan zaofan qijia de ren, bangpai sixiang yanzhong de ren, dazaqiang fenzi) were

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identified as "not yet fully cleansed" (hai meiyou wanquan qingli). It was said that their "substantial impurity in terms of thought, style and organization" (sixiang, zuofeng, zuzhi shang de yanzhong bu chun) brought about great harm to the Party. What began as a strictly inner-Party rectification movement soon spread to all of China. An explicit standard was implemented in identifying and "cleansing" the "sanzhong ren." While most remaining middle and lower-rank Party cadres who had been promoted from 1966 to 1976 to "foster successors to the cause of proletarian revolution" (peiyang wuchanjieji geming shiye de jiebanren) were at once eliminated as sanzhong ren. At the same time, the rightwing Party leaders' own well-documented factionalist violence during the CR was considered "against their will" (weixin de) and hence forgiven.87

Rural China was also changing in dramatic ways adverse to its grassroots leftist heritage. By 1982, over 90% of production teams in the countryside had established different forms of household responsibility systems in agricultural production. While few held on firmly against the tide of decollectivization, on the national level, the collective communes that dominated organizationally in the earlier years had been mostly dismantled, bringing the organizational leadership in some villages to paralysis or quasi-paralysis.88 Results of this were complex. Rural Party cadres, in fear of being labeled and purged as "leftists," enthusiastically promoted and imposed the new policies on peasants. This anti-leftist campaign and overemphasis on individual household achievement in the countryside produced immense setbacks in the face of natural disasters, during which the Party was no longer able to mobilize the localized and disconnected peasant masses for grassroots political mobilization was critiqued as a thing of the "ultra-leftist" past as China returned to her far-flung feudal consciousness of letting one "sweep only the snow

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from their own doorstep and heed not the frost on their neighbor’s roof.” (Ger en zi s ao mengqian xue, moguan taren washang shuang)89

Decollectivization furthered. The 1982 Constitution stipulated the transfer of people’s communes’ (Renmin gongshe) administrative functions to township (xiang) or county (xian) governments,90 which were not established until Beijing’s 1983 order to separate political affairs from the commune and establish township governments.91 Privatization of first the collective economic and welfare functions of the commune, and then of land use, marked by 1984’s state approval for agricultural fields to be contracted, followed. Finally, the enforced state monopoly farm-purchase scheme was replaced by a system of contractual procurements in 1985.92

1984 concluded the emphasis on agricultural reform, a prelude to the neoliberal market economy for years to come, and shifted the focus to massive urbanization, as Party elites perceived that the post-Mao reform “had achieved enough momentum to encompass the whole economic system.”93 This came after an increasing social deviance had been suppressed by the Strike Hard Campaign and the Anti-Spiritual Pollution Movement (fan jingshen wuran yundong) in the previous year, which, through massive increases in police and judicial forces and the number of arrests, prepared the stage for further reform and suppression of the remainder of Party leftists, many of whom were ironically active in both political campaigns.94 Leftist involvement in the campaigns does not indicate that rightists were the primary victims, as is often argued. Neither yanda nor fan jingshen wuran sought to ideologically suppress any given social group. The former targeted at remaining criminals and outlaws in Chinese society, which was alleged to have only recently reestablished its legal infrastructure after the lawless CR. The latter
campaign was initiated as a lumbering Party resistance to rising domestic consumerism and consumer lifestyles at the popular level, but not the political.

Just as the economic reform was not possible without accompanying political violence, it was also not possible without an entirely novel superstructure supportive of the new regime’s rightward market orientation. The bare bones of this superstructure were laid out by the 1981 Resolution and the 1982 Constitution, which sought to rationalize the legacy of the Chinese revolution itself as nationalistic and compatible with the rhetorical tide of constructing Four Modernizations under the rightwing philosophy of market authoritarianism. Such a reduction of the revolutionary legacy to a nationalistic effort aimed only at expanding the “wealth and power” of the nation proved both misleading and contradictory. The victimized scholars of the CR, in viewing the government connection of current nationalism to its revolutionary legacy as failing to explain the historical nature of the revolution and the root of the CR in aiming at precisely the same nationalist goals, collectively blamed Chinese culture as feudalistic and superstitious. This systematic critique of China’s cultural legacy was dominant in the decade’s popular arts, particularly in “scar literature” (shanghen wenxue), which treated the CR and the suppressed experiences of intellectuals as on a historical continuum, arguing that it was Chinese culture that lacked a modern flavor and therefore needed to be displaced completely. In much the same way that Chen Duxiu and earlier leftists called for a decisive break from Chinese culture in the New Culture Movement, these works embraced capitalistic development in Taiwan and Singapore, the basis of which was ironically the same Chinese culture that was condemned by Chinese intelligentsia as essentially incapable.
This tendency of mistreating and denigrating traditional Chinese values inevitably led to discrediting the Chinese revolution altogether. This became apparent in the mid-to-late 1980s, and resulted in massive oppression from the state, which advocated nationalism, yet tolerated it only to the extent that it could be utilized for legitimacy. In addition, the tide of laying the blame at Chinese culture as backward and violent carried, as did the early Chinese Marxists, a strong pro-western, if not all-western agenda. It is this mixed feeling of the uneasy (and deceptive, I think) search for pro-western nationalism, itself a practical paradox, in a country that only recently achieved independence from colonialism and imperialism, that characterized the contradictory character and fundamental weakness of post-Mao Chinese nationalism. Nationalist writer Wang Xiaodong names such a phenomenon “reverse racism” (nixiang zhongzuzhu yi), whereas Arif Dirlik brands it “rehearsals of an earlier Orientalism,” and Paul Pickowicz terms its descendant in the popular culture of the next decade as “reverse Orientalism.”

While suffering from an allegedly nationalistic identity rooted in “reverse nationalism” and westernization, the nationalist theme did nonetheless slide into the ongoing war and economic construction under the rightwing developmental disarray. In 1984, a movie version of the intensely popular novel “Wreaths at the Foot of the High Mountain” (gaoshan xia de huahuan) was released. Depicting the uneasiness of the 1979 war and the eager search for a new nationalism out of the “trap” of ultra-leftism, the novel was published in 1982 and was reorganized into stage plays, folk plays, stand-up comedies, dances and TV series. The movie won 1983’s Hundred Flowers Awards (baihua jiang) for Best Picture, Best Actor, Best Supporting Actor, Best Supporting
Actress, and the Golden Rooster Awards (jinji jiang)\(^{103}\) for Best Screenplay, Best Actor, Best Supporting Actor, and Best Editing.\(^{104}\) Equally nationalistic war songs, such as the expressive "Blood-stained Spirit" (xuevan de fengcai)\(^{105}\) and "Mid-Autumn Moon" (shiwu de yueliang), both distinctively different from their Maoist counterpart in focusing on the individual instead of the collective and the professional soldier instead of the peasant-worker, also became definitive songs of the times. Even commercial moviemakers such as Chen Kaige and Zhang Yimou collaborated in 1986 to produce another nationalistic film "The Grand Parade" (da yuebing), which was also an instant hit. Songs that stressed the ultra-optimism and enthusiasm for rightwing initiatives of stability and development, on the other hand, were produced substantially, some iterating the beauty of the land,\(^ {106}\) others urging for collaboration in realizing Four Modernizations.\(^ {107}\) Most representative was the 1980 song "Young Friends Come and Join Us," which stated:

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\begin{align*}
\ldots & \text{Oh dear friends, to whom does the dulcet scenery of spring belong? / To me, to you, to us the new generation of the eighties / Let us meet again twenty years later / How beautiful will our motherland become! / Both the heaven and earth shall be new / Even more enchanting will be the scenery of spring / Which adds luster to cities and villages everywhere / Oh dear friends, on whom does the creation of such a tomorrow rely? / On me, on you, on us the new generation of the eighties / Let us meet then / Toast the heroes, to whom the glory belongs / How much sweat will we have left for the motherland and Four Modernizations? / Will we be ashamed when recollecting the past? / Oh dear friends, let us proudly raise our glasses / Thrust out our chests and raise our eyebrows / Glory belongs to the new generation of the eighties.}\end{align*}
\]

That nationalistic sentiment, which concealed deeper ideological contestations from the public scene under the rhetoric of normalization and "entering the world," was brought to an apex with 1984's Los Angeles Olympics, which the Warsaw Pact countries
boycotted. China participated for the first time and took 15 gold medals, a widely promoted success of the neo-"new China" in breaking away from the alleged self-isolation of ultra-leftism in previous decades. Yet this success did not come about without the persistent erasure of the leftist past by the current regime, which, to use a Chinese proverb, sought desperately to extract the firewood from under the cauldron (*fu di chou xin*). Nor did it come without drastic internal leftist resistance. This was exemplified in the same year, when the PLA's new service law was passed. Long considered an egalitarian model,¹⁰⁹ the PLA had remained, even with the ongoing war against its truest comrade, a last obstinate leftist element in the flood of capitalistic transformations initiated by the authoritarian Party. To be sure, it had long been a site of ideological struggle. The normative quasi-Soviet rank system, for instance, was introduced under the urge of military elites shortly after founding the PRC (read "after the revolution was considered complete") in an attempt to turn the PLA's back on the egalitarian character that had defined it.¹¹⁰ But by 1984, Mao's pre-CR enforcement of the abolishment of the rank system had been in place for nearly two decades. Ranked insignia was still absent in army uniforms; soldiers and cadres alike wore uniforms with a red star on the hat and red badges on the collar, with their only remaining difference in the number of pockets. In 1984, rightwing decision-makers finally felt confident enough to challenge this taboo. The new law stipulated the reintroduction of military ranks and consequent refocus of the extraordinary over the ordinary. Military leaders "justified the restoration of ranks as improving organization, discipline, and morale and facilitating coordinated operations among different arms and services, thus serving to modernize and regularize the military."¹¹¹ Yet it was countered by considerable leftist criticism from within. The
internal contestation was so fierce that the implementation of the rank system in the entire army was delayed until 1987, a quite exceptional struggle in military history.

No doubt, the rightwing leadership again triumphed in the last instance. Military personnel were issued new professionalized uniforms in 1985. The red star on the army hat was replaced by a cap emblem with a red star, in which the characters of bayi (August 1st, anniversary of the 1927 uprising) were placed.112

With an empty, reverse “nationalism” providing the self-assurance so desperately sought by the CR “capitalist roaders” in all walks of social life, China’s reform entered its next stage. A last fortress of the “old” system—the “iron rice bowl” that ensured a lifetime job tenure to regular workers in state factories—was to be smashed. With “intense and bitter” opposition from the Left, the government compromised by retaining the job security and welfare guarantees of all hitherto employed workers, but ordered that new workers be hired contractually.113 The upfront outcomes were welcoming, but smashing worker security would give way for the reversion of status to contract and a process of systematic betrayal to the working class,114 which directly resulted in radical worker unrest simultaneous with hastened urbanization and the rise of the urban consumer throughout the entire 1990s.

Urban reforms and student movements: 1985-89

The reforms of the 1980s, however related to them in policy orientation, did not have as much impact as their successors did on industrial workers in the labor contract reform campaign that dominated the 1990s. The primary beneficiaries of the “all-round dictatorship over the Bourgeoisie,” Chinese workers could find no political outlet in a context of the discredited CR ideologies and an overwhelming tide of privatization. Some
were still blindly hoping for benefits from the coming reforms. Instead, statistical economic successes and practical improvements in material living prompted Chinese intellectuals, many of whom were still either condemning the CR or hailing Deng, the war and the reforms, to reach an “enthusiastic consensus” to advocate capitalism in the political sphere. Leftist voices were virtually ignored during this period. They were regarded as inherently backward for their “outdated” convictions and devotion to a Chinese culture that was equally “outdated.”

A second May 4th Movement, this time headed by intellectuals on the Right, thus began to gain enormous influence, but not in an undistorted fashion. By 1985, the popular post-Mao folk saying of “Toiling for three decades, and overnight it is pre-liberation again” (Xinxinkuku sanshi nian, yiye huida jiefang qian) had become reality. Reforms in the early 1980s had indeed returned the Chinese economy, especially its agricultural sector, to her pre-liberation mode. This did not pose a problem in itself, though, until grain output began to decline rather steeply—the steepest since the Great Leap—in 1985. The prior upsurge in agricultural production had been notable since 1978; yet it was only in 1984 that the household responsibility system was widely adopted. In other words, it is useful to consider how such an upsurge “would not have been possible without the vast irrigation, flood control, and technological infrastructure built in the Mao period.” But with the policy encouragement of the return to de facto feudal values (consider, for example, the feudalistic characteristic of the popular slogans “to get rich is glorious” and “let some people be rich first”), peasants found little reward for working the land. However, when some stopped farming, all suffered. The stagnation in agricultural production and increasing reliance on imported grains has continued to the present.
With decollectivization came visible rapid growth of economic inequalities in the countryside between the coastal regions and the interior, and between wealthy and poor peasants within different rural communities, a characteristic of semi-colonial China in the early 1920s. While urban living standards in general rose considerably, it tended to be more related to previous agricultural successes—which were not necessarily correlated with the market reforms—than improvements in the efficiency of urban industry. Moreover, although the chief concerns of this period were efficiency and manageability of economic transformation articulated in strong contributions from a younger generation of neoliberal economists, living in China in the late 1980s meant recurrent cycles of unparalleled inflation and a strong sense of insecurity for both the common citizenry and the emerging capitalist class, whose private ownership rights were not yet protected by law. For Meisner, this legal private ownership of property was then the only missing link to make China essentially capitalist—authoritarian capitalist, that is.

It was in this troubled and multifaceted context that large-scale student movements emerged into view in 1986. Granted, some people did become rich first, as Deng's maxim goes. Nonetheless, the lead was taken not by common folk but the offspring of aging Party leaders, who had promised to better the lives of all, when in fact many citizens were suffering from the contested price reforms and inflation, among other reform initiatives that benefited the bureaucracy more than the ordinary citizen. Bureaucracies of large and small, urban and rural, and young and old, profited much more deeply than the emerging urban middle class consumers, whose numbers were hardly relevant at this point. The entire bureaucracy had come to enjoy the benefits of both political control by the Party state and economic power in the marketplace, where many bureaucratic
institutions “perforce function as capitalist enterprises.”\textsuperscript{122} Even the PLA had by now become a major force in international trade and finance, as well as armament manufacture and export, through its vast civilian subsidiaries of some 20,000 profit-making enterprises, created to employ offspring, spouses and other relatives of officials of bureaucratic staff.\textsuperscript{123}

Thus, the post-1984 pursuit of a market system\textsuperscript{124} through rightwing authoritarianism, and the unavoidable intensity of corruption that followed, could end in no other way than provoking a theoretically privileged yet factually discontented as well as politically unstable group to act in its own, albeit twisted, interest—intellectuals and students. This began with the December 1986 protest of some 3,000 students at University of Science and Technology in Hefei, Anhui, who demonstrated against the lack of choice in forthcoming local elections.\textsuperscript{125} Supported by the school leadership and rightwing intellectuals, the demonstrations quickly spread to other cities, culminating with Shanghai’s 50,000-people protest on December 20.\textsuperscript{126} The movement was brought to an end with Beijing’s launch of the Anti-Bourgeois Liberalization Movement (fan zichanjieji ziyouhua yundong), the last movement in which the remainders of the Party Left played a significant role. This was the third mass crackdown\textsuperscript{127} in the “apolitical” era that assumed the end of all political movements, for which vast crowds had celebrated so happily on Tian’anmen Square with the arrest of the “Gang of Four” a decade earlier. Intellectuals supportive of the demonstrations, some (although definitely not all) of whom were outspoken right-wingers, were banished by the Party. Compared with the cold-blooded “cleansing” of leftists in the jiepicha movement and the ongoing nationwide campaign against the “sanzhong ren,” which totaled five years, the short-lived “consider-
it-as-it-stands" (jiushi lunshi) movement was nothing more than a pragmatic microsurgery. It ended a month later, with Zhao Ziyang replacing Hu Yaobang as the Party's General Secretary.128

The anti-bourgeois liberalization movement was against “bourgeois liberalization” only in the sense of political liberalization. This vigilant oppression of liberalization in the superstructure was necessary not because of what Meisner termed the “democratic ideals” of rightwing intellectuals, whose visions and practices of “democracy” have certainly proved otherwise since 1989, but only because the bourgeois intellectuals had not yet been fully absorbed into the vested interest groups of the state bureaucracy in the reform initiated by the Party itself. The movement left untouched the area of bourgeois economic liberalization, which was to become a radical state initiative under Zhao’s ephemeral leadership.

Articulating the term “socialism with Chinese characteristics” to claim a twisted socialist-nationalist lineage with the strong promotion of an export-oriented economy, rightwing Party ideologues and propagandists attempted to rationalize and relate the state’s capitalistic policies with Marxist ideology. The theory of a “primary stage of socialism” became China’s essential rationale for borrowing freely from capitalist models and practices.129 But inasmuch as the ideological nature and eventual task of socialism, discussed so vigorously by previous generations of Chinese Marxists, were not clearly defined, but rather reserved for generations centuries later in an apparently carefree way. How and what the ordinary Chinese, the working class in particular, could identify in their lives as “socialist” was entirely obscure. This, coupled with Zhao’s second attempt at the abolition of state-fixed prices for commodities, which brought another round of
unbearable economic and financial chaos, was the essential rationale for rising social unrest against the regime in 1988.

When inflation in major cities reached a per annum rate of 30 percent in fall 1988, the government adopted strict measures to avert greater social disorder. The introduction of stringent controls on credit, however, resulted in closed factories and township and village enterprises, greatly reduced production, and massive unemployment (more than 50 million by spring 1989). Inner-Party debates between "the conservative Left" and "the reformist Right" continued, and neither would compromise even for the sake of sustaining Party dominance amidst growing student activism, workers' strikes, peasant resistance, reemerging feudal vice and superstition, and social delinquency.

As disorder continued unfavorably for both the government and its people, who seemed at a loss, and as the very goals of the Party's rightwing leadership for stability and development were undermined by the processes of reform itself, things again turned into their opposites. It was only good fortune that the Chinese intellectuals from both Left and Right traditions, who headed the discussions and demonstrations that led to June 4th, had a clear, although intrinsically contradictory, vision. This vision was that of the West and themselves, the former as a romanticized other that was foreign in both context and content, and the latter as natural leaders in the social movement to assist China in marching towards that historical direction. The result, as recollected by Li Minqi, who was imprisoned for two years for publicly commemorating June 4th in 1990, was that:

...popular discontent found expression in a democratic movement led not by ordinary working people, but by intellectuals and students committed to a system quite foreign to them. Of course, this made any active and effective mobilization of the great mass of urban workers ultimately impossible. But without their participation, the movement was doomed to failure.
So much has been written on June 4th that we neither could nor should proceed with the diversity of perceptions as to how it happened and why. More important is the legacy it left behind, and the implications it carried over to the next decade, when the time was finally ripe for full-scale marketization championed effortlessly by students of earlier democracy movements, whose challenges to the bureaucracy hardly ever related to the realm of economic liberalization.

**Guess what: the nineties**

Wang Hui considers Chinese intellectuals of the 1980s essentially incapable of 1) providing practical social goals; 2) understanding the full extent of potential social mobilization; 3) comprehending the social contradictions peculiar to the times; 4) understanding the socialist tendencies inhering within the grassroots social movement, and 5) transcending the intellectual blinders imposed by Cold War ideology.¹³² In essence, although it did embody unconscious resistance to “inequalities springing from the growth of markets,”¹³³ the 1989 movement never fundamentally challenged the paradoxical logic of the market (and of reverse racism) in Chinese development, certainly not to the extent that the state apparatus was challenged. As a result, the chief participants of the movement consisted of multifaceted groups that “had benefited greatly from a reform process characterized by the devolution of political and economic power.”¹³⁴ Coupled with the fact that peasants and workers never participated on a decisive scale, the student movement was conveniently utilized by certain intellectuals to influence the power relations within the bureaucracy.¹³⁵ These scholars were the tone-setters for today’s Chinese neoliberalism.
In this context, then, the neoliberals' focus was the intensification of hitherto economic reforms, which would be rationalized eventually through legislative means reinforcing class polarization whereby the rightists could share a major piece of the cake controlled by the governing elites, the Party bosses of whom were as joyful as the rightists themselves in finding each other, thereby forming in Gramscian terms a "hegemonic bloc." Their relationship, itself an active process, was thus reciprocal: rightist intellectuals' called for further reform, which excluded immediate guarantees for social security that better characterized deeper aspirations behind public unrest than the pro-western movements of the 1980s. They responded to the political hierarchy need for reform propagandists after cleansing leftists out of the game. The "resister" image of neoliberalism was therefore never truly present. Quite the opposite, the governing elites and neoliberals started to exist in "a complex relationship of codependence."

This radical reversal of political claims and rising economic status of Chinese neoliberals became visible as the 1990s gradually unfolded. Not surprisingly, as scholars were being integrated into the state bureaucracy, the post-Mao Left/Right debate, characterized mainly by elite Party conservatives and reformers, was extended, or in fact was absorbed into the equally elitist world of the intelligentsia. Obscured by both representations of the debate were the left-leaning tendencies within Chinese society as well as right-wing convictions and the new generation fostered by the reconstituted education system that had begun to champion "the world economy" as such. Both intellectual camps failed to speak directly—albeit much more so the rightists than the
leftists—to popular objections to privatization and demands for a revitalized attention to social security and justice.

Simultaneous with the integration of neoliberal scholars and economists into the reconstituted ruling bloc of state and public institutions was the restructuring of the intellectual Left, the bulk of which were forced into almost complete detachment from the state. This context gave rise to the understanding of today’s Chinese Left as essentially counterelite.\(^{137}\) Marching into the 1990s, what was labeled the Party Left was not the same orthodox “Old Left” before the Deng reform or in its early years. The Party leftovers of the Left, they were not the “ultra left” of the CR, but were nonetheless suppressed and marginalized on that basis. Even more external to the established system (tizhi wai) were the intellectual leftists, many of whom suffered to gain a comprehensive understanding of June 4\(^{th}\) and the direction China was about to take. The popularization of the Left was necessary inasmuch as China’s furtherance of privatization and market reforms left no room for an open critique or alternative vision of development—definitely not a Maoist one, the very aim of which was to suppress the “capitalist roaders”—particularly in an already unstable society stricken by various movements and crackdowns in the previous decade. This was no better displayed then by Deng’s famous slogan “guard against the right, but guard primarily against the left” in his southern tour of 1992.\(^{138}\) Organized at “a time when official Beijing media were dominated by leftist Party ideologues,” the second and less militant post-Mao coup, led directly by the retired autocratic leader, “relied on the pens of southern journalists.”\(^{139}\) Their celebrated Robin Hood was Huangfu Ping—a pen name for a collective of the Shanghai Party Propaganda Department’s pro-market researchers and writers—who “conveyed Deng’s ideas for
accelerated market reforms in a series of commentaries that sent shockwaves through the Chinese press.⁴⁰ In the wake of Tian'anmen, an intense line struggle between defenders of orthodox Marxism (termed “the Old Left”) and of Deng’s reforms, which had been building since 1978, erupted in the years of international sanctions and downfall of Soviet state revisionism, both of which further weakened CPC legitimacy after the crackdown. That period ended in 1992 with Deng’s successful ideological coup and the subsequent “triumph of the market”¹⁴¹ in another concurrence with undemocratic violence, which ironically helped to affirm the nature of the reform as “progressive” (and any attempt to question it as conservative) and unquestionable.¹⁴²

In 1992, China renewed the push for market reform by marginalizing the last platoon of the Party Left. While it was passionately cheered by local interest groups and establishment intellectuals, most of whom reside on the Right, “the basic factors that had provided the mobilizing force in 1989 had not been resolved in any substantial way,”¹⁴³ an indicator to the realization that the social conditions under which overdevelopment and crises deepened in the 1990s were very much related to those prior to 1989. They were much more widespread in the 1990s, however, under the influence of neoliberal globalization, which resulted in no small part from the demise of the Soviet Union, a demise which many feared China too might experience. Open, critical voices for accelerated marketization had become politically impossible in the new setting—any such practitioner, particularly those in the press, could be “seen as harming the pro-market agenda and playing into the hands of the leftists.”¹⁴⁴ Hence, the eventual revisiting of modernity, an issue untouched by pre-1989 intellectuals, was now headed almost solely by leftist thinkers in academia under excessive pressures from the inside.
In this historical context, Chinese neoliberalism referred to a combination of market extremism, neo-conservatism and neo-authoritarianism, which sought to "radicalize the evolution of economic and political power in a stable manner, to employ authority to guarantee the process of marketization in turbulent times, and to seek the complete withdrawal of the state in the midst of the tide of globalization." Blindly critiquing all manifestations of radicalism (inclusive of the communist revolution and the student movement, both critiqued as leftist) with the stability rhetoric, the Chinese neoliberals were systematically forgivable of systematic corruption, other social costs of marketization, amorphous resistance as well as organized opposition. Therefore, they were incompetent in responding to the issue of social security, which was the upfront concern of the Chinese masses instead of the abstract notion of democracy that ruled the minds of intellectuals in the 1980s. Neither did they pose any constructive critique to Deng’s insistence on further reform, in which they were to become a primary group of beneficiaries.

Deng’s 1992 tour resulted in the emergence of coastal “development zones” and the opening of vast markets in commodity futures, stocks and securities, and real estate, which created the policy basis and market conditions for the emergence of a “new rich class,” and matured the conditions under which political and economic elites could be combined. True, systematic innovations aimed at long-term productivity rather than immediate profitability were on no account introduced. Despite structural corruption, declining agricultural production and massive poverty in the late 1990s, intellectual discussion never questioned the validity of the reforms. This was partially because Deng’s tour came at a time when the national economy had been so exhausted by the
post-1989 international sanction that the intellectual public had lost genuine interest in critical examination, and partially because these scholars, most of whom were neoliberals, had no real motive to object to marketization. The leftists, however, were too divided—and marginalized after 1992—to raise social concerns collectively. During this transitional period, He Xin\(^ {147} \) and his theory of \textit{guojia zhuyi} (i.e., “nationalism stressing the interests of one nation as opposed to subordinate areas or other nations or supranational groups”), rather than \textit{minzu zhuyi}—“nationalism stressing people's loyalty to the country and the promotion of its remembered glory, culture and interests”\(^ {148} \) played a particularly formative role in leftist reconstitution. As Zhu Dongli\(^ {149} \) asserts:

\begin{quote}
In a time of the capitalist world system, He Xin refreshed the view of Chinese intelligentsia since the end of the CR with an appeal for \textit{guojia zhuyi}. He was the early pioneer of popular Chinese nationalism in the 1990s, and to a certain degree, also the civil engineer [\textit{minjian shejizhe}] of the Chinese government’s \textit{guojia zhuyi} ideology in the 1990s...He Xin is an important hinge of the Chinese thinking public in its transition from the eighties to the nineties...In the spring of 1992, Deng Xiaoping forcibly pushed the Chinese reform through his “southern tour” speeches. Hence began the true unfolding of Chinese society’s characteristics during the nineties—namely, rapid development, wealth polarization, official corruption and the rise of consumerism under market economy and authoritarian politics. In many aspects, the state forged alliances with the market, power and capital, while the massive [lower] social classes silently shouldered the grave cost of economic transition. In the meantime...internationally, with the end of the Cold War, the global strategic situation experienced a reversal. China became once again the target of U.S. containment. Because of these gigantic changes in the domestic and global environments, recollections of the Red China in our earlier years were awakened after an extended oppression during the eighties and became a resource for criticism. We surprisingly discovered that many concepts and propositions that had been seen as dogmatic express truths, and that many figures and narratives that had been sneered and laughed at are filled with enchantment. We were even more shocked in discovering that in fact, many of our quandaries have but proven Chairman Mao’s political prophecies.\(^ {150} \)
\end{quote}
This was the condition under which some leftist intellectuals turned to the study of postmodernism to understand China's contemporary problems. Unfairly labeled "the New Left" (xin zuopai), scholars such as Wang Hui and Cui Zhiyuan reject the neoliberal formulation of "left" and "right," dismissing it as a "Cold War mentality." Neoliberal intellectuals, however, were only too pleased to identify themselves as such, or as "liberals," a term that "came to enjoy an inviolable, even sanctified aura." Because this mentality is still haunting us all in the post-9/11 context, and because of the visible polarization of the increasingly fractured Chinese society into the shifting boundaries of Left/Right, such an ideological distinction is not dismissible. In addition, the categorization is also polemically important because the dominant discrediting of leftist thinking ("New Left" hence carries an inherently negative connotation) was not readily adopted by Chinese workers and peasants, which was reflected not only by a rather radical nostalgic sentiment of the Mao period in 1993, the 100th year of the birth of the late Chairman, but more importantly, their rationale for such sentiment.

Thus interestingly, while "socialism with Chinese characteristics" revealed its full meaning by full-scale privatization following the western route, a number of intellectual leftists, all sharing educational experiences in the U.S., engaged in critical self-reflection on capitalist modernity in the West and whether China should—or could—follow this direction. Urban Chinese echoed this trend nationally when U.S. interference in Beijing's application process to host the 2000 Olympics, which contributed to her defeat by a mere two votes, spurred a strong nationwide reaction. The reaction was psychological: the uneasy national quest for capitalist modernization in the wake of June 4th, so it seemed to the urban public, was refused by U.S. imperialism. Especially
revealing were the protestors who had passionately held up the so-called "Goddess of democracy," replicated from the American Statue of Liberty four years earlier, who turned radically against their former idol in search of an alternative modernity that had long defined Chinese development but had been emptied of meaning in the context of Deng's reforms. In an intricate but not surprising way, then, intellectual leftism, as in the 1920s, integrated with nationalism on a common path of seeking a genuinely distinctive Chinese path of development. A series of intellectual discussions opposing the antidemocratic nature of privatization and commodity fetishism took place between 1993 and 1996.154

The government, of course, was not unaware of this trend. Neither did it object to the reemergence of nationalism, which restored in major ways its legitimacy lost with June 4th. But it was not ready for the extent to which urban nationalism grew with economic privatization, for deep inside this round of nationalistic uproar was a refutation of westernization (although not of capitalist borrowing), an essential element of the Deng reform which characterized earlier "nationalisms" in the 1980s. Besides the exclusive Han nationalist strain, however, this period also saw the reemergence of the utopian and/or Maoist nationalists, whom the government could neither associate with nor claim to speak for. An early 1920s image of China, where diverse schools of nationalists from highly utopian young Marxists to Confucian nationalists flourished in the country ruled by an allegedly nationalist but essentially comprador-oriented rightwing regime, which could speak to the demands of neither, was reappearing in a new guise.

This is not to suggest that outsiders did not perceive such a reemergence to be dangerous, particularly when the intellectual critique of westernization and Eurocentrism
corresponded to nationalism at the level of popular culture in 1996, with the publication of such books as *China Can Say No (Zhongguo keyi shuo bu)* and *The Background to the Demonization of China (Yaomohua Zhongguo de beihou)*. The books were compilations of articles by domestic freelance writers and western-educated intellectuals. Both groups claimed that despite strong U.S. influence on them in the 1980s, they had become disillusioned in the new decade. The books' vivid expressions of anti-American sentiments and their profound popularity were clearly elements beyond the immediate cooptation of the state. Moreover, they, particularly *China Can Say No*, carried a distinctly antigovernment tone with striking similarity to books written by young radicals in the early 1900s, which in the same tone called for and practically led to the downfall of the Qing Dynasty, and inspired the first generations of Chinese leftists.

The enormous popularity of such books was not an isolated incident. Rather, it was deeply related to Sino-U.S. clashes, a severely sanctioned domestic market from 1989 to 1992, a troubled national economy, an increasing social tendency to correlate economic development with political unity, military strength and social stability, and an intellectual shift in focus from abstract narratives of modernity without considering the concrete conditions of Chinese society to analyses of the actual changes that were taking place. The Asian financial crisis (which was itself ill defined) of 1997 only intensified the conditions for further and more systematic intellectual criticisms of neoliberalism.

However systematic this criticism was, and irrespective of the increasing popular skepticism regarding the general direction Chinese society was taking, open critiques of neoliberalism remained largely intellectual as the new millennium was about to unfold. China’s phenomenal pace of commercialization, urbanization and privatization since
1992 was well beyond the grasp of any immediate intellectual disapproval. But at the end of the 20th Century, Chinese society again responded to academic leftist critiques by a nationalist upheaval astonishingly more radical than in 1996. The attention of ordinary Chinese—especially a younger generation of students—was galvanized by the unexpected U.S.-led NATO bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade on May 8, 1999, which resulted in the deaths of three journalists. Until then, the bombings had already aroused a deep level of uneasiness among the older Chinese, many of whom associated Yugoslavia with the legacy of socialism, and the mid-aged generation that grew up with the Deng reform, a period which opened with vast unleashing of preselected cultural products of which Yugoslavian movies occupied a significant role.

Then Chinese Primer Zhu Rongji’s widely criticized April visit to the United States, in which his explicit remark that “my job is to come here to the United States and explain China to the people of the United States in order to let them get whatever they have against China off their chest” in the context of the U.S. bombing, culminated that psychological effect and earned Zhu the nickname of “Mollifying Primer” (xiaoji zongli). The bombing of the Chinese embassy was considered by young students of the day as an open gesture of challenge to Chinese modernization, against which they had no immediate outlet of expression. Popular anger was thus manifested in unprecedented nationwide demonstrations and limited violence toward the U.S. Embassy in Beijing and Consulates elsewhere.

Crucial in this episode was the complete isolation of the Right, a phenomenon that has since become typical of similar events. Their pro-western, all-U.S. stance had not only become undesirable, but unconvincing for students. The liberal critique of the
nationalist outburst as replicating the 1900 Boxer "riot"\textsuperscript{160} (\textit{baoluan}) and blaming the "New Left" for encouraging "primitive nationalism" only added to popular indignation (\textit{nifan}) against themselves and corresponding public recognition of the "New Left" as a voice worth listening to in this scenario. In Li Minqi's words:

The anti-imperialist demonstrations in the big Chinese cities mark a sea-change in outlook. A new generation of students and intellectuals has begun to understand the limits of "freedom of press" in the West – as they see the way Western media have served as propaganda outlets for the war, suppressing alternative voices – and has started to question the nature of the political system in whose name it is being fought. For the first time in many years, socialist terms and ideas can be heard again...Meanwhile, liberal intellectuals used to glorifying everything from the West are in serious disarray. Those who have chosen to echo the mainstream media in the West have shown their complete indifference to the feelings and wishes of ordinary people in China. Their influence on the newest generation of students has consequently been greatly undermined, if not altogether discredited.\textsuperscript{161}

Thus by the beginning of the new millennium, China's cultural atmosphere shifted. The reform that began with the Right tripped over to the Left. With virtually none left of the Party Left within the leading institutions, dominant neoliberal representations in the mass media and their ubiquitous accusations of any dissenting voice as "leftist" had given the identity a new meaning, as China's liberalization of the economy progressed into the political realm, legitimizing piece by piece the very injustices of market authoritarianism by legislative means. Key differences in economic stance and political claims aside, clear similarities between a well-educated yet at best underrepresented group of critical intellectuals identified as the "New Left," the Party's "Old Left" (read the leftover oldsters) that seemed to be more progressive than ever in claiming historical continuity by associating with popular demands for social security in the face of the enormous increase in "off-post" (\textit{xiagang}) workers, and a disorganized crowd of the so-called
“grassroots economists” (caogen jingjixuejia) who began to reconsider the reform, who were accused of the same “leftist” sin, had come to join with a fully recharged popular underground leftist in Chinese society against their common adversary. The cheerful “young friends” of 1980 met again twenty years later, only to find themselves drastically polarized in a deeply contentious motherland brought to life in their own hands. Pat Howard’s worries that “overcoming utopianism will mean reversion to a pragmatism more or less devoid of social ideals,” that rejecting the moralizing of the CR “will involve a rejection of ethics altogether,” and that rejecting “large-scale class struggle will involve elimination of struggle over questions of equity and justice” had all been acutely materialized. While most western analysts saw her future in the same elitist struggle between the Party conservatives and reformers, China was quietly entering a stage of revisiting market reform, under not only the impetus of the new leadership, but of leftists at both elite and popular levels, whose influences had become incontrovertible.

Notes

1 This is what Benedetto Croce has been widely quoted as writing. What he in fact wrote was: “The practical requirements which underlie every historical judgment give to all history the character of ‘contemporary history’ because, however remote in time events there recounted may seem to be, the history in reality refers to present needs and present situations wherein those events vibrate.” Benedetto Croce. History as the Story of Liberty, trans. Sylvia Sprigge. London: George Allen and Unwin, 1941: 19.


4 Many neoliberal scholars in China and overseas have argued to the contrary. However, this reflects the Chinese state’s incorporation of the intellectual establishment, which has been much more successfully implemented in the rightist camp of marketization advocates than among the silenced leftist intellectuals.

5 Among many, such a categorization was offered by James Ethridge. See James M. Ethridge. China’s Unfinished Revolution: Problems and Prospects since Mao. San Francisco: China Books &
For “social security” I am referring to the most basic human material needs in food, housing, education, medical treatment and so on.


I disagree with Wang Hui’s claim that the basic difference between Right and Left in today’s China is related to their respective understandings of democracy. Seventeen years after 1989, its essential difference has become much broader. Wang Hui (2003a): 113.

Some who are identified as “leftists” do not agree with such a classification. But the fact that they are so identified and that they are unable to categorically avert it brings to light the extent of China’s authoritarian market extremism. However unsatisfied these people are with their labels, one may recall Marx’s observation that human beings never make history on the conditions of their own choosing. This is discussed at length by Paul Pickowicz. (1981): 81-98; 111; 153. Marxist Literary Thought in China: the Influence of Ch’ü Ch’iu-pai. Berkley; Los Angeles; London: University of California Press.

Again, history is never made in ways people plan or expect. The leftist coalition, like its revolutionary legacy, is a practical necessity, not a choice made by its members.


Zhao (2003a): 37.


Mao (1957).


More metaphorical than scientific, this chart is by all means a mere subjective estimation of the scale of leftist influence in contemporary Chinese history, and is sketched as a rough outline to assist the reader.


30 Ye was then Minister of National Defense. The coup d’état was important because, even to the most brainless observer, it proved that “Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun.” (Qiangganzi limian chu zhengquan)


34 Shuiluzhou (March 7, 2004).


36 Ibid.


38 Unlike hitherto campaigns since Mao, all of which were imposed top-down, the short-lived movement was a grassroots act. Indeed, many of its participants were rightists rather than leftists, and some—Wei Jingsheng for example—have been vigorously championed by western liberal media as “freedom fighters” against the Party state. Yet that rightist challenge to the rightward Party leadership was itself a manifestation of deepened contradictions among different rightwing interest groups during China’s first years of “rightist restoration.”


40 Ibid.


42 “Normalization” in this context refers to both “modernization” and “professionalization” in the rightwing rhetoric of stability and order.

43 Meisner (1999): 432-435; Meisner (1996): 97-103; Shuiluzhou. (March 26, 2004). “The Third Plenum of the 11th Central Committee.” (Shiyijie sanzhong quanhui) In The Road of the Late Years of

45 Marx (1851-52): 399.


50 China and Vietnam signed a military agreement in 1964, according to which China was to send an army 300,000 strong to Northern Vietnam to fight with the Vietcong. Ilya V. Gaiduk. (1996): 16. The Soviet Union and the Vietnam War. Chicago: Ivan R. Dee.


52 Zaixiuxianshangtanzou (2005).

53 This is a result of the CR’s failure, not necessarily of its deviance. As Arif Dirlik stresses, “a revolution that fails is likely to leave behind only memories of the naked oppressions and cruelties that revolutions inevitably unleash.” In this case, then, “What stands out in historical memory is the wasteful and arbitrary cruelty it visited on millions of people.” Arif Dirlik. (2003): 158. “The Politics of the Cultural Revolution in Historical Perspective.” In The Chinese Cultural Revolution Reconsidered: Beyond Purge and Holocaust, edited by Kam-yee Law. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

54 The CR’s “four great freedoms” was proposed in direct response to Liu Shaoqi’s rightwing version of “four great freedoms” in the early 1950s, which had been widely implemented until Liu’s downfall. Liu’s “four great freedoms” were to right to employ, lend and borrow, lease and rent, and trade (guoyong ziyou, jiedai ziyou, zulin ziyou, maoyi ziyou).


56 Ibid., 447.

57 Mobo Gao notes that “When a memoir is written at a time when the prevalent framework of discourse is different from that of the time when the memoir is written about, events and even feelings can be restructured without the writer’s knowledge. It is true that personal suffering and violent brutality did occur during the Cultural Revolution. But explanations of why they occurred and how people felt about them can be restructured.” Mobo C.F. Gao. “Review Essay: Memoirs and Interpretation of the Cultural Revolution,” Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars, 27.1 (1995): 51.

58 Ibid.


60 This is not least because Mao was suspected to have said that the entire gongjianfa system ought to be “smashed” (zalan gongjianfa). Ibid.
As per Ministry of Public Security's December 1964 notice. The notice was withdrawn in 1985. Ibid.


Comparatively, according to a leftist account, when a group of people were chatting on China’s judicial darkness on his business trip to the Northeast a few years ago, an old worker stood up and said “it is now no law with law, if you have money you have law. In Chairman Mao's time in the past it was law with no law, if you had reason you had law.” (Xianzai shi you fa wu fa, you qian bian shi fa. Guoqu Mao Zhuxi nage shidai shi wu fa you fa, you li bian shi fa) Yiming. (n.d.). “Another Voice (I)” (Ling yiizhong shengyin: (yi)), edited by Wozhenbuzhidao. (September 1, 2003). Protagonist Forum. Retrieved March 12, 2006, from https:/host378.ipowerweb.com/~gongnong/bbs/read.php?f=3&i=37515&ct=37518.


One of the two models of self-reliance in the CR; the other was Daqing oil field.

Dirlik (2003): 169-170. Observers such as Pat Howard disagree with a characterization of the household responsibility system at this stage of the post-Mao Chinese reform as “privatization.” However, it must be noted that since “in Chinese political economy, collectives are defined as one form of ‘public ownership’ (gongyouzhi),” it is only natural to relate to their dismantling in the first years of the Deng era reform to a shift in the ownership system and “the privatization of agriculture.” See Pat Howard. (1988): 45-76; 134-137; 166-173. Breaking The Iron Rice Bowl: Prospects for Socialism in China's Countryside. Armonk, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe.


Ibid.


Ibid.


80 To suggest that there was a definite, unbridgeable break between the Mao before 1957 or 1966 and
the one after is comparable to and equally problematic as suggesting that there was a definite, unbridgeable break between the younger and the later Karl Marx, a prominent tendency among western academia. Yet unlike Marx, confusions in the Mao case were largely created by the post-Mao leadership out of necessity.

82 Laoshi (2005).
83 Ibid. PLA local forces were transformed into Armed Police Forces as per Document 30.
87 Song (2006).
89 An example of this was the 1981 floods in Sichuan, a forefront trumpeter of the post-Mao reform. When floods struck the province, the new context of countryside development “made Chinese peasants reluctant to reallocate a substantial amount of resources to cope with the floods.” As a result, the “flood impact on grain production” was aggravated. Y.Y. Kueh. (1995): 161. Agricultural Instability in China, 1931-1991. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
91 Shuiluzhou. (April 21, 2004).
94 Laoshi (2005).
95 That is, to further Chinese development, itself a nationalistic project, through class struggle and dictatorship over the bourgeoisie.
96 Their point is to compare the voluntary Mao cult to the forced feudal worship of emperors in Chinese history, two rather unparallel historical issues. Personal cults of Napoleon and Stalin under emerging modern societies are never discussed in comparison.
99 Ibid. The English translation is Wang’s own. It is his belief that “reverse racism” is on the other end to German nationalism under Hitler. In the cited article, Wang also makes the case that contemporary Chinese nationalism has developed with the Internet, rather than facilitated and mobilized by the state.
101 Pickowicz was referring to film director Zhang Yimou and Chen Kaige’s blockbusters such as Juedou, Raise the Red Lantern, A Lifetime, and Farewell My Concubine. Funded by overseas sources, such films, which had gained considerable international recognition and contained virtually no element of “dissident politics,” provoked serious debates with regard to their “Chineseness,” for they were after all made for an international audience who was interested in a China not necessarily recognizable to urban Chinese audiences themselves. Hence, these films had to rely on the

102 Hundred Flowers Awards (1962-) was then the highest award for domestic production in the film industry.

103 Golden Rooster Awards (1981-) was then an emerging award for Chinese films and is as prestigious as Hundred Flowers Awards.


105 Quite ironically, the song became a student-favorite during summer 1989. An English version of its lyric is accessible at http://msittig.freeshell.org/docs/tiananmen_song.html.

106 These would include “The Place Where Peach Blossoms” (zai na taohua shengkai de difang), “Fields of Hope” (zai xiwang de tianye shang), “The Yang-tze Spirit” (Chang'iang zhi ge), “Ocean, Oh Hometown” (dahai a guxiang), among others.

107 This stream is much less popular than the first, particularly in the post-Mao context of “depoliticization.” Examples include “Jinsuo and Yinsuo” (jinsuo yu yinsuo) and “Young Friends Come and Join Us” (niangqing de pengyou lai xianghui). Still another stream—albeit much less durable than these two—was composed of songs such as “Toast Song” (zhujiu ge), which depicted both the enormous joy in “crushing the Gang of Four” and ultra-confidence in realizing sihua.

108 This is my own translation. The original Chinese lyrics can be accessed at http://www.yzmet.gov.cn/hjy/upfile/ltmp3/NlO.htm.

109 Mao and the “Old Left”—otherwise termed the “Mao Left”—have long been accused by rightwing propagandists of promoting absolute equalitarianism, the very concept that Mao had repeatedly opposed and considered part of a “Left deviation.” In his own words: “We support the peasant’s demand for equal distribution of land in order to help arouse the broad masses of peasants speedily to abolish the system of land ownership by the feudal landlord class, but we do not advocate absolute equalitarianism. Whoever advocates absolute equalitarianism is wrong...Such thinking is reactionary, backward, and retrogressive in nature. We must criticize it.” Qtd. In William Hinton. (1966): 486-87. Fanshen: A Documentary of Revolution in a Chinese Village. New York: Vintage Books. It was through means such as the abolishment of the military rank system, the anti-Rightist campaign, the Rustication movement and the CR that Mao attempted to gradually diminish—rather than immediately eliminate—the “three major gaps” (san da chabie) between urban and rural, between workers and peasants, and between mental and manual labor, which he saw as a “constant feature of socialist society.” Kraus (1981):165.


112 The red star on the police hat was replaced around the same time with the national emblem. For some untamed sections of the PLA, however, the red star on the hat remained until 1987. Beginning with the 1979 war and especially during this transitional period, the soft Mao hat was replaced by steel helmets, a transition also symbolic of the shift from egalitarianism to “standardization.”


116 Ibid.
Ibid.
Ibid., 472-473.
Ibid., 475-478.
Ibid., 478.
Ibid., 487.
The first and second were the jiepicha movement of 1976-78 and Party rectification movement against the “sanzhong ren” of 1983-86.
Ibid.
Ibid., 488-489.
Ibid., 492.
Ibid., 58.
Ibid.
Ibid.
Ibid., 60.
Ibid., 192.
Ibid.
Ibid.
Zhao (2004a): 47
He Xin (1949-, personal website at http://www.hexinnet.com) is a remarkably influential and controversial figure in Chinese intelligentsia. A college dropout at the beginning of the post-Mao reforms, He began to work in the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) in 1980, and his essays quickly gained widespread attention. Author of more than 30 books, He is now a senior fellow of the CASS.
Zhu Dongli (1962-) is deputy chief of China Art Research Institute’s Marxism Literature and Art Theory Research Center (Zhongguo yishu yanjiuyuan Makesi zhu yi wenyi yanjusuo) and deputy editor-in-chief of Theory and Criticism of Literature and Art (wenyi lilun yu piping). A collection of his essays can be retrieved online from Left Bank (zuo’an) at http://www.eduwuw.com/ljc/

150 Fewsmith (2001): 123.
152 Ibid., 4.
155 Ibid., 156.
156 These include works such as Zou Rong’s The Revolutionary Army (Geming jun) and Chen Tianhua’s Take the Return Journey Immediately (Meng huitou), both published in Shanghai 1903.
159 Their presumption was that the Boxer rebellion was both irrational and violent.
The historical continuum of Chinese leftism suggests that the leftist resurgence is neither a sign of optimism nor a pure coincidence. It is the profound social inequalities marketization and rightwing authoritarianism inevitably unleashed in the post-Mao reforms that resulted in the equally inevitable revival of leftism, which historically liberated China from imperialism, colonialism and rightwing authoritarianism. Inadequate, if any, elitist attempts to establish organic ties with the countryside and to some extent the emerging urban middle-class in China’s market restructuring process posed serious threats to sustainable development and the legitimacy of the CPC leadership. Beginning in 2003 with the SARS epidemic that seemingly revealed the Hu-Wen administration as pro-people, and certainly by 2005, the realm of “ideological convergence between global capitalism and ‘socialism with Chinese characteristics’” sternly enforced in 1992 collapsed decisively. Even the very term “reform” had become associated with a myriad of negative connotations that were for so long unleashed on and reserved for the leftists.

Table 1 Left or Right?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Western</th>
<th>Chinese 1980-2003</th>
<th>Chinese 2003-</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Left</td>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>&quot;Conservative&quot;</td>
<td>Neo-&quot;reformist&quot;/ Post-&quot;reformist&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Right</td>
<td>Conservative</td>
<td>&quot;Liberal&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;Reformist&quot;/conservative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To demonize critiques of the "reform period" as "oh, that's just leftist" became increasingly difficult because the conditions for such smears had shifted. Implications of Left and Right shifted accordingly. The Chinese Rightists that had defined themselves as "liberals" and whoever counters their reform initiatives as "leftist" and "conservative" were increasingly reluctant to even address the most fundamental concerns of the masses and the possible setbacks of the Deng and Jiang reforms, which pushed them ironically to the conservative position according to their own definition. In many instances since 2003, their sole response to leftist critiques has been silence. It is a silence different from the passive silencing of the Left in the neoliberal reforms—after all, it is the rightists that are holding enormous power in the current bureaucracy. Rightist silence is an ultimate expression of their collective anxiety, if not embarrassment in face of the public's call for social security. I thus refer to the current Chinese rightists as conservatives—finally true to their name in the western context—and "reformist" for their blind insistence on the essentialism and fundamentalism of the "reform" rhetoric to justify their economic and superstructural dictatorship over all dissent.

The leftists, on the other hand, have been to a reasonable extent dominating the public scene as neo-"reformists" and post-"reformists" over the past three years. This shift in the political landscape is noteworthy: while China is becoming at all levels saturated with rightist hegemony, fashionable neoliberal discourse no longer (if it ever did) offers a convenient escape from responsibility for the harsh social costs of the post-Mao reform. Hence, scattered leftist critiques all converge in calling for revisiting "reform," if not bringing it to an immediate halt. On the surface, this demand has achieved significant success. Year 2005 was envisioned by Premier Wen Jiabao and
mainstream economists as the "critical reform year" (gaige gongjian nian),\(^3\) when in fact became the year the public began to be critical of "the reform."\(^4\) Leftist pressures from within the Party, intelligentsia, peasantry, and nationwide labor unrests compelled the Party to conceptualize a "socialist harmonious society" (shehuzhuyi hexie shehui) as the primary goal of Chinese development, *in conjunction with* (not in place of) the earlier version of "building a well-off society in an all-round way" (quannian jianshe xiaokang shehui),\(^5\) itself a 2002 modification of the still-earlier slogan of "building a well-off society."\(^6\) The government's 2006 emphasis was also reworked to "constructing the socialist new countryside" (jianshe shehuizhuyi xin nongcun).\(^7\) Even the long-abandoned Maoist "rural cooperative health care system" (nongcun hezuo yiliao)\(^8\) has been embraced as a state initiative to be fully implemented by 2008. But these shifts merely reflect the enormous challenges that the rightwing leadership is facing in furthering neoliberal reforms and the extent of compromise it has to make, rather than full-scale leftist successes in shifting the Party's agenda-setting and policymaking processes. Moderate achievement is much more accurate in describing the outcomes of the leftist revival and government "left turn" (zuo zhuan) of 2005. Suggesting that Beijing has "turned left" is itself misleading. Granted, the Party is caught between the competing leftist and neoliberal forces *as the historical initiator of both*. But as an instrument of the present ruling class, it naturally inclines to intervene on behalf of neoliberals against the leftists whom it actively disconnected and marginalized. Two recent events illustrate this in the furious ideological confrontation between the two camps.

1) The Property Rights Law Draft

Issued in July 2005, the Draft was to go through public consultation, after which it
would be enacted in March 2006. It was to pardon the “original sins” of the “new rich”
class of capitalists and legitimize their economic domination. It also displaced
“ownership by the whole people” (quanmin suoyouzhi) with “state-owned assets”
(guoyou zichan), without a definition of the latter by the State-owned Assets Law, the
draft of which has not been brought to discussion. Even though the Property Rights Law
Draft was presented to the public as a progressive attempt at clarifying “the legal
responsibility of those who cause losses of state assets through management buyouts
(MBO) in small and medium-sized state-owned enterprises at low prices,”9 its release
still prompted enormous contestations. But it was not until nomology processor Gong
Xiantian published an open letter online on August 12 critiquing the Draft as departing
from the Constitution and civil laws that public disputes began to receive meaningful
attention. The intensity of the debates that followed compelled the delay of the Draft’s
enactment. The rightist response was, like all others since 2003, sluggish but collective. It
came right before the National People’s Congress (NPC) sessions of March 2006, when
nearly all of China’s civil law elites gathered for a remarkably brazen response to, and
critique of Gong’s open letter.10 The marginalized Gong, on the other hand, was at this
time struggling for only an accurate depiction in the media, which openly favored the
neoliberal right by presenting him as an isolated radical.11

2) Freezing Point versus China Workers Net

In January 2006, Freezing Point (bingdian), a weekly magazine, was forced to end
publication.12 This was due to its publication of an article by professor Yuan Weishi,13
who condemned Chinese history texts and related it to China’s backwardness.14 Yuan
interpreted the Boxer Rebellion of 1900 against foreign invaders as “against civilization
and humanity” (fan wenming, fan renlei), and it is the boxers’ “evil deeds” (zui’e xingjing) that “brought greatest tragedy to the country and the people” (gei guojia he Renmin dailai moda de zainan). He further claimed:

For example, law is the crystallization of human civilization and the rule behind which society functions. International regulations are legally effective. People can condemn that such rules and regulations are formulated under global powers, and that they are not favorable to weak countries and the poor masses. People should continue to critique and reveal their falsehood and, by struggles through various forces, formulate new rules and draft new regulations. Nevertheless, we are left with no choice but to conform to them before they are revised. Otherwise, unnecessary chaos may result, which to the very end is unfavorable to weak countries and majority of the masses.

A leftist counterpoint was absent in the weekly, but not elsewhere. While government censorship was countered by massive rightist critiques, it was strongly backed by the nationalist Internet population. A month later, two prominent leftist websites, China Workers Net and Communists Net, and the latter’s bulletin board, Worker-Peasant-Soldier BBS, were shut down. All three websites passed ICP Record and Registration (bei’an) by the Ministry of Information Industry, and were censored on the grounds that they were “political commentary” (zhenglun) websites, the registration of which must be accompanied by a capital of no less than 10 million RMB, equivalent of roughly 1.2 million U.S. dollars. The sites’ voluntary operators complied with the decision with the words: “we are a bunch of volunteers serving the workers and peasants, and also a bunch of paupers without 10 million. Therefore, [we] can only accept the finale of the website being declared illegal.”

Both scenarios witness not only the powerful comeback of Chinese leftism, but the much stronger dominance of neoliberalism. The absence of leftist voices in the
mainstream media that depict a debate between Left and Right, where only views of the latter are present, is especially remarkable. As Zhao observes, "the primary objective of Deng’s closure of ideological debates on the political nature of the economic reforms was not simply to block liberal democratic ideas from abroad but to shut down indigenous leftist voices in the media." This is echoed by a China Workers Net editor’s speculation regarding the extent to which the self-described “liberal” Chinese media, whose linkage to the Party is by and large deliberately concealed, truly care for the socially vulnerable. In asserting the level at which liberal, “alternative” newspapers spontaneously contain freedom of speech for the disenfranchised, the editor recalls an instance where he was involved in a factory’s struggles, which was later reported by Nanfang Weekend (Nanfang zhoumo), a well-known outspoken newspaper:

Those who didn’t know thought the paper was speaking on behalf of the workers, but essentially, it was completely rejecting the workers’ actual claim, which is to self-manage their own factories. What kind of image was [the newspaper] portraying to the reader in an “objective” manner? [An image] that workers are engaged in internal conflicts, disinterested in solidarity, incapable of managing collective enterprises, and that enterprises should be left for the capitalist to be of any value.

The stage is set

The leftist narrative is no more than a loose conglomerate composed of two distinctive types of narratives from two rather unique camps: elite and popular leftism. This distinction is notable not only in the contemporary context, but in historical terms, as elucidated by Figure 1. Despite sharp differences in their participants, class stance, claims, goals as well as discursive ethos, this Party/intellectual/popular formation is often understood, particularly among the intelligentsia, in an ultra-reductionist manner.
emphasizing the role of intellectual elites, while dismissing the struggle between Party 
leftists and rightists in pure partisan terms (thus presenting it as irrelevant in the whole 
picture), and popular leftism as a mere expression of rightwing Chinese nationalism, 
where the historical contexts of China as a semi-colony and imperialist battleground, 
from which leftist movements and revolutions originated, developed and succeeded, were 
selectively forgotten. I believe the dynamics of the triad must be decoded historically. 
The influence of Party and intellectual leftism, the mixture of which I term “elite leftism” 
in China, has been radically overlooked in relation to popular leftism, whose participants 
include the however unconsciously Left majority of the peasants and workers who have 
been left out in the post-Mao reforms, and whose concerns of security and equality 
amidst the violence and inequalities of market authoritarianism have only recently gained 
attention. This is not to blame the defeat on elite leftists; rather, active elite leftist 
participation in their own defeat must be understood in historical terms. Timothy Cheek’s 
documentation of intellectual-propagandist Deng Tuo and his generation of leftist 
establishment intellectuals as both servant—high-level cadre (gaoji ganbu) and savant— 
high-level intellectual (gaoji zhishijenzi) of the competing lines of faith and bureaucratic 
Maoism, as well as their demise in the CR, is still of compelling relevance here,29 in a 
post-revolutionary state which has turned the revolutionary logic for “the public” (gong) 
against itself with the Party becoming “the public,” and its directed propaganda system 
“the public sphere”30 through capitalizing support of the disenfranchised.

Popular leftists, on the other hand, have always been present. A recent description of 
the Chinese Left’s emerging reformation at intellectual and popular levels is offered by 
Yuezhi Zhao:
On the one hand, “new left” intellectuals well tuned to the neo-Marxist and post-colonial literature have developed critical analyses of global capitalism and China’s role in it. On the other hand, perhaps as the ultimate “dialectic” of the Chinese Revolution, the lived experience of global capitalism and American imperialism has led some Chinese intellectuals, workers, and farmers to reclaim as their own the anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist themes of the Communist Party.31

For this thesis, the focus will be limited to those popular leftists who are Internet participants who actively intervene in the intensification of polemical exchanges online who are prone to the same Leftist ideals that the lower classes are leaning toward, and responding to the same concrete social concerns to which the ordinary citizen is not immune.32 This differs phenomenally from the persistent “New Left” focus on the abstract construct of “democracy.” Popular leftists are leftist by the nature of their reemergence in direct opposition to China’s increasingly powerful and violent rightwing dictatorship, and for their struggles against the inequalities created by Chinese capitalism, which, like its colonialist-imperialist ancestors, were results of the system’s introduction from outside forces. Popular leftists are thus naturally nationalist, a discourse from which Chinese socialism cannot be separated. The popular nationalism that historically enhanced the influence of socialism is precisely “ultra-leftism” to the contemporary Chinese neoliberal; it bears no “rightist” meaning, but is rather the same “leftism” neoliberals fear because of its link with the socialism that brought about national liberation and their temporary demise. For Dirlik, socialism has offered the most plausible way to fend off the possibility of national dissolution into the capitalist world system.33 This open-endedness of popular leftism, its socialist-nationalist character and historical contribution to social movements and revolutions must be emphasized in
analyzing its image of “swimming against the tide” or simply being outside the consensus.

With this in mind, if we were to comprehend Chinese society with evidence from the media—Chinese and western, conventional and online—a massive grey area sandwiched between elite and popular leftism can be observed. The following table, the content of which shall be discussed in subsequent sections, depicts this complex picture, and some of the key contemporary Chinese leftists.

Table 2 At the Surface: Today's Key Chinese Leftists

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elite leftists</th>
<th>In-between</th>
<th>Popular leftists</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Party</td>
<td>Intellectual</td>
<td>Han Yuhai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deng Liqun</td>
<td>Wang Hui</td>
<td>Han Degiang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ma Bin</td>
<td>Cui Zhiyuan</td>
<td>Wang Xiaodong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Han Xiya</td>
<td>Gan Yang</td>
<td>Zuo Dapel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yu Quanyu</td>
<td>Yang Fan</td>
<td>Kuang Xinnian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Han Deqiang</td>
<td></td>
<td>Shuxue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zhang Guanglian</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yundanshuinuan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Li Xianyu</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yuchunxiaozhu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lao Tian</td>
<td></td>
<td>Yan Yuanzhang</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

"New Left" intellectuals are herein positioned with the "Old Left" cadres under the same category of "elites" in the larger leftist camp. This does not suggest that they share positional, ideological or generational similarities, but instead reflects their relative dominance within a much broader leftism, and among the reconfigured Chinese society. Although it is often argued that "Chinese intellectuals have never enjoyed a dominant position in the ruling class," and that among themselves, rightist intellectuals, with significant socioeconomic capital in the transformed Party state, "...represent the interest of newly rising class, while the new left represents the interest of workers and farmers," it would be misleading to fully associate the "New Leftists" with the socially vulnerable groups they claim to speak for. Neither do they want to be so associated. On the one
hand, it is instructive to note Pierre Bourdieu’s observation that “...intellectuals are holders of cultural capital, and even if they are the dominated among the dominant, they still belong among the dominant.” On the other hand, the influential Chinese tradition of the “scholar-official” (shi dafu) control “over ideological interpretation, administrative management and social coordination” has to be taken seriously. Contestations with the rightist ruling bloc notwithstanding, members of the “New Left” are indeed mostly employed by state organs or leading public institutions as professors and/or researchers, and are considered “state cadres” (guojia ganbu) in one way or another. The term “elite” here in describing the “New Leftists” does not purely indicate a powerful presence within the establishment; that is, the “New Leftists” do not hold key posts or monopolize resources as do the “establishment intellectuals” (many of whom are outward rightists), and they do not operate within the Party as the remaining Party Leftists, who have been increasingly vocal against the direction of the reform outside the mainstream Chinese media, but within the Party leadership since 2001.

The vast in-between area in Table 2 does not compose a third category, for all those in-between originate from and can be reasonably relocated to either of the two sub-camps. In particular, figures such as Han Yuhai, Han Deqiang, Zuo Dapei and Kuang Xinnian share profound similarities and are constantly associated with the “New Left.” Nevertheless, whereas the “New Leftists,” whose overseas experiences and postmodernist approach allowed them an active role in academia’s reemerged ideological discussions during the late 1990s, such intellectual leftists have only recently gained voice in the Chinese mainstream with their distinctively populist orientations and overtly socialist tendencies. Including the in-between area instead of articulating a separate
category should allow us to rethink and better recognize the ambiguity of not only Chinese leftism, but social categorization in general. While the structure of elite and popular leftism is as stable as the in-betweens, participants in the three sub-camps shift periodically. Some moves are willingly made by participants; others are forced. All manifest the variable nature and shifting tendencies of social thought.

Key participants of Chinese leftism can thus be examined according to this table. Indeed, it is a picture of only those whose voices have been presented by, and whose debates have taken place in the media. If it can be speculated that dominant media portrayals of Chinese society as being formed of state elites, the urban middle-class, and the rural population are reductionist, then our categorization is no exception. After all, most Chinese polls are “conducted among the population in major urban centers,” and “do not even bother to include rural residents, still the majority of the Chinese population” misinterpreted as “socially vulnerable.” Are we not risking the same by drawing data from existing accounts? Does Table 3 better depict China’s urban/rural dichotomy than our unavoidably fractured presentation in the one above?

Table 3 A Real Picture?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elite leftism</th>
<th>Popular leftism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elite # 1</td>
<td>identifiable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elite # 2</td>
<td>faceless</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elite # 3</td>
<td>genderless</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elite # 4</td>
<td>nameless</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elite # 5</td>
<td>voiceless</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...</td>
<td>...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Perhaps—to be sure, the acknowledgement of this study’s structural limitations is necessary. With the information currently available, we can begin nowhere other than with Table 2, which offers a point of departure otherwise missing.

From elite leftism to popular leftism

Media portrayals of labor in comparison to capital in the West are very much related to how the Left is portrayed in China in contrast to the Right. Thus, unlike their truly elitist counterparts, elite leftists in China today are elitist in a moderately restrictive way. Elite leftism is herein defined in terms of 1) class—the bourgeois interests most elite leftists share; 2) power—their relative socioeconomic privilege and authority over general public opinion, and 3) influence—their higher frequency of media exposure compared to ordinary citizens. It consists of two practically inseparable but essentially disconnected components: Party elite leftism and intellectual elite leftism. Indeed, the two were historically intermingled rather than separate, the latter serving as “part of the broader revolutionary elite” that led the Party to victory. But their integration admittedly collapsed when the Party denounced leftist ideologies in favor of those of the “capitalist roaders” after the CR, since which leftist intellectuals became increasingly disassociated with, and marginalized from the rightwing establishment, irrespective of their subjective wish to continue to serve as socialist propagandists under the state-directed “public sphere,” a task willingly assumed by neoliberal intellectuals. In the transformative context of post-Mao development, then, Party elite leftists are, however officially suppressed, still located at the periphery of the Party state’s center of political influence. Intellectual elite leftists’ social influence is much broader, but they hold
considerably less authority than the former and are scattered on the outskirts of the former’s sphere of power.

While the gaps among both the Party and intellectual ideological rivalries are exploited by the rightwing mainstream media, those among the latter are most fruitfully presented to the public, although largely without an acknowledgement of what the Left actually claims. As a collective, the critiques of elite leftists against various aspects of the Deng reform are often presented in the media as individual (i.e., “dissenting,” which is easily associated with instability in the cohesion-oriented rightwing agenda) endeavors against a social consensus represented by establishment neoliberals.

**Reaching its opposite: Party elite leftism**

Today’s Party leftists in China are neither the upfront leftists of the communist revolution, the CR, the “Two Whatevers Faction,” nor the “Old Left.” A genuine Party leftist analysis of the dangers of “reinstallation of the Bourgeois Right”—an existing reality—was offered by Yao Wenyuan in 1975:

...the inevitable result will be polarization, i.e., a small number of people will in the course of distribution acquire increasing amounts of commodities and money through certain legal channels and numerous illegal ones; capitalist ideas of amassing fortunes and craving for personal fame and gain, stimulated by such ‘material incentives’, will spread unchecked; public property will be turned into private property and speculation, graft and corruption, theft and bribery will rise; the capitalist principle of the exchange of commodities will make its way into political life and even into party life, undermine the socialist planned economy and give rise to such acts of capitalist exploitation as the conversion of commodities and money into capital and labor power into a commodity; there will be a change in the nature of the system of ownership in certain department and units which follow the revisionist line; and instances of the oppression and exploitation of the laboring people will once again occur...As a result, a small number of new bourgeois elements and upstarts who have totally betrayed the proletariat and the laboring people will emerge among party members, workers, well-to-do peasants and personnel in state organs....‘if bourgeois right is not restricted, it will hold
back the development of socialism and aid the growth of capitalism’...When the economic strength of the bourgeoisie grows to a certain extent, its agents will demand political rule, the overthrow of the dictatorship of the proletariat and of the socialist system and a complete change of socialist ownership, and openly restore and develop the capitalist system...The new bourgeois elements who arise as a result of erosion by bourgeois ideas and the existence of bourgeois right generally share the political features of double-dealers and upstarts. In order to carry out capitalist activities under the dictatorship of the proletariat, they always put up a certain socialist signboard; since their restorationist activities aim not at snatching back any means of production of which they have been dispossessed but at seizing the means of production they have never possessed, they are especially greedy, anxious to swallow at one gulp the wealth belonging to the whole people or to the collective and place it under their private ownership.46

It is Party leftist accounts like these that were immediately and most brutally suppressed with the restoration of the Party’s bourgeois Right for accurately reporting its process. That stream of Party leftism was the first to be exterminated in 1976.47 All remaining Party leftists proved far more tolerable—and increasingly so after each round of oppression and marginalization. The history of Party elite leftism in China since Mao thus reveals the ideological contradiction between its self-image as defenders of genuine socialism and “an image of it that denies validity” to this (i.e., the discourse of capitalism), but is ironically fundamental to the very assurance of their political status confronting the waves of anti-leftism in the late 1970s.48 For example, consider the role CR leftists played in the arrest of “Gang of Four;” how they were purged by the much less leftist Deng Liquns,49 who were then considered “rightists” for being pro-reform; how the same Deng Liquns that passionately drafted the 1981 Resolutions, a mandate of the post-Mao reforms, were in turn type-cast and critiqued as conservative leftists, lost power in the mid-1980s and have been viciously marginalized since 1992; and how the retired and powerless Deng Liqun, still a loyal supporter of Deng Xiaoping’s many reform initiatives, is now perceived by neoliberals as the Left’s patriarch (zuo wang).
very genuineness of socialism that today’s Party elite leftists sought to protect from radical CR leftists failed in actuality to collapse with their immense contribution to the articulation of market authoritarianism “to the demands of a capitalist world order.”

Because many of its participants are retired CPC cadres born well before 1949, elite leftists’ established prestige within and contribution to the Party (as well as to the Deng reform) more or less undermines attempts to erase them completely from the Party establishment. But the essential strategy is to wait for them to “die out;” with the “sanzhong ren” thoroughly cleansed from middle-rank cadres for two decades, one has to pay comparative attention to the absence of younger generations of Party leftists, who are even less “leftist” than the so-called “Old Left,” within the Party core.

While voices against “the reform” were no longer heard within the power structure, intellectual leftists caught up. Party leftists were forced into silence until 2001, when Jiang Zemin’s call for admission of capitalists to the CPC met firm and systematic opposition. The opposition was expected given the CPC’s revolutionary legacy. In late July, 16 members of the leftovers of “the Party Left” collaborated in an open letter to the Central Committee. The letter claimed that:

We, a group of old Communist Party members, are duty-bound to state clearly our position and submit our views to the Central Committee in exercise of our rights under the Basic Statute of the Party. We hereby solemnly declare that we firmly and without reservation oppose the proposition that private business owners be allowed to join the Party.

Such open criticisms were not tolerated. The letter, as with all other periodically submitted ten-thousand-word letters (wanyanshu) by the remaining “Old Left,” never achieved anything other than making an impotent declaration of “hey, we’re still around.”
Worse still, influential leftist journals such as *The Pursuit of Truth* (zhēnli de zhǔqiú) and *Midstream* (zhòngliú), both of which published articles questioning the Party’s admission of capitalists, were forced shutdown. To top it off, an initial attempt of Chinese leftist convergence online miserably failed. An online subsidiary of *Tianya*, *Tianya zōnghèng* (http://www.tianya.com.cn/cgi-bin/default.asp) had been until then a most popular leftwing forum of discussion. When Han Deqiang cross-posted a letter from “Old leftist” Deng Liqun on Jiang Zemin’s July 1 speech on the forum, sensitive debates soon followed. In the face of official pressure, forum moderators Li Tuo and Han Shaogong insisted on not deleting the post. Consequently, *Tianya zōnghèng* was ordered to shut down. Leftist laments seemed to be yet again repeating its historical fate of defeat. But this resulted from the objective social conditions of the year 2001, which allowed little space for nonconformist viewpoints amidst the soaring nationalist waves that the Party leadership cautiously exploited.

Of the 16 retired Party cadres, some have been especially active since the 2001 letter. Particularly remarkable are Ma Bin (1914-) and Han Xiya (1924-). Ma, an economist, was a former advisor of the State Council Center for Development Research and former General Manager of Anshan Iron and Steel Company (a.k.a. *Angang*); Han was a former Candidate Secretary of All-China Federation of Trade Unions (*quanguo zōng gōnghuì*). The duo wrote a lengthy letter a week prior to drafting the other and better-known open letter in critique of Jiang’s policies, and has since strived to bring the marginalized Party leftism back to life. This was exemplified in the following endeavors:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authors</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Article</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ma Bin</td>
<td>August 2002</td>
<td>Letter to Hu Jintao on healthcare conditions in the countryside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ma Bin</td>
<td>Summer 2003</td>
<td>&quot;On the Iraq War&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ma Bin</td>
<td>Fall 2003</td>
<td>&quot;Only Mao Zedong Thought can save China: misc. notes&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ma, Han, and etc.</td>
<td>December 2003</td>
<td>Internet petition for enacting legislation to proclaim December 26, Mac's birthday, a national holiday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ma Bin</td>
<td>September 2004</td>
<td>&quot;Against the implementation of MBO in China&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ma Bin</td>
<td>October 2004</td>
<td>Letter to Wen Jiabao on the sellout of Baogang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ma, Han, and etc.</td>
<td>October 2004</td>
<td>&quot;Open letter of 101 CPC members on consolidating socialist democracy and advice to enhance election methods&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Han Xiya et al</td>
<td>April 2005</td>
<td>&quot;Open letter of 73 CPC members on consolidating the ideological building of the Party&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ma Bin</td>
<td>May 2005</td>
<td>Discussion proposal of &quot;situations and tasks&quot; to Hu Jintao and standing members of the Politburo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Han Xiya</td>
<td>November 2005</td>
<td>&quot;The economic domain must be guided by Marxist political economy; the entire society must be guided by Marxist philosophy&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ma and Han</td>
<td>February 2006</td>
<td>On Zheng Bijian’s &quot;The Direction of the CPC in the 21st Century&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ma, Han, and etc.</td>
<td>March 2006</td>
<td>Open letter of 35 CPC members to the Two Meetings defending the prime status of public ownership and opposing privatization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ma and Han</td>
<td>March 2006</td>
<td>Suggestion letter to Hu Jintao for his April visit to the U.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ma Bin</td>
<td>April 2006</td>
<td>Letter to the Central Committee on the &quot;Xishan Conference&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Han Xiya</td>
<td>April 2006</td>
<td>A Comparative Analysis of the &quot;Xishan Conference&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Han Xiya</td>
<td>May 2006</td>
<td>&quot;A fantasticality in the opening up: sincerely recommend 'the Rise and Fall of a State-owned Enterprise'&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Han Xiya</td>
<td>June 2006</td>
<td>&quot;The working class nature is selflessness: commemorating the 85th anniversary of the founding of the CPC&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Their activeness informs us of a deeper regeneration of Party leftism, the conditions of which were not fully ripe until 2003. The intra-elite conflicts, “covert debates about the capitalist nature of the reforms and left opposition to the Party’s embrace of capitalism”75 were made explicit. Behind Ma and Han are the soaring frustrations of and ongoing resistance to rightist push to further neoliberal reforms, and a firm class of elite leftists, including not only the last of the “Old Left,” but the offspring of old-time Party elites themselves (for example, Lin Yanzhi76) claiming legitimate heritage of the revolutionary legacy in egalitarianism and self-reliance, which has been by and large swept away by the short-sighted neoliberal reforms. It is true that the explosive Party Left resurface in 2001’s debates around what the CPC was to become resulted in nothing
but further suppression. Nonetheless, Party suppressions in 2001 did not bring about the temporary regression of leftist criticism within the leadership as in previous years. The shifting social conditions and massive anxiety led to an ever-so strong and ideologically unified leftist alliance headed by not the intellectual leftists who are allowed some opening, but the very Party leftists who have been the focus of state repression.

A recollection of how the early CPC, the agenda of which was to organize the Chinese urban proletariat, was forced to turn its attention to the peasantry after its brutal suppression of 1927 in the desperate search of an alternative space for survival, comes to mind when history appeared to have repeated itself in 2003. In searching for the same alternative space for survival and site of struggle, the Party leftists who were labeled and condemned as being historically ignorant of participatory democracy, human rights, and freedom of speech by the rightists turned decisively against such allegations. In 2003, they turned to the online space that had been until then almost exclusively utilized by the Right. Precisely what happened in China 2003 and why they fit in all too well with leftist resurgence online shall be discussed in the next chapter. But the importance of this phenomenon needs to be stressed further. The revival of today's Chinese leftism online does not originate from or correlate with intellectual leftism, the influence of which has been fully overshadowed by popular leftism in the online sphere. Rather, leading figures of this liberation of ideas online are the same "Old Leftists" that had been demonized as conservatives. Granted, the scale of influence of leftist websites in 2003 was incomparable to neoliberal ones, but Party leftists' very turn to the web and the existence of their "base areas" online, coming at a time when popular online leftism was urgently seeking a mainstay (zhuxingu), serves a highly symbolic purpose, to which all online
leftists are invariably forced to return from time to time. Contradiction is thus significant at several levels: the legitimacy of the revolution and the Party leadership, long lost with Tian'anmen and the neoliberal reforms, is encountered by Left-oriented popular resistance which contributed to its rise to power but has since been constantly suppressed; this legitimacy is restored by the so-called Party leftists who have been repressed for the precise label of leftism, members of which have become "the unwelcomed other" under the normative structure of neoliberalism; such restoration collides with Party leftists' alliance with and leading role in popular leftist resistance online, which manifests reflexively their regaining currency and enduring prestige in offline struggles; the development of leftist websites and their growing influence across other major discussion forums and popular gateway websites are beyond both the incentives and the control of their initiators, for the conditions of leftist development and neoliberal hegemony are not up to them; that said, all existing leftist endeavors, regardless of their extent of departure from the ideals of "the Old Left," are nonetheless inescapable from associations with it.

What exactly did the Party leftists do to turn to the web? In summer 2003, editors of *The Pursuit of Truth*, seeing little hope in resuming publication, collaborated with a hundred retired cadres in launching a website named *Mao Zedong Flag* (*Mao Zedong qizhi*). The move was necessary because no alternative base of leftist voices was left within the Party. Taking Deng's call for using "precise and complete" Mao Zedong Thought and Hu Jintao's rhetoric of "always hold high the great banner of Mao Zedong Thought at any time under any instance" (*zai renhe shihou renhe qingkuang xia*) as its "instruction" (*zhuan xun*), the website rationalized itself as essentially supportive of the current regime. Although it was and still is regularly censored or hacked, the immediate
influence of *Flag* extended well beyond its mere objective of becoming an online substitute of the banned leftist journals. On the one hand, it was the lone site through which the marginalized Old Left’s anger could be vented (i.e., it was their *chuqitong*); on the other hand, it became the apparent source site of all hitherto existing leftist websites. By the time *Flag* was established, today’s most influential leftist websites and forums, including *China and the World* (since 1996), *Huayue Forum* (since 1999), *Mao Zedong Study* (since 2000), *Peasant-worker World* and *Protagonist Forum* (since 2002) had all been in operation. *Utopia*, too, was created around this time. This is not to mention the popular leftists within “enemy territories” (*dizhan qu*)—the existing neoliberal forums. Creators of *Flag* were distinguishable from those of other leftist websites in their quasi-official background and “Old Leftist” stance. In the authoritarian context of China where resistance has been historically unorganized, the creation of a centralized mouthpiece prompted a rapid alliance of leftist forums, whose participants saw hope in collectivizing the diversified (in actuality, weak and loose) field of resistance under the leftist banner.

This Party leftist-backed setting is a fundamental characteristic of Chinese leftism online. With popular leftism growing offline, and with intellectual leftism battling neoliberalism in the media, Party leftism, the future of which was as uncertain as the lives of their leaders, almost all of whom were in their early nineties, moved its site of struggle online. Their alliance soon inspired the average online Chinese leftist. Even the vast number of those in between popular and elite leftists, many of whom are frustrated and/or marginalized intellectuals, joined the alliance. Han Deqiang, Zuo Dapei and Zhang Guangtian, for example, were regular contributors to *Flag* in its early days.
Finding a way out: the intellectual Left, the in-betweens, and the popular Left

Because they had enjoyed relatively better treatment than the Party Left since 1992, the resistance of intellectual leftists took place primarily offline. We have reviewed how a Chineseness-centered nationalism of the 1900s revived in the 1990s, and how postmodernist scholars are unfairly labeled “New Leftist.” Implications of this were at once twofold: its emergence suggested a break with the neoliberal consensus in academia that had contributed greatly to the decade’s market reforms; at the same time, however, that it was labeled “New Left” by its rightist adversaries and that it was never able to present itself otherwise in the media suggests the level of suppression it faced.78

In the 1990s, the remnants of the Party Left disappeared from Chinese politics, leaving a gaping hole that the neoliberal Right believed fell to the “New Left” to fill. Thus the “New Left” had to carry that burden, albeit with huge displeasure. Such was the context of its emergence. It was indeed a new Left—most of its prominent leaders were once firm believers in liberalism, to the extent that Kuang Xinnian argued that the “New Left” is but a breakaway faction of Chinese liberalism.79 Because the context in which the “New Left” emerged was the shift in focus among the Chinese intelligentsia in the mid-1990s to revisit capitalism and Western liberal discourse in light of the catastrophe of Russian experience,80 Wang Hui, the school’s most prominent leader, sees twin dangers in this categorization: 1) because most of its early participants were scholars with overseas education, the designation “New Left” implied a complete import of Western ideas rather than studying Chinese realities; 2) by 1997-98 when the label became widely used, the Right had adopted “New Left” in the context of the ongoing demonization of “leftism” in post-Mao China to imply that “New Leftists” must be calling for a throwback to the CR, an equally sensitive and negative terminology in mainstream vocabulary.81 It
is on these grounds that he considers "New Left" a "standard accusatory term." As an alternative to the problematic and biased distinction between "Liberalism" and the "New Left," Wang Hui proposes the terms "Neoliberalism" and "Critical Intelligentsia." Cui Zhiyuan and Gan Yang also refuse to be associated with the "New Left." Gan in particular points to the classical western distinction of the Left as liberals and the Right as conservatives, and stresses that the "New Left" is in fact "Liberal Left" (ziyou zuopai), and its rivals—the "Liberal Right" (ziyou youpai)—are truly "Conservatives."

The contradictions of the mainstream neoliberal definition of the Chinese "New Left" became most apparent in an encounter with its western counterpart. When Jürgen Habermas’s comments on the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia were translated and published in Chinese in 1999, his support of NATO’s actions immediately triggered widespread criticisms among the Chinese "New Left." These criticisms peaked during Habermas’s visit to China in April 2001. As Wu Guanjun summarizes:

Many Chinese "liberals" (such as Xu Youyu, Lei Yi, Zhu Xueqin, etc,) assumed that as Habermas belonged to the Frankfurt School, and thus to a left-wing school of thought, they would not need to read his works. Conversely, many left wing scholars (such as Wang Hui) engaged with Habermas’s ideas but felt that Habermas placed too much emphasis on existing forms of Western liberal and procedural democracy and concluded that his ideas were not directly applicable to the Chinese socio-political context. Consequently, when Habermas visited China and held discussions with Chinese scholars, a series of misunderstandings and embarrassments took place.

According to Lei Yi, Habermas made two comments on the Chinese "New Left" during his visit: 1) their viewpoints have shown a tendency to both serve authoritarianism and despotism and defend the CR; 2) because they have misused the theories of the Frankfurt School, the Chinese "New Left" should use other theories than those of the
Frankfurt School to criticize China’s “reform and opening up.” Lei’s publication of these comments online led to a heated debate as to whether the Chinese “new leftists” are “qualified” to use the theories of their western counterpart and “teacher” and whether the western “leftists” are any “superior” to the Chinese ones. As nationalist researcher Fang Ning put it:

The historical course of economic globalization has caused the globalization of class relations. Such class relations have transformed considerably on the international level. [Western] Countries’ internal and external class structures have crisscrossed, bringing to life different classes’ external symbiosis and internal division…this transformation in class relations is naturally reflected by the thoughts and practices of western thinkers and theorists, including some so-called “leftists” such as Habermas. On an abstract level, they criticize and negate modern capitalism as per the logic of thought. But politically, they consciously and unconsciously defend the interests of western countries and stand on the sides of the west…Under globalization, the harms capitalism has brought to humanity and the threats it has caused to the future of the human race are collectively expressed by the international hegemony of the advanced western countries and the existing world order. If we were to speak of hegemony and despotism, this is the greatest hegemony and despotism in the world today. A real critique of modern capitalism should naturally focus on western hegemony and [injustices caused by] the global order. What is the use of a critique that only conceptually criticizes capitalism but concretely affirms it?…These contradictory “leftists” are not really “left”…today, any force against the globalization of western capitalism is of a revolutionary and progressive nature and will preserve the non-capitalist social genes for human history. At least functionally, they are all “left”…if we must adapt a “left-right” distinction, I speculate that it is the attitude towards capitalist globalization that separates Left and Right among the contemporary thinking public.

These perplexities bring to awareness the profound challenges the Chinese “New Leftists” faced in the 1990s. Whereas critical intellectual leftists in the Mao period “were generally out of power…unable to harmonize their elite pastimes with popularization work among the peasantry, and were small in number, even among the tiny class of the educated elite” compared to their establishment counterparts, proponents of the “New
Left” have had no better experiences with the official discrediting of popularization work. Throughout its earlier years of debated existence in the 1990s, the major site for “New Left” activities was the print journals. Most early Left/Right debates took place in the issues of *Dushu, Xueren, Tianya* and *Twenty-First Century*. Vocal representatives of the “New Left” included Wang Hui, Cui Zhiyuan, Gan Yang, Han Shaogong, Li Tuo, Zhang Chengzhi, and Li Shaojun. Discussions were highly theoretical and non-engaging to even the most interested laymen. This restrictive setting changed in 2000, when the Rightists launched a collective “violent offensive” against the “New Left,” accusing it of leading the “primitive and irrational” nationalist upheaval following the 1999 NATO bombing in Yugoslavia. The “New Left” did not jointly respond, not least because it never was a union of “new leftists” as such. The task was taken on by a group of domestic scholars who had not been clearly defined as “New Leftists.” These people were primarily mid-aged researchers, economists and professors; they neither drew as much academic attention as the “New Left” nor possessed the economic wealth and ideological hegemony of the neoliberals. Their emergence, concurrent with fierce rightist opposition and the temporary retreat of the “New Left,” has been phenomenal since 2000. These people, whom I collectively refer to as “the in-between” leftists in Table 2, have been the primary force of offline leftism and the Chinese Left’s contestation against neoliberalism, which deliberately brought the debate before the Chinese mass media in the hope of undermining the influence of its critics. That initiative has failed. “New Leftists” have indeed become increasingly inactive compared to the in-between leftists and the earlier years of their own struggles. But where the intellectual elite leftists retreated, the in-betweeners quickly fulfilled the gap.
Such is why I argue that the superimposed mainstream distinctions between “leftisms” have not been applicable to Chinese society since the turn of the century. In their increasingly in-depth struggles with neoliberalism, and on the principle issues of social security, justice and equality, Chinese leftisms collided with one another. Members of groups identified as “leftists” in contemporary Chinese vocabulary include a good deal of liberal scholars who would be considered to occupy at best a Center position in the West but are nevertheless demonized as Left by the neoliberals. Who with open eyes would associate Lang Xianping, the liberal economist who openly questioned the extent of China’s privatization process in cheaply selling off state-owned assets in 2004, with the term leftist? Yet he was precisely so labeled by Chinese economists and the media.

On October 1, 2005, Lang responded to such labeling during a public speech:

You ought to understand that I am a capitalist economist. I myself was born in Taiwan, educated in the U.S., received my PhD of Finance from Wharton School of Business, and since then stayed in American universities to teach...some Chinese think that I’m too left-leaning. How can I be left-leaning? If even I am considered too left-leaning, then anything more right-leaning [than myself] is definitely wrong.95

Yet explanation is of no use. Lang’s “leftist” label has only become more stable. In June 2006, Lang further commented:

Is China today still a socialist country? I think today’s Chinese society is in a most primitive, man-eat-man stage of capitalism where a distorted economic development concept acts as the sole orientation. This stage of corruption was the very hotbed of socialist revolution in Europe two hundred years ago. After experiencing so many years of adversity, China had defeated western imperialism and gotten rid of the corrupt Chiang Kai-shek regime, but only to one-sidedly stress economic development, which has very ironically brought China back to two hundred years ago and to the corrupt predicament of the Chiang Kai-shek regime...Does a man-eat-man country like this still deserve to be called a socialist country?96
A month later, former CASS deputy Chief Liu Ji condemned Lang on the elitest Reference for Reform (gaige neican).\(^7\) Acknowledging the de facto alliance of what he terms “the Old ‘Left’ and New ‘Left’,” Liu arbitrarily asserted that this alliance is also one of “the ‘Left’ and the overseas Right.”\(^8\) He declared:

...this time [the leftists] are not engaged in direct ideological struggle, but are instead collectively attacking economic phenomena and the so-called ‘mainstream economists.’ They claim to be ‘grassroots economists’ representing the social vulnerable groups and say that ‘the mainstream economists are a group of neoliberal economists’ and that ‘the mainstream economists have misled China’s reform and opening up.’ This means that the Party and the government have been mislead, [the leftists] are not only comprehensively negating this great socialist reform and opening up led by the Party and the government, but are also pointing directly at the Party and the government.\(^9\)

Regardless of Liu (a Chinese Communist Party elite)’s critique of Lang (a capitalist economist from Taiwan), Lang’s article did not have the slightest bit of the “sin” of “attacking socialism and opposing the Communist Party” (gongji shehuizhuyi fandui Gongchandang).\(^10\) Conversely, Lang’s sympathy towards socialism and the Communist Party is quite visible. If Lang is truly “attacking socialism and opposing the Communist Party,” then by the same logic, liberal-oriented Chinese scholars such as Sun Liping, Li Changping, Qin Hui and Wang Xiaoming should also be considered as people who “attack socialism and oppose the Communist Party.” This is not to mention the “Old Left” and many in-between leftists who openly speak of a “capitalist restoration.” Hence the question: what is socialism and what is the Communist Party?\(^10\)

Lang is not a “leftist” in the conventional sense. But to the extent that Lang was so labeled, and to the extent that he is right that a society dominated by elites who consider those like himself as “leftists” is excessively rightwing, Chinese leftism is inclusive of a
diversity of critiques of neoliberalism, and as such cannot and should not be further disintegrated except for the sake of detailed analysis. This desire and capacity to build a united opposition is comparable to that of leftist intellectuals in the early days of the Chinese Revolution. Their experiences as outlawed “Communist” agitators in the 1920s and 1930s helped reshape their commitments toward Marxism and the CPC. In the same way, suffering repression, marginalization and accusation in the name of “leftists” in post-Mao China consolidates “the unconscious guilt of the ‘survivor syndrome’” where each tide of leftist “cleansing” sparks active resistance by the survivors, fanning the fire and passion of both intellectual and popular leftist commitments.

This is ample evidence of the vast middle area in Table 2 reserved for the in-between leftists. If we can safely distinguish elite leftists within the Party apparatus and leading public institutions on the one hand, and popular leftists online on the other, where shall the in-betweens, whose backgrounds, status and claims vary rather sharply not only from the two camps, but also among themselves, be situated? I do not take controversial figures such as Lang Xianping and Liu Guoguang as leading figures of the in-between leftists. Instead, the need to consider the similarities among the in-betweens in assessing who they are and why they are here has to be underscored.

To do so, let us first backtrack a bit to analyze leaders of the “New Left:”
Table 5 Who's Who: Leaders of the “New Left”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>People</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Overseas experience</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Website / blog</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cui Zhiyuan (1963-)</td>
<td>PhD, U. of Chicago (1995); MA, U. of Chicago (1989)</td>
<td>U. of Chicago; Harvard; MIT; Stanford; Wissenschaftskolleg Zu Berlin; East Asian Institute, National U. of Singapore</td>
<td>Prof. at Tsinghua U.</td>
<td>Yes¹⁰⁴</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gan Yang (1952-)</td>
<td>PhD Candidate, Committee on Social Thought, U. of Chicago; MA, Peking U. (1985)</td>
<td>University of Chicago</td>
<td>Research officer at U. of Hong Kong</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yang Fan (1951-)</td>
<td>PhD, CASS (1999); MA, Jilin U. (1984)</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>CASS researcher; assistant prof. at China U. of Political Science and Law</td>
<td>Yes¹⁰⁵</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While Wang, Cui and Gan have always been associated with the “New Left,” Yang is a very recent addition.¹⁰⁶ Two observations underlie this table: 1) the earlier and the most well-known “New Leftists” are indeed overseas-educated mid-aged scholars, whose experiences abroad inevitably shape their perceptions of Chinese society in both positive and negative ways; 2) while the position of these few “New Leftists” has become stabilized on the outskirts of the establishment, most other intellectual leftists do not quite share the fortune.¹⁰⁷ Many leftist scholars, inclusive of a majority of the in-betweens, have attempted to move toward this direction, but none other than Yang has achieved notable success in the intolerable neoliberal intellectual mainstream, which only pushed the remaining leftists further left and intellectual elite leftists further right. But even the incorporation of Yang into elitist leftism itself defeats the neoliberal condemnation of the “New Left” as western-educated intellectuals oblivious to Chinese realities. This critique
is undermined by the rapid growth of domestic “New Leftists” such as Yang and many other present in-betweens. 108

In analyzing the current trend of “New Left” integration into China’s transformed elitist structure, it is instructive to note how their members became associated with “the school” (be it the actually existing “New Left” school in the West or the alleged “New Left School” in post-1992 China) in the first instance, a scenario in which the dynamism of contradiction is again vital. Historically, Wang and Gan’s theoretical interpretations of Chinese development departed little from those of present-day neoliberals during the 1980s and well into the first half of the 1990s. Unlike their now distinguished critiques of the market reforms and cautious calls for revisiting “pre-reform” China, their earlier works both portrayed the Deng reforms in an exceedingly positive light and the Mao period in a substantially negative manner. 109 I therefore think there is reason to suspect that Kuang Xinnian’s claim is valid, that the “New Left” merely responded (not necessarily in a wholeheartedly progressive way) to the worsening objective situations of Chinese society in the 1990s, that their essential concerns, guided by self-interest, 110 do not depart from liberal scholars (instead of being leaders of a neo-Marxist, postmodernist school as is often said of them). They are “New Leftist” only to the extent that the historical intolerance of Chinese rightists to any open theoretical critique makes any critic vulnerable to such labelling. Their leftist stance, then, as with that of upper-middle class overseas critics of Chinese neoliberalism such as Lang Xianping, who form a small piece of today’s in-between leftists, is a product of the historical circumstances in which they emerged in the mid-1990s. This contradictory formation of the “New Left” is an important context for understanding its relationship with the neoliberal mainstream and
its tendency of being overpowered by the in-betweens and popular leftists both online and offline.

A look into the who's who among the in-between leftists reveals interesting comparisons with the intellectual elite leftists:

Table 6 Who's Who: The In-Betweens

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>People</th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Website / blog</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Han Yuhai (1965-)</td>
<td>PhD, Peking U. (1991); MA, U. of Shandong (1988)</td>
<td>Professor at Peking University</td>
<td>Yes&lt;sup&gt;111&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Han Deqiang (1967-)</td>
<td>PhD, Renmin U. of China</td>
<td>Prof./researcher at Beihang U.</td>
<td>Yes&lt;sup&gt;112&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wang Xiaodong (1955-)</td>
<td>MA, Tokyo Institute of Technology; BA, Peking U. (1982)</td>
<td>Deputy Chief and assistant researcher, Dept. of Youths, Chinese Youth Research Center</td>
<td>Yes&lt;sup&gt;113&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zuo Dapei (1952-)</td>
<td>PhD, CASS (1988); MA, CASS (1985)</td>
<td>Prof./researcher at CASS</td>
<td>Yes&lt;sup&gt;114&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobo Gao (1952-)</td>
<td>PhD, U. of Tasmania</td>
<td>Associate prof. at U. of Tasmania</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zhang Guangtian (1966-)</td>
<td>Shanghai College of Traditional Chinese Medicine (1982-85)</td>
<td>Theater director</td>
<td>Yes&lt;sup&gt;115&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Li Minqi (1969-)</td>
<td>PhD, U. of Massachusetts (2002); BA, U. of Delaware (1996); Peking U. (1987-90)</td>
<td>Professor at York University</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Li Xianyuan (1954-)</td>
<td>Certificate in English Self-study Examination, Nanjing Normal U. (1986)</td>
<td>Private entrepreneur in film rentals</td>
<td>Yes&lt;sup&gt;116&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lao Tian (19xx-)</td>
<td>BA, Wuhan U. (late 1980s)</td>
<td>Sales manager/independent scholar</td>
<td>Yes&lt;sup&gt;117&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Also herein offered is a brief overview of contemporary in-between Chinese leftists' publications, activities as well as emphases of and frameworks for their leftist convictions and dedications, which vary quite considerably.
Table 7 The In-Betweens: Recent Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>People</th>
<th>Publications/articles</th>
<th>Other activities</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Han Yuhai (1965-)</td>
<td>Literature of the CPC 1949-1989; Vogelfrei: the disease of the world; The theoretical indigence of liberals; “Behind the carriage of ‘Liberalism’”; “The far-flung revolution: Mao Zedong’s socialism”</td>
<td>Screenwriter of TV series My Dear Motherland (2005) and Fengshenghei (2003); signer of the antiwar petition</td>
<td>Calls for a renewed proletarian literature; supporter of Zhang Guanglian’s new literature revolution and working-class novel Naier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Han Deqiang (1967-)</td>
<td>Collision: Traps of Globalization and China’s Realistic Choices; “Reinterpreting Chinese history; “A summary of moral market economy;” “The end of history and the new CR?”; “50 years, 30 years and 20 years”</td>
<td>Active Utopia discussant; editor of Yearning for Mao Zedong; drafter of a 2005 wanyanshu on SOEs; signer of the letter of 101 CPC members and the Zhengzhou Four; petitioner; initiator of the antiwar petition; signer of the Mao petition and the 2001 open letter</td>
<td>Self-alleged economist of Mao Zedong Thought; envisions a “moral market economy”; opposes China’s entry into the WTO; open advocate of “sustainable exploitation”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wang Xiaodong (1955-)</td>
<td>The Chinese Road Under the Shadow of Globalization; “The formation of Chinese intellectuals’ enslaved and elusive historiography and its harms;” “Piracy is justified”</td>
<td>Initiator of the antiwar petition</td>
<td>Claims a patriotism against “reverse racism;” supports piracy; deeply critical of the Mao period</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zuo Dapei (1952-)</td>
<td>The Chaotic Economics: What Has Economics Really Taught Us?; China’s non-mainstream economics; “Revise the Property Rights Law to protect public property;” “On guard of adjudicating privatization”</td>
<td>Active Utopia discussant; drafter of the 2005 letter alerting to the status of SOEs; drafted open letter to the Supreme Court on the Zhengzhou Four; prefaced Dishwashing or Reading</td>
<td>Critic of “economic liberalism with Chinese characteristics”; 7th grader when classes stopped in 1966; PLA soldier (1971-76); self-studied and entered university in 1977</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobo Gao (1952-)</td>
<td>Gao Village: Rural Life in Modern China: “Writing history: Gao Village;” “From one extreme to another: should we lean to the center?”</td>
<td>Signer of the Zhengzhou Four petition, the 2003 antiwar statement and the 2001 open letter</td>
<td>Gao Village (1952-73); Xiamen U. (1973-77); UK (1977-80); Xiamen U. (1980-85); UK (1985-90); Australia (1990-)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Several thematic observations on the nature of in-between leftists can be made utilizing the above tables. A structural division is identified among these participants, namely, between those pushed away from intellectual elite leftism and those from popular leftism. This partially explains where most of the in-betweens come from and why they situate where they do. The educational backgrounds and social positions held by such people do not display a radical departure from the “New Left,” whose intellectual aspiration is initially homogenous with western liberalism and their Chinese advocates.\textsuperscript{130} The rationale for their categorization as “in-between” is that the essence of their claims is not reconcilable with Chinese neoliberalism, the Sinified liberalism\textsuperscript{131} which established itself on a foundation of pro-western reverse racism and normalization, and a refutation of “Maoism” (not as a definitive ideology, but rather a coalition of policies, ideologies and beliefs attributed to Mao) and a proletarian revolutionary literature. This is in addition to the aforementioned in-between leftists’ populist orientations in contrast to the elitist and increasingly administrative focuses of the “New Left.” Zuo Dapei, on the other hand, despite his prestigious position in the elite CASS, entered graduate school in the tide of anti-leftism during the early 1980s and was
historically considered a radical leftist (jijin zuopai), labels that disqualified him from association with and influence over the post-Mao Chinese establishment.

Mobo Gao and Li Xianyuan represent a third category of in-between leftists who grew up in Maoist China and migrated overseas during the Deng reform. Their dedication to leftist activities has been passively determined (not actively sought) by the objective situations of both western and Chinese societies at the historical moments in which they migrated. Gao was frustrated by the wide disparities between his post-Mao teaching experiences in China and his actual Maoist lived experiences, which led to works on a history of the ordinary peasant during the CR and the limitations of history writing in general. Both identified him as a “leftist” to Chinese neoliberals, but since his background sharply differs from leaders of the “New Left,” it was difficult to label him as such. Gao is hence seen as an intellectual swindler. In contrast, people such as Li Xianyuan did not receive much formal education prior to immigration overseas around 1989, a period to which their perceptions of China and the world were historically confined (especially by the River Elegy—heshang—mentality). Their current leftist view is marked by a radical conversion from their earlier rightist convictions. They claim to speak on behalf of popular leftism, yet fall considerably short precisely because of their in-betweenness, to which they are bound by their status as overseas Chinese: it is difficult to neither return to the truly popular stance of the lower classes nor to be fully integrated with elite leftism, the roots of which are on Chinese soil. It is notable, however, that the shift in these individuals’ convictions is not only due to their individual experiences of injustice as members of the lower classes under western capitalism. Just as important is the psychological impact of both the theories and
practices of the CR, which were inescapably revived in the face of their experiences and simultaneously resonated with the lived experiences and consciousness of the Chinese lower classes in an increasingly integrated global capitalism.

The fourth category includes people such as Zhang Guangtian, Li Minqi and Lao Tian, a younger group whose members were primarily born in the earlier years of CR, and whose major life experiences are in the Deng period. Most had a less-than-decent upbringing, were active participants in the student movements of the 1980s, and some were detained or imprisoned. Their current fields of expertise are highly diversified. Both Zhang Guangtian and Li Minqi are full-time professionals; Lao Tian has since 1999 shifted his focus to academia and gained much fame online. Zhang strives to work in the elite structure and through commercialism, and has been labeled an avant-garde artist rather than a die-hard leftist. Li Minqi has established reputation in academia and through leftist engagement, but his overseas status and teaching position suggest the same structural dilemma faced by older generations of in-betweens such as Mobo Gao. Lao Tian, however, is often critiqued online as being “too scholastic” (tai xuejiu qi) and unreadable despite wide respect for his intellectual commitment.

Thus as a whole, in-between leftists possess several discernable characteristics. They include people from a variety of social groups based in China and overseas, who were for the most part brought up in poor households and engaged in non-academic work in their earlier years. Compared with the “New Left,” the in-betweens are generally younger (between mid-thirties to early-fifties), much greater in number, and profoundly more active and unified as a group. Unafraid of being labeled as “leftist,” their activeness was triggered by the NATO bombing of 1999 and gained momentum largely after 2000. Their
leftist engagements are tied to the Internet, and many are active bloggers. The in-betweens are not shy in speaking of "the proletariat" and "the bourgeoisie"; on the contrary, they have reclaimed as their own the "anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist themes of the Communist Party"\(^\text{137}\) in connecting with the endeavors of both Party and popular leftists online and offline. Most in-betweens have signed one or more of the recent leftist petitions online and are tightly monitored offline on a scale unmatched by their rightwing opponents. For example, when Li Xianyuan's book manuscript *Looking through American Democracy* (*Meiguo minzhu toushi*) failed its final inspection and was thus refused publication, an extremely pro-U.S. book *The U.S. at Close Quarters* (*Jin juli kan Meiguo*), written by an American-based Chinese couple, had already been reprinted several times in China and was making its way into Chinese school textbooks.

Further analysis of the in-between leftists' points of intersection with the Party and popular Left will require a comparative investigation on their different emphases, claims and visions of the future. Here I acknowledge once again the contribution of Party leftism as the primary backdrop of online leftism. I do not intend to describe on an individual level who the popular leftists are. This is due to several reasons. First of all, it should come as no surprise that popular Internet participants are not as readily identifiable as the elites and in-betweens; the arbitrariness of virtual identities, which secures their anonymity, adds to such a complexity. Secondly, the majority of those identified in Table 2, which I believe are among the most influential popular leftists of the day, are either reluctant to reveal their personal information in an academic study or unresponsive to contact. Of the ones that are willing to do so, I find striking parallels between them and the in-between leftists. Of course, they are even more prone to the Left than the in-
between; that is, they are even greater in number; they are even more active—and unified—online; they are even more diverse in backgrounds, experiences, and age (Shuxue, for example, is a 51-year-old professor of mathematics; Yundanshuinuan is rumoured to be an “off-post” worker around the same age; Yuchunxiaozhu is a mid-thirties engineering PhD; Juezhan is a Shenzhen-based IT worker, Chongjili—real name Ye Huijian—is a mid-twenties graduate of Zhejiang University, and Hongcao—real name Qin Jiaming—is a third-year law student at Guizhou University); they are even more unafraid of speaking of their source of inspiration in Mao; the more senior popular leftists are even more inclined to relate Maoist achievements with their own efforts and recollections; they are more concerned with how the Maoist experience, and to some the CR in particular, aroused their sense of ownership and self-management, as well as the legitimacy of rebellion against traditional claims of authority; their activities are even more connected to the Internet, and many have signed various leftist petitions since 2003. This is not to suggest there is no distinction between the composition of in-betweens and popular leftists, but that their most vocal proponents share similar experiences. That said, one must bear in mind that behind this minority of popular leftist representatives are the vast number of frustrated students, the typical Chinese netter whose political consciousness has been inspired by ubiquitous online debates from forum to forum; and still behind them are the dominant majority of the offline population, the unpredictable, unidentifiable, and historically more “radically Left” masses of peasants, workers, and the “floating” populations.

An attempt at such an analysis is provided in the following table:
The in-between leftists manifest profound similarities with popular leftists. This suggests the extent to which the Internet has provided a meaningful mechanism for such leftist convergence. Since 2003, many social issues expressive of the structural inadequacies of the neoliberal reforms have triggered massive online debates among popular leftists, which have unequivocally overshadowed the trumpeting neoliberal propagandists. A reflection of the main objects of respective support is provided in the following tables:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Components</th>
<th>Emphasis</th>
<th>Claims</th>
<th>Vision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Party elite</td>
<td>Function of the socialist state; dictatorship of the Proletariat;</td>
<td>Postpone neoliberal reforms and SOE privatization; a Marxism-guided media; reclaim Mao; anti-corruption; anti-capitalism; anti-imperialism; anti-“connection to the global track”</td>
<td>An egalitarian socialist state of self-reliance under Marxism, Leninism, and Mao Zedong Thought</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>intellectual</td>
<td>compliance of all reforms to the state Constitution; stability</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>leftist</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual</td>
<td>Function of state; compliance of all reforms to the state Constitution;</td>
<td>Postpone neoliberal reforms and SOE privatization; balanced development; anti-globalization;</td>
<td>A humanistic utopian state of common prosperity and self-reliance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| leftist      | rule of law; fair reforms                                                | anti-“institutional fetishism;”
|              |                                                                         | new collectivism                                                                                      |                                                                        |
| Popular leftist | Function of the socialist state; justice and equality in reforms;        | Postpone neoliberal reforms and SOE privatization; reclaim Mao; anti-corruption; anti-establishment; anti-capitalism; anti-imperialism; anti-“connection to the global track” | A powerful, egalitarian socialist state of self-reliance                |
| leftist      | grassroots representations                                               |                                                                                                  |                                                                        |
Table 9 Objects of Online Support in Major Social Issues: 2003-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Left</th>
<th>Right</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Antiwar petition</td>
<td>Jiao Guobiao (propaganda reform)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversified</td>
<td>Liu Yazhou (PLA reform)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversified</td>
<td>Ma Licheng (diplomatic reform)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ma Jiajue</td>
<td>The reprieve of Liu Yong's execution (legal reform)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liang Xiaping</td>
<td>SOE reform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wang Binyu</td>
<td>Professionalization and rationality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Left</td>
<td>Right</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nanjie Cun</td>
<td>Xiaogang Cun (agricultural reform)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural cooperative health care system</td>
<td>Medical reform through privatization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gong Xiantian</td>
<td>Legal reform through the Property Rights Law Draft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liu Guoguang</td>
<td>Huangfu Ping, Zhong Xuanli, Liu Ji &amp; &quot;unshakable&quot; reformism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yuan Weishi, Freezing Point, and press/education reforms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Auction of the Mao portrait</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With its incredibly small readership and exceptionally limited perspectives on Chinese intellectuals, the fancy, reductionist and overstated "cybercontroversy" manifested by "online publication of Chinese intellectual debates" at the turn of the century on topics trivial, if not entirely irrelevant to the masses from below, has vanished into the thin air in the face of genuine, populist "cyberdebates" and "net-based cultural manifestations" ever since. Today, the neoliberal insistence on the absolute necessity of "reform," stability and rationality in their essays and commentaries is categorically overshadowed by the popular Left, which has gradually incorporated segments of both Party leftism and intellectual leftism. Indeed, the role of a top-down succession of struggles was central in the post-Mao leftist revival: what was left of the most elitist Party leftists, upon their defeat in 1992, passed the relay baton to intellectual leftists, who "fought" in the print journals until they passed the baton to the in-between leftists, whose interventions were largely in the mass media, to which popular leftists eventually corresponded online in 2003. In an alleged socialist society of proletarian dictatorship,
and with a government that still describes itself as "leftist" or at least "socialist," the
leftists have been collectively marginalized and oppressed severely for so long a time
until the advent of the Internet, so much so that as soon as the cybersphere became an
avenue to voice individual and collective concerns as well as a practical space for
survival, the vast number of leftists from different levels rushed online and built their
respective base areas in much the same way the Chinese Worker and Peasant Red Army,
the PLA's predecessor, built theirs in the 1920s. By 2003, the most pressing issues of
Chinese society had all been brought to intensive Internet discussion, and the neoliberal-
dominated online space had turned predominately Left almost overnight. This
predominance has only become strengthened since. How was this change possible? What
contributed to the online leftist upsurge of 2003? What are the essential characteristics of
Chinese cyberspace and how are they relevant to leftist participation online? How do
leftists participate online, and why do they matter? These are the questions to which the
next chapter responds.

Notes

1 Yuezhi Zhao. (2003b). "Transnational Capital, the Chinese State, and China's Communication
Industries in a Fractured Society." From The Public/ javnost: Journal of the European Institute for
http://www.sfu.ca/~cmns/faculty/zhao/04-zhao.pdf.

2 Sun Liping. (February 7, 2006). "Speech at the 25th Reform Condition Analysis Conference." (Zai di
ershiwu ci gaige xingshi fenxi hui shang de fayan) Utopia. Retrieved May 13, 2006, from

3 The tone of the original Chinese term is much stronger than the English translation. Literally,
gongjian implies to assault strong defensive installations or storm fortifications. Wen's 2005 vision
included state reforms, SOE reforms, finance reforms, agricultural reforms and social security system

4 Zhao Hanzhi. (December 13, 2005). "The 'reform year' of 2005 transformed into 'calling into
question reform year.'" (2005 "gaige nian" yanbian chengwei "zhiyi gaige nian") Win Weekly (ying
The English translation has gone through several changes; this is the final official version dictated by the 16th Party Congress. Xu Meijiang. “Standardization and Diversification of Chinese-to-English Translation.” (Han yi Ying de guifanhua he duoyanghua) Central Compilation & Translation Bureau (CCTB). Retrieved January 2, 2006, from http://www.cctb.net/xszm/20031180006.htm.


This implies universal medical coverage in the countryside, which had been Mao’s attempt since the 1950s, and was quickly abandoned and critiqued as ultra-leftist in 1980. The 2005 version is termed new Rural Cooperative Care System to separate itself from its Maoist origins.


This was the “Xishan Conference” (“Xishan huiyi”) of March 4, 2006, organized by Gao Shangquan (1929-) on behalf of China Society of Economic Reform (CSER, http://www.csor.org.cn), an elite organ established in 1983. Gao is CSER’s chairperson. Most of the 22 attendees are outspoken neoliberal reform advocates. Accusing Gong of being a “complete Maoist” (wanquan de Mao Zedong zhexi zhe), Harvard-trained Peking University nomology professor He Weifang (1960-, personal website at http://www.china-review.com/fwsqhwf.asp), expressed concerns regarding leftist “rampancy” (changjue) online and the extent of neoliberal frustration. According to He, whereas leftists are free to utilize socialist discourses in critiquing “the reform” without risk, those on the Right are constantly hesitant to respond “because some words can’t be shown” (youxie hua liang bu chulai), and their own aims “are in fact not currently speakable, [although we must] proceed according to this road in the future.” Commenting that “Our entire Party is unregistered...[and] external to law” and “I explicitly said that I hope the Communist Party engenders two factions...[and] nationalize[s] the army”, He also said that in order to protect peasant rights, land must become “truly privatized instead of [still using] methods according to the collectivist system.” Gao stated: “this is an internal conference...we don’t want outside journalists to pick this up.” As well, Deputy-Dean of Peking University’s Guanghua School of Management Zhang Weiying (1959-) said that “I observe that today’s conversations are easy to raise issues...lucky that we’re [at] a safe place, no journalists.” Only a seven-line English report appeared on the China Institute for Reform and Development (CIRD)’s website, without noting its essential content. Nonetheless, full transcripts of the conference were somehow leaked and posted on Huayue Forum on March 20. The transcripts are accessible from Utopia at http://www.wyzxsx.com/ShowArticle.asp?ArticleID=18307 as well as http://www.wyzxsx.com/ShowArticle.asp?ArticleID=18308. Utopia. (March 24, 2006). “China Macro Economy and Reform Trend Symposium (I).” (Zhongguo hongguan jingji yu gaige zhanlanhui) Retrieved March 24, 2006, from http://www.wyzxsx.com/ ShowArticle.asp?ArticleID=18307; China Institute for Reform and Development (CIRD). (March 7, 2006). “CIRD’s President and Executive President Participated in ‘Macro Economic Reform and Trend’.” Retrieved April 1, 2006, from http://www.chinareform.org/cgi-bin/news/news_main.asp?news_id=524. China Reform Foundation (CRF), a subsidiary of CSER, was forced to publish its own official version of the conference transcript after the leakage onto leftist forums. On April 6, a heavily edited version, excluding almost of all of He Weifang’s speech, appeared on their website at http://www.cpipp.org/crf/shownews.asp?id=22. To be sure, it was never officially termed the “Xishan Conference,” which referred to the November 1925 conference held by Dai Jitao, Lin Sen and other Guomindang rightists before Sun Yat-sen’s tomb at Xishan in Peking. The conference rejected Sun and the Guomindang leadership’s policies of cooperation with the CPC, unilaterally expelled all CPC members from the Guomindang, and prepared to set up a “Party Central Department” (Zhongyang dangbu) of their own. The fact that the March 4, 2006 forum is so viewed is an issue of concern—for
many leftists, such a view is rooted in Mao’s pre-CR observation that “Anyone wanting to overthrow a political regime must create public opinion and do some preparatory ideological work. This applies to counter-revolutionary as well as to revolutionary classes.” Mao Zedong. (September 24, 1962). “Speech At The Tenth Plenum Of The Eighth Central Committee.” From Marxists Internet Archive. (2004). Retrieved April 12, 2006, from http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-8/mswv8_63.htm.

On February 26, 2006, Gong filed an official complaint on Nanfang Weekend journalist Zhao Lei, whose February 23 article “Gong Xiantian: hero or sinner?” he considered a deceptive mispresentation of their prior interview. In the article, Gong is presented as a poor, marginalized, isolated and disruptive radical who has not published a book since 1997, whose lectures are so unpopular that his course was nearly cancelled, whose support comes from only university freshmen, and whose critiques of the Draft were not presented academically, but rather in the form of “open letters directly to the Central Committee.” According to Gong, who has co-authored numerous books since 1997, he is neither “poor” nor “radical.” Instead, with a fair monthly wage of 5000RMB, he is still gravely concerned about the general masses and the widening income gap (in his words: “buyao ziji zhizu le, jiu buguan guangda Renmin quzhong”). While Zhao Lei’s article is widely accessible, Gong’s complaint never got anywhere. Gong Xiantian. (February 26, 2006). “Where have Nanfang Weekend journalist’s professional ethics gone?” (Nanfang zhounuo jizhe de zhiye daode nali qu le?), edited by Hongcao. Protagonist Forum. Retrieved February 26, 2006, from https://ihost378.ipowerweb.com/-gongnong/bbs/read.php?f=3&i=149569&t=149569; Zhao Lei. (February 23, 2006). “Gong Xiantian: hero or sinner?” (Gong Xiantian: yingxiong haishi zuiren?) Nanfang Weekend. From Nanfang Daily. Retrieved February 26, 2006, from http://www.nanfangdaily.com.cn/zm/20060223/xw/fz/200602230017.asp.

Its publication resumed in March 2006.

Philosophy professor at Zhongshan University, Yuan (1931-) is a regular blogger at both BlogChina.com and Sina at http://www.blogchina.com/new/member/%D4%AC%CE%B0%CA%B1 and http://blog.sina.com.cn/m/yuanweishi.


Ibid.

This would not have been possible without the outburst of online leftism since 2003. Yuan purportedly said that the article was originally published in 2002, and received overwhelmingly welcoming comments then. According to him, it was Freezing Point editor Li Datong that read the article online and contacted him for its republication. Yuan was “wholly unprepared” (shiliaoweiji) for the responses it triggered in 2006. Boxun News. (January 28, 2006). “Freezing Point stops publication: Zhongshan University professor Yuan Weishi denounces Chinese Propaganda Department.” (Bingdian tingkan: Zhongshan dame Yuan Weishi jiaoshou bochi Zhongxuanbu). Retrieved April 1, 2006, from http://www.peacehall.com/news/gb/china/2006/01/200601280603.shtml.

That is, Zhongguo gongren wang. Accessible at http://www.zggr.org during its operation.


That is, gongnongbing BBS. Accessible at http://www.gcdr.com.cn/bbs during its operation.


Neoliberal forums and the mainstream press remained silent over this issue. Their primary Maoyan
kanren, which has not been censored, has a registered capital of 3.45 million RMB.

23 The Chinese reads: “Women shi yixie wei gongnong fuwu de ziyuanzhe, yeshi yixie qiongguang dan,


27 The paper is often championed by outside sources as an emancipatory weekly with independent-minded journalists. The Washington Post, for one, sees it as “a beacon to many journalists and a sign of what could be accomplished even under the watchful eye of party censors.” John Pomfret. “China removes top editors: party cracking down on independent-minded journalists.” Washington Post, June 7, 2001, A26. The paper is subsidiary to Nanfang Daily Group (Nanfang ribao baoye jituan), which controls some of the most outspoken neoliberal papers in China such as Nanfang Daily, Nanfang Weekend, Nanfang Metropolitan News, 21’ Century Business Herald, and so on.


32 By this definition I confront Zhou Yongming’s bold categorization of netters such as Lu Jiaping, An Ti, and Ji An as so-called “minjian online political writers.” Not everyone who writes about politics online is a minjian writer—certainly not these three, all of whom illustrate distinctive elitist orientations and rarely bother to “look below.” Zhou Yongming. (2006): 181-207. Historicizing Online Politics: telegraphy, the Internet, and Political Participation in China. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
Although the majority of both camps occupy positions within similar state organs and leading academic institutions, rightists hold considerably more political-economic authority and cultural influence, and their voices have been much more prominent than the intellectual left. Consider, for instance, Zhang Weiying’s recent comments during the notorious “Xishan Conference” that “I’ve said in the past: ‘The reason the poor can’t afford university education is that tuitions are too low’...our low-tuition method is in fact subsidizing the rich instead of the poor. If we adequately raised tuitions and stipulate the percentage of such tuitions to be used on financial aid, then these issues can be resolved well.” (Wo guo qu jiang guo yijuhua: “Weishenme qiongren shang bu qi dama, yinweixin wei xuefei tai di”...women yong di xuefei de fangfa shi jiang bute de shi furen, er bushi buti qiongren. Ruguo women ba xuefei shidang de tigao, ranhou guiding xuefei duoshao bili bixu yongyu zhuxuejin, zhexie wenti ji keyi henhao de shi jie jie...women yong di xuefei de fangfa shi jiang bute de shi furen, er bushi buti qiongren. Ruguo women ba xuefei shidang de tigao, ranhou guiding xuefei duoshao bili bixu yongyu zhuxuejin, zhexie wenti ji keyi henhao de shi jie jie) Scattered leftist critiques to such remarks have not been reported by the Chinese media, let alone their internally isolated April 9 conference in response. Zhang Weiying. (March 4, 2006). “Zhang Weiying: the poor can’t afford university because tuitions are too low.” (Zhang Weiying: qiongren shang bu qi xue shi yinweixin xuefei tai di) Nanfang dushi bao. (April 29, 2006). From People’s Daily Online. Retrieved May 14, 2006, from http://finance.people.com.cn/GB/42774/4341776.html.

Zhao (2003a): 46. These results are based on an examination of the press coverage of China’s 1999 WTO accession agreement with the U.S. from eleven Chinese newspapers.

Nevertheless, there is profound debate among the intellectual Left as to whether this classical Marxist categorization is accurate, which is itself an illustration of the complexities of its formation. Most intellectual leftists, regardless of their class stance, self-consciously identify (zijue rentong) with “ordinary countrymen from below” (diceng shehui minzhong), whereas those on the Right self-consciously identify with the middle class and chiefly concern about issues related to elites. This observation is made by liberal thinker Xu Jilin. Xu Jilin, Liu Qing, Luo Gang, and Xue Yi (n.d.): 210-226.


Ibid., 14-16. There has been, since Hu Jintao’s formal succession in 2002, a wide range of state attempts at leftist incorporation. Among them, most famous is no doubt the opening of CASS Institute of Marxism Research (Makesi zhuyi yanjiuyuan) at the 112th anniversary of Mao’s birth on December 26, 2005. A massive financial and bureaucratic expansion from the previous Graduate School of Marxism Research (Makesi zhuyi yanjiusuo), the Institute is, according to minister of Propaganda Department Liu Yunshan, to respond to “fatal realistic issues” (zhongda xianshi wenti). Its opening is part of a grander “Fundamental Research and Construction Project in Marxism” (Makesi zhuyi jichu jichu...


47 It has been argued that “Deng’s reform program itself was inaugurated through the suppression of the Maoist left within the party.” Zhao (2004b): 211.

48 Dirlik (2005): 231. Dirlik describes this postsocialist tendency as characteristic to the entire experience of Chinese socialism, with which I disagree. I do however share his view on it as an important characteristic of post-Mao Party elites.

49 It has to be noted that CR leftists such as Wang Dongxing, Chen Xilian, Wu De and Ji Dengkui were “sacrificed” by Hua Guofeng himself as a welcoming gesture to the revivified Party Right during his brief rule.

50 Ibid.


55 Li Tuo (1939-, original name Meng Keqin) is a renowned writer and literary theoretician.

56 A prominent writer and essayist, Han Shaogong (1953-) presided Reading during the mid-1990s. He later became the editor-in-chief of Tianya. Han co-translated Milan Kundera’s The Unbearable Lightness of Being into Chinese with his sister in 1987.

57 Maoist Angang was most famously known for the Constitution of the Anshan Steel Mill (Angang

55 The full text of this letter is available at http://www.monthlyreview.org/0502cpc3.htm.

56 Accessible from Protagonist Forum at https://host378.ipowerweb.com/~gongnong/bbs/read.php?f=3&i=88626&t=88625. The article called for a summary of “China’s reform and opening up in the two recent decades. During the past twenty-six years, our ‘three great struggles’ have only focused on production struggle and scientific revolution while neglecting class struggle, and have frequently implemented a revisionist line.”

57 Accessible from Protagonist Forum at https://host378.ipowerweb.com/~gongnong/bbs/read.php?f=3&i=88626&t=88625. The letter was in response to Baoshan Steel Mill (a.k.a. Baogang)’s sellout. In Ma’s words: “In devoting my whole life to the emancipation and construction of Chinese socialism, I’ve lived to ninety years, and I’m proud of the socialist restoration of Angang and socialist construction of Baogang. The socialist Baogang whose ownership is by the whole people is not for sale! It’s not up to any given individual. I’ve sacrificed my blood there and remember every slightest detail!”


60 By far the most well-known of all their endeavors, the article was first posted on Flag. Subsequent discussions led to the website’s shutdown by the Chinese Government during the Two Meetings (simultaneous with the shutdown of the other three leftist websites) from late February to March 2006. Zheng Bijian (1932-), director-general of the Forum on China’s Reform and Opening Up and senior state adviser, published an article named “The Direction of the CPC in the 21st Century” on the front page of People’s Daily Overseas Edition on November 11, 2005. An edited official English translation is accessible from People’s Daily Online from http://english.people.com.cn/20051114/eng20051114_221007.html. The article’s rightist comprador rhetoric provoked widespread criticisms online, the tone of which was set by Ma and Han’s essay. They denounced: “What position is he in to announce to overseas the fundamental direction of the Communist Party of China? Isn’t such a momentous decision to be made by the Party’s National Congress? How can Zheng Bijian announce it on his own behalf to the U.S. Government?” The duo further took to task Zheng’s ridicule of USSR’s collapse with its invasion of Afghanistan, the internal context of the Deng reform with unilateral U.S. approval, and economic globalization with the “peaceful rise” (heping jueqi) of China. They asserted that Zheng’s article “is for the Great U.S. President, Secretary of State, Deputy Secretary of State and the high-class politicians—that is, for U.S. imperialism. It is to profess to these bigshots that today’s Communist Party of China has changed and is no longer the vanguard of the proletariat that upheld basic principles of Marxism-Leninism and devoted in revolutions to realize socialism and communism. [It is to profess that] this Party is now pleased to be a responsible, interest-bound formal member of
the U.S.-dominated global system, and will strive to maintain it with the United States. [It is to] hope the American bigshots will like this Communist Party of China.” The article also contends that Zheng’s announcement represents a “class power” (jieji liliang) of vested interest groups. The article is accessible from Protagonist Forum at https://host518.ipowerweb.com/~gongnong/bbs/read.php?f=3&i=149936&e=149936.

70 The letter responds to People’s Daily’s March 1, 2006 “Two Meetings” (lianghui) feature article “State-owned enterprise reform in countdown stage.” (Guoqi gaige dao jieduan) Written by Wang Zhongming, Director of Research Center of the State Council’s State-run Assets Committee (guowuyuan guozhiwei yanjiu zhongxin), the article considered irreversible and necessary the “strategic retreat” (zhanlue tuichu) and “systematic reform” (gaizhi) of state-owned enterprises (SOEs) into privatized businesses. It is accessible from People’s Daily Online at http://npc.people.com.cn/GB/28320/41246/41339/4151291.html. The open letter calls on Two Meetings’ delegates to defend the prime status of public ownership and opposition to privatization and all those violating the existing Constitution, and calls for People’s Daily and the Chinese press to not speak for privatization promoters and instead disseminate messages truly in line with the Constitution and “the interests of the masses.” Accessible from Protagonist Forum at https://host378.ipowerweb.com/~gongnong/hbd/read.php?f=3&i=150713&t=150713.

71 Insisting that two lines—the lines of revisionist eclecticism and Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought—lie before the new leader in his dealing with the global superpower, the letter is accessible from Protagonist Forum at https://host518.ipowerweb.com/~gongnong/bbs/read.php?f=3&i=153639&t=153639.


73 Speech at April 9 Flag workshop. On April 9, 2006, Mao Zedong Flag moderators organized in Beijing “Workshop on Insisting Socialist Reform” (jianchi shehuizhuyi gaige yantaohui), which explicitly aimed to respond to the rightists’ “Xishan Conference.” Most participants were senior Party leftists. Transcript of Han’s speech is accessible from Protagonist Forum at https://host518.ipowerweb.com/~gongnong/bbs/read.php?f=3&i=153416&t=151724.

74 Written by Xiao Jingxiang in May 2006, the article “The Rise and Fall of a State-owned Enterprise—the Demise of Shanghai Sensitization Film Factory” was recommended by Han, who wrote brief comments on May 29, which were together crossposted at Flag, Utopia, Protagonist and Huayue. The factory was established in 1958 and had been vastly successful and competitive throughout the Mao and Deng years. In the beginning of the 1990s, however, as it was competing with foreign corporations and as the construction of its new workshop was near complete, the factory was ordered by government officials to sell its production rights of color films to Kodak for US$21 million. The essence of the deal was that the factory would no longer form a joint venture or cooperate with any other foreign company to produce color films in any other brands. As a result, the factory was dismantled, its workshop and other production sites bulldozed and sold to real estate developers, its over 2,000 employees forced off-post with an allowance of 1,300RMB for each year of service, their resistance silenced, and the entire field of Chinese sensitization films collapsed. Almost a decade after its demise, the time was finally ripe for such an unwelcoming empirical review of “the reform” to be openly published on the web. See Xiao Jingxiang. (May 2006). “The Rise and Fall of a State-owned Enterprise—the Demise of Shanghai Sensitization Film Factory.” (Yige guoying qiyeyi de xingwang—Shanghai gangguang jiaopian chang xiaowang ji) Utopia. (June 6, 2006). Retrieved June 6, 2006, from http://www.wyzxsx.com/Article/Class4/200606/7273.html.

75 Zhao (2004b): 211.

76 Son of Lin Feng (1906-77), former Vice Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress (NPC) and principal of CPC Party School, Lin Yanzhi (1948-) is Deputy Secretary of Jilin Provincial Party Committee and Chief of the Provincial Propaganda Department. He is known
for his opposition to Jiang Zemin’s July 2001 admittance of private entrepreneurs into the Party with the article “How can the Communist Party lead capitalists” (Gongchandang ruhe lingdao zichanjieji), which was co-signed by “Old leftists” such as Deng Liqun, Wu Lengxi, Wei Wei and Yu Quanyu.


82 Ibid.

83 Ibid., 62.


85 This is referring to his work “Bestiality and humanity: a war on the border between law and morality.” Accessible online at http://www.theglobalsite.ac.uk/press/011habermas.htm.


88 Fang Ning (1957-) is deputy chief of CASS Political Science Research Center and director of the Graduate School of Political Science Department. His blog is accessible at http://www.blogchina.com/new/member/1../%B7%BF%C4%FE.


92 Zhang Chengzhi (1948-) is a writer and researcher of Mongolian history and history of northern Chinese minorities.

93 Li Shaojun (1967-), a dedicated poetry commentator, is the current editor-in-chief of Tianya.


97 Liu Ji (1935-) is currently principal of the state-funded China Europe International Business School (CEIBS, http://www.ceibs.edu), allegedly “one of the top 50 business schools in the world.”

98 Liu Ji. (July 2006). “Examining the third wave at negating the reform through the ‘Lang Tornado’.” (Cong “Lang xuanfeng” kan fouding gaige de disanci sichao) From Utopia. Retrieved July 14, 2006,
yijing buneng yangai, bixu zhengmian tichu xinyang) Utopia.


We want to revisit the Reform while liberals want to further reforms in the political realm, both of
gains, and must be brought to full-frontal discussion.” The latter two sentences in Chinese reads:

Yang also comments: “So long as the Chinese elites are anti-Mao, corruption cannot be exterminated...China isn’t a Christian society, and her law system can’t be fully in place. Thus anti-
corruption [in China] necessitates a mobilization of the masses to a certain degree, which at once
relates to public opinion towards CR. Liberals would then of course immediately become neurotic.
We want to revisit the Reform while liberals want to further reforms in the political realm, both of
which necessitate a second judgment of Mao, albeit in oppositional directions.

Disproving himself as a leftist, Yang advocates “surpassing the left and right wings” (chaoyue zuo
you yi) in furthering economic reform for “sustainable exploitation” (ke chixu boxie). At the height of
the resurfaced Left/Right debate, he explicitly criticized Lang Xianping and Liu Guoguang, both
pioneers of the unified left circle. During his March 25, 2006 meeting with far rightist economist
Zhang Weiying on how to “rationally revisit the reform” (lixing de fansi gaige), Yang, appearing as a
leftist color-bearer, expressed apologies for his criticisms and purportedly reached an amicable
settlement with Zhang and the rightist economists. He has since been fiercely attacked among the left
as accommodationist to the neoliberal mainstream. However, relating latest contestations and his own
experiences of marginalization, Yang has most recently acknowledged the rightist rampancy in China
during a speech delivered at Beihang University on May 14, 2006: “...our country’s political life has
shown a tendency towards scoundrelism, which is typically result of a combination of authoritarian
politics and a Far Rightist thought line.” (Women guojia de zhengzhi shenghuo, you liumanghua de
qingxiang. Liumanghua yiban chanwu)

Elsewhere, Liu Ji also published a piece on the Vietnamese reform on July 12, 2006. He considers
the ongoing Vietnamese political reform worth noting in comparison with the Chinese reform, which
has been brought to a standstill. For the entire article, see https://host518.ipowenveb.coml-gongnong/
bbs/read.php?f=3&i=158209&t=158208. Many Chinese leftists question Liu’s incentive of publishing
such a piece during this highly sensitive period. Some have argued that Liu is putting pressure on the
Hu Jintao leadership to “smash” leftist opposition and further the reforms.

Nonetheless, this is indeed where they are situated according to rightist accusations.

A personal website provided by China Review. Accessible at http://www.china-review.com/
fwsq/homepages.asp?person=崔之元.


Ibid. The Chinese reads “zheci bushi zhijie jinxing yishixingtai douzheng, ershi jizhong gongji jingji
xianxiang he suowei de ‘zhulu jingjixuejia’. Tamen zicheng shi dalibiao ruoshi qunti de ‘caogen
jingjixuejia’; shuo ‘zhulu jingjixuejia shi yipi xinzhouzhihui jingjixuejia’, ‘zhulu jingjixuejia wudao le
Zhongguo gaige kaifang’. Zhe jiushi shuo dang he zhengfu bei wudao le, bufen quanmian fouding
dang he zhengfu lingdiao de zhechang weida de shehuizhuyi gaige kaifang, erqie ba maotou zhijie
duizhe dang he zhengfu.”

Ibid. (February 27, 2006). “Revisiting

Ibid. (May 14, 2006). “Mao Zedong Thought and national belief.”

Ibid.

Ibid. The Chinese reads “shi yipi xinziyouzhuyi


This is not restricted to the left circle alone. In He Qinglian’s observation, although a segment of the intellectual elite, irrespective of their ideological convictions, “has developed into an interest group tied to the ruling politico-economic bloc, a far greater number have gained very little from the economic reforms... The attitude of intellectuals towards the reforms is therefore no longer one of unconditional support, but is now guided by the dictates of self-interest... This group of experts has been extremely successful in transforming their previous political capital into social capital, the network of social connexions that served them so well under the planned economy era once again playing a significant role in the rent-seeking China of today. Driven by self-interest, some elements have taken up positions that are in direct contrast to their earlier values and beliefs. Their ample cultural capital and money-driven ideology have been put at the service of the economic elite, enabling them to get a handsome share in the first round of wealth accumulation.” He (n.d.): 169. Timothy Cheek too describes “the disestablished status of 1990s intellectuals compared to Deng Tuo’s establishment intellectual cadres of the early 1960s,” albeit with an underdeveloped discussion on the level of neoliberal incorporation into and dominance within the Chinese establishment. Timothy Cheek. (2004): 213. “Historians as public intellectuals in contemporary China.” In Chinese Intellectuals Between State and Market, edited by Edward Gu and Merle Goldman. London and New York: RoutledgeCurzon.

For an elaborated observation, see Gan (2000).

These include Wang Hui’s 1994 book The Gradual Revolution: China’s Economic Reform Movement, Gan Yang’s 1989 book We Are Creating Tradition (Women zai chuangzao chuantiang), and many of their earlier essays.

He (n.d.): 169.

Opened on February 6, 2006. Accessible from Tianya at http://www1.tianyablog.com/blogger/view_blog.asp?BlogName=hanyuha&kidWriter=0&Key=0.

Opened on September 6, 2002. Accessible from BlogChina.com at http://www.blogchina.com/new/member/_%BA%AB%B5%C2%C7%BF.


Written by Shenzhen University professor Cao Zhenglu (1949-), the 2004 novel is a critical ethnography of a contemporary working class community which carries implicitly a call to reexamine the legacy of working class positions and the meaning of the proletariat in China today that belong to such a category. “Na’er” is a character’s mispronunciation of “yingtenaxonger” (internationale) in the story. New York-based leftist website China Study Group (CSG, http://chinastudygroup.org) has called for translations of the novel into English. Existing web links to its coverage are defunct after the site’s update in late March 2006. A cache page is accessible through Google at http://72.14.203.104/search?q=cache:5hWEplYxfJU:www.chinastudygroup.org/index.php%3Faction%3Dfront%26type%3Dsearch%26qt%3Dsection%26q%3D%26PSESSID%3Da87ceac2c9e90d8589be0374014dc52+the+zhengzhou+four+%22china+study+group+&hl=en&ct=clnk&cd=2. The full-text Chinese version of Na’er is accessible from Left Bank Culture Net (zuop an wenhuawang) at http://www.eduww.com/bbs/dispphbs.asp?boardID=44&ID=13741&page=1.

In Chinese, “Xiangwang Mao Zedong.” Published in April 2005 by Central Literature Press with courtesy of Flag, the book aims to scan through “the new century’s first wave of the Great Tide of ‘Mao Zedong Fever.”’ (Xin shiji di yi bo “Mao Zedong re” dachao) Its some 110 editors and contributors are a loose group of leftists at both intellectual and popular levels online and offline, including “Old Leftists” such as He Jingzhi, Han Xiya and Yu Quanyu; famed writers such as Wei Wei,
Li Xifan and Yi Zhun; intellectuals such as Zhu Dongli, Han Deqiang, Lao Tian and Han Yuhai, and popular artists such as Zhang Guangtian and Huang Jisu.

The Zhengzhou Four refer to four senior workers who were arrested in Zhengzhou on the 28th anniversary of Mao's death in 2004 for distributing leaflets in a public park. Two of the four (58-year-old Zhang Zhengyao and 71-year-old Zhang Ruquan) were found guilty of libel in a closed court proceeding and were sentenced to three years in prison; the other two were placed under police surveillance. Titled "Mao Zedong forever our leader," the leaflet was posted on Mao Zedong Flag by one of the workers before distributing it in public. The Zhengzhou Four Petition Project (http://www.zzppetition.org) was initiated in response. Its primary developer China Study Group has translated into English a brief account of the entire case as well as an abridged version of the leaflet, which are available from Monthly Review at http://www.monthlyreview.org/0105commentary.htm. In their introduction, Monthly Review commented that "We...[believe] that a strong case can be made that the story of the left opposition inside China is the most important and least covered in the world."

In Chinese, "daode shichang jingji." Han considers the growth of "morality forces" (daode liliang) in opposition to "market forces" (shichang liliang). In his view, the strength of the former can restrict the rampanty of the latter, and lead to a humanist utopia. Han Deqiang. (March 2, 2000). "Brief comments on moral market economy." (Lielun daode shichang jingji) From Utopia. Retrieved January 2, 2006, from http://www.wyxwyx.com/xuezhe/handeqiangelong/ShowArticle.asp?ArticleID=86.

According to him, computer applications in China have relied upon piracy. No one will benefit from eliminating piracy within the country. One the one hand, "no piracy" will inevitably undermine the Chinese IT industry and harm the interests of Chinese computer users. On the other hand, a shrinking Chinese computer-related market is undesirable to the global IT corporations. This is not to mention that India and Taiwan's achievements in the IT industry took place in the context of their enormous level of piracy. Wang Xiaodong. (1999). "Piracy is Justified." (Daoban youli) Retrieved July 9, 2006, from http://www.boxun.com/sixiang/9911089/9911084.htm.

The publisher changed its name from The Misleading Economics (Wudao de jingjixue).

A critical examination of Chinese industrialization in the 20th century in relation to the Japanese experience, the 2005 book was written by Huayue Forum discussant Zhong Qing. In Chinese, "Zhongguo tese de jingji ziyuzhuyi." Zuo terms it so because Chinese economy since Mao shares many similarities with global economic liberalism during the same period, and because Chinese economists have given life to many "peculiar creations" (teshu chuangzao) of their own. Zuo believes while these simplistic and reductionist views or policy initiatives are intellectually futile, they nonetheless fully reflect "Chinese characteristics" in being "filled with the spirits of greed and cruelty, and ignorance to modern society and modern science." (chongman le tanlan, canren de jingshen he dui xiandai shehui, xiandai kexue de zhengji) Zuo Dapei. (2002). "Conclusion: what can economics teach us?" (Jieyu: jingjixue neng jiaogezi women shenme?) In The Misleading Economics (Wudao de jingjixue). Utopia. Retrieved April 12, 2006, from http://www.wyxwyx.com/xuezhe/zuodapei/ShowArticle.asp?ArticleID=66.

In Chinese, "xin lixiang zhuyi." In a blog entry, Zhang explained that "1) Neo-idealism first criticizes collectivism and refutes collective idealism. Where there is boo and hoot there isn't neo-idealism. When liberalism boos and hoots, [it] criticizes liberalism. Today's most primary superstition is collective boo and hoot [qihong]. Therefore, neo-idealism's break with superstition is to break with the collective, thereby promoting the individual; 2) Neo-idealism refutes the collective but affirms ideals. This is different from empiricism and liberalism. Neo-idealism's ideal is the individual's ideal.
Once human beings come into existence in the world, they themselves are the world and universe, and possess all laws of the world and life. Humans live in accordance with their own laws; there is no law external to the individual; 3) Thus, neo-idealism puts “interpreting the world” in the second place. More important than the world of interpretation [zhixing shijie] is the world of virtue [dexing shijie]...Neo-idealism’s individual ontology is not the ontology of individualism and egoism, but rather a socialist ontology that begins with and focuses on the individual.” Zhang Guangtian. (March 13, 2006). “A second reply to neo-idealism.” (Zai da xin lixiang zhiyi) Zhang Guangtian’s Sina blog. Retrieved April 25, 2006, from http://blog.sina.com.cn/u/48309513010002kw.

128 When organizations such as Human Rights Watch and Labour Watch and The New York Times ridiculed the factory’s March 2001 movement against corruption in the rhetoric of “independent union movements” under “independent union leader” Li Jianqiu, Li Minqi and several others in Zhengzhou took action by putting out a statement of correction, which claimed that the goals of the workers in opposing corruption, the loss of SOE assets and privatization are “far different from the so-called ‘independent union movement’ run by Chinese liberal intellectuals who have been co-opted by western imperialism,” that “The Zhengzhou Paper Factory Workers acted through their WRC [Workers Representatives Congress] mass meetings in order to protect socialism’s State Owned Assets, their own legal rights, and have little to do with ‘Independent Union Organizations’,” and that “the so-called ‘independent union movement’ is a deceptive product of western imperialism, which utilizes the original goals of socialism to breed the foundation of its own fake brand of justice and facilitates the takeover of the socialist state by capitalists, corrupt officials and intellectuals...the rights of China’s entire working class to state assets is sacrificed, with nothing to show for in return, as the door is opened to foreign capital to enslave China’s workers.” Li Minqi. (March 18, 2001). “The True Story Behind Zhengzhou #1 Paper Factory Workers’ Anti-Corruption, Anti-Privatization Struggle,” trans. and edited by Stephen Philion. (March 19, 2001). From The Economics Department of the University of Utah. Retrieved May 8, 2006, from http://archives.econ.utah.edu/archives/pen-l/2001m03.3/msg00127.htm.

129 The 3403 movement, a most violent scenario of China’s SOE reform to date, took place at the height of the Lang Xianping-Gu Chujun debate (see note 146) on SOE reform, but captured not the slightest of media attention. The PLA 3403 Factory went bankrupt in June 2004 under managing director Zhang Chengyi (a.k.a. Zhang Ermao). Although Chinese law stipulates that bankrupted enterprises ought to be auctioned publicly, Chongqing officials sold 3403, estimated to be worth 200 million RMB, to private firm Chongqing Naide Shanhua Special Vehicles Factory under Lin Chaoyang for a mere 22 million RMB without a public auction. Only having paid two million RMB before its August takeover, Naide itself was SOE Chongqing Meter Company before being taken over by Lin in May 1998 in the name of “SOE restructuring,” which made both Lin Chaoyang and his younger brother Lin Xuesong millionaires. 3403 had been in cooperation with Naide since 2002 under the same rhetoric of “restructuring.” As many as 90 percent of the workers were owed wages, some of which were at as low as 80 RMB a month. When 3403 was declared bankrupt, Zhang, who was appointed to a senior managerial position in Naide, hid away in the autonomous region of Xinjiang with his lover. The 3403 workers themselves had already made a counterproposa of collective purchase at a price higher than 22 million RMB. As the news spread, 3,000 workers launched a two-week protest against the sell-off beginning August 18. The protest proceeded under tremendous pressure from both Naide and the Chongqing Municipal Government, the Party Committee of which organized negotiations with the protesters to enter the factory on August 24. When workers refused officials to enter the financial department, which contained evidence of malpractice and corruption, negotiations collapsed. 3403 workers made several online appeals beginning August 27 on various Internet forums, which were most consistently organized by and heavily discussed on Protagonist at https://host378.ipowerweb.com/~gongnong/bbs/read.php?f=3&i=81327&t=81327,

As former 3403 manager Xu Huai and other suspected organizers were arrested, detained and tortured, 3403 workers jointly issued a public letter to the Fourth Plenum of the 16th CPC Central Committee on September 17. The letter claimed that “the evil tide of privatization of SOE and collective enterprises have engendered a new capitalist class who did not waste a penny to become rich, hundreds of millions of new proletariats like us, and increasingly deepening contradictions between social classes. But what is promoted now is ‘all profits and property rights to entrepreneurs’...now that ‘all profits and property rights to entrepreneurs’ this had long been the case in the China before 1949—why did the Communist Party ever need to wage a revolution sacrificing the lives of tens of millions?” It concluded with the words: “We want to live. When living is impossible, we will defy death!” (Women yao huoming, buneng huoming shi jiu zhiyou pinming!) Chongqing3403gongchang. (September 20, 2004). “SOE Privatization Will Eventually Lead to Revolution — Open Letter to the Fourth Plenary Session of the 16th CPC Central Committee.” (Guoqi sihua zhong jiang jifa geming—zhi Zhonggong shiliujie sizhong quanhui de gongkaixin) From Protagonist Forum. Retrieved September 21, 2004; April 29, 2006, from https://host378.ipowerweb.com/~gongnong/bbs/read.php?f=3&i=87159&t=87159.

The 3403 incident and the Chinese Left’s coverage of it are particularly important because they have made the current level of injustice more consciously felt. It was the 3403 incident that changed many liberal-oriented netters’ perspectives toward Chinese leftism. Xiao Wu (pseudonym Leiyankanren, MSN blog at http://xiaowu9000.spaces.msn.com) is one of them. Currently a graduate student in Shanghai, Xiao Wu has published An Uplooking Stance (Yangwang de zitai) and is praised by liberal scholar Xu Jilin as an “amateur thinker” (yeyu sixiangjia) on the Internet. Recollecting his first encounters with Protagonist and Flag from late 2002 to early 2003, Xiao Wu asserted: “At the time, I thought that no matter how problematic the ‘reform and opening up’ is, it’s still more constructive than destructive and at least it’s better than the CR. A person who would say good things about and defend the CR—that’s simply too radical. Thus, although many left-wing friends had been helping me in BBS debates, I never dared acknowledge myself as a leftist, let alone accepting their stance and viewpoints, so as not to be associated with the residual evil of the CR that people look down upon...I...thought that ‘firmly opposing the CR’ was my last bottom line. If I crossed that line, I would not even be human...[That all changed] with the Chongqing 3403 factory incident in summer 2004, when my position was suddenly reversed.” (Dangshi wo xiang, gaige kaifang jiushi wenti zaiduo, ye yinggai shi gongdayuguo de, zhishao bi wenge qiang. Zuoren zuodao gei wenge jiaohao, bianhu, nu weimian ye tai jiduan le. Suo, suiran you bushao zuiyi de pengyou zai BBS gajia de shiyou jingchang bang wo, dan wo zemne ye bugan chengren zhi shi zuopai, geng bugan jieshou tamen de lichang he guandian, shengpa yi bu xiaoxin zhi yue chengle yao bei ren kanbiqi de wenge yinie...Wo...renwei “jianju fandui wenge” shi wo zuihou de dixian, guo le zha tiao xian jiu jianzhi bushi ren le...Zhidao 2004 nian xiatian, Chongqing 3403 chang shijian fasheng, wo de lichang fasheng le turan de zhuhanbian) Xiao Wu. (March 1, 2006). “A whole new world through a whole new generation.” (Chongzheng heshan dai housheng) Retrieved July 18, 2006, from http://spaces.msn.com/xiaowu9000/blog/cns!4762116FCDECAF06!625.entry; Xu Jilin. (February 11, 2005). “Amateur thinkers in the age of the Internet.” (Wangluo shidai de yeyu sixiangzhe) Retrieved July 17, 2006, from http://guancha.gmw.cn/show.aspx?id=1579. Xiao Wu is now a neo-Maoist.

131 This terminology is used by both Zuo Dapei and Timothy Cheek, albeit in different ways. See Zuo (2002); Cheek (2004): 208.

Lao Tian is a pseudonym; his real name is Tian Liwei. The enormous popularity of his 2000 play *Che Guevara* (*Qie Gewala*) prompted signs of optimism and “the emergence of a new form of leftist cultural politics and a new form of internationalism and revolutionary idealism beyond the margins of the globally integrated Chinese cultural market.” Zhao (2004b): 213.

Lao Tian is also actively involved in praxis offline. He has organized a good number of discussion seminars for CR “rebels” in Sichuan and Hubei.

It does not mean the CR is thus “justified.” Rather, it notes the fact that many do think this way. As noted by Arif Dirlik and others, it is necessary to explain the conditions that led to the consequences of the CR. Ignoring the initial conditions “and discrediting the intentions by holding them directly responsible for the consequences...is a means to burying...the revolutionary problematic that inspired it in the first place. Ironically, those intermediating factors which may have done much to distort the initial aspirations of the Cultural Revolution are still in place, while the aspirations are systematically ‘forgotten.’” Dirlik (2003): 167. The “initial aspirations” of the CR are reflected in part by the Party’s August 8, 1966 historical resolution. The resolution transcript and its historical audio record are accessible from *Huayue Forum* at http://washeng.net/HuaShan/BBS/shishi/gbcurrent/145095.shtml. The latter file is downloadable at http://61.156.238.18:9100/uid_1446416%2fSingle%2f200651683015_409.mp3. Other primary Chinese documents from the 1966-1976 period are best preserved online by U.S.-based scholar Xiao Xidong at his website *Historical Literature Archives of the Chinese Revolution* (*Zhongguo geming lishi wenxuan ziliao*) at http://cn.geocities.com/wozhenbuhao and http://geming.20m.com, and *China Revolutionary History Literature Exchange Forum*.

Among many, Mobo Gao argues—and this is overwhelmed by similar arguments online—that it would be wrong “to assume that peasants did not have a sense of ownership in the commune system. Under the leadership of a production team leader, and within a production unit of ten to fifteen...


141 That is, “yu guoji jiegui” in Chinese.

142 That is, anti-“institutional determinism,” a fetishistic belief on the absolute power of institutional structures in society. See also note 2 on page 167.


144 In other words, there is no consensus among the online Left as to what should be supported in opposition to Liu Yazhou, what he is perceived to represent and who he is perceived to speak for. This is the same in Ma Licheng’s case.


146 During a speech at Fudan University in early August 2004, Lang Xianping called for active state intervention in the nationwide SOE reforms and observed that Gu Chujun, Chairman and CEO of Greencool Group, the largest shareholder of well-known refrigerator maker Kelon, “siphoned off state-owned assets through enterprise restructuring.” Backed by China’s neoliberal elites in the government and intellectuals, Gu filed a lawsuit in Hong Kong against Lang, accusing the latter of slander. After heated ideological debates online and offline, Gu and five other Kelon executives were detained in August 2005 as suspects for economic crime. The Kelon board chairperson was suspected to have used millions of Kelon’s cash to pay for the acquisition of three companies. With Gu’s detainment, neoliberals brought the “Lang-Gu debate” (Lang Gu zhi zheng) to an abrupt stop. China Internet Information Center. (August 19, 2004). “Hong Kong scholar sued by entrepreneur.” Retrieved April 2, 2006, from http://www.china.org.cn/english/China/104465.htm; China Internet Information Center. (August 3, 2005). “Six Kelon executives detained.” Retrieved April 2, 2006, from http://www.china.org.cn/english/China/137292.htm.

147 Wang Binyu (1977-2005) was a migrant worker who killed four of his foremen’s comrades and seriously injured another in summer 2005 when he failed to collect payment after many attempts for his father’s urgently needed medical treatment. He turned himself in with plenty of hopes but was immediately ruled to be executed. Despite frantic online criticisms, Wang was secretly executed on the 50th day after turning himself in.


Former commentator of People’s Daily and China Youth Daily, Ma (1946-) is now a commentator for Phoenix TV in Hong Kong. His article “New Thinking on Relations with Japan” (Dui Ri xin siwei) in the final 2002 issue of Strategy and Management (zhanlue yu guanli), its unilateral claim that Japan’s “apology question has been resolved” in particular, triggered enormous nationalist responses throughout the web. Qtd. In Peter Hays Gries. (2005). “China Eyes the Hegemon.” From University of Colorado. Retrieved April 23, 2006, from http://socsci.colorado.edu/~gries/articles/texts/Gries2005ChinaEyesHegemon.pdf.

Head of a Shenyang crime ring, Liu was sentenced to death in April 2002, but won a two-year reprieve in August 2003 upon appeal to the Liaoning Provincial Higher People’s Court with the strong backup of the majority of Chinese judicial experts on the basis of “humanism” (rendaozhuyi). He was sentenced to death by the Supreme People’s Court in December 2003 following persistent popular anger at the reprieve. People’s Daily Online. (December 22, 2003). “Shenyang gang leader Liu Yong gets death penalty.” Retrieved April 1, 2006, from http://english.people.com.cn/2OO312/22/eng20031222_130952.shtml.


Former Deputy Chief of CASS, Liu (1923-) is a famed market economist who explicitly critiqued in summer 2005 elements of “capitalist restoration” within the state superstructure and called instead for the re-stressing of a “socialist” economy in the reform process. The full-text transcript of his most famous July 15 discussion with cadres from the Ministry of Education is available from China Economics Education Scientific Research Net (Zhongguo jingjixue jiaoyu keyan wang) at http://web.cenet.org.cn/upfile/79615.doc. Subsequent discussions both online and offline were massive and heated. The long-abandoned ideological warfare between the pro-socialist Left and the “capitalist readers’-rightists in the Maoist historical sensibility—has since been brought into the public domain in light of China’s extremely contentious neoliberal developments.


Long promoted as the sole model of the post-Mao “Dabaogan” individual responsibility system in agricultural production, Xiaogang Cun of Anhui Province “took the lead” in the practice and is propagated as “the source of the Chinese countryside reform.” However, in its first visit to Nanjie Cun in January 2006, the Xiaogang Cun Party leadership expressed wishes to “organize the peasants” (ba nongmin zuzhi qilai) and “learn from Nanjie Cun and consolidate the collectivist economy towards mutual affluence.” (xuexi Nanjie Cun, zhuangda jiti jingji, zouxiang gongtong fuyu) Fengyang China. (n.d.). “Xiaogang, the source of the Chinese Countryside Reform ‘Dabaogan.’” CCTV Forum. Retrieved April 26, 2006, from http://www.cctv.com/forumthread.jsp?id=7589622.

In its first appearance since 1992, the pen name Huangfu Ping resurfaced through Zhou Ruijin’s January 2006 essay “The Reform [is] unshakable,” which drew massive criticisms online. Former
deputy editor-in-chief of People's Daily, Zhou (1939-) asserted in the article that “The new problems faced during the Reform can only be dealt with by further reform” (Gaige zhong mianlin de wenti, zhineng yong jinyibu gaige lai jiejue), and that “since we’ve been profoundly influenced by orthodox socialist theory and planned economy, which frequently fail to grasp situational changes, [some people] often make radical ideological interpretations in encountering problems, and impute such problems to the Reform.” Huangfu Ping. (January 26, 2006). Finance and Economics (caijing). From NetEase. Retrieved January 27, 2006, from http://talk.163.com/06/0126/01/28BVRABE00301J1.html.


Zhou’s remarks have been echoed by rightist support. For a radical recent account, see Wu Min. (May 27, 2006). “Unshakably Insist on Guarding Primarily Against the ‘Left’.” From Guangming guancha. Retrieved June 1, 2006, from http://guancha.gmw.cn/show.aspx?id=9033. Officially, on June 5, 2006, People’s Daily published a 3,000-word article named “Unshakably Keep to the Path of the Reform, In Order to Provide Powerful Impetus and Systematic Assurance for the Realization of the Objectives of the 11th Five-Year Plan” (Haobu dongyao de jianchi gaige, wei shixian 'Shiyi Wu' guihua mubiao tigong qiangda dongle he itzhi baoshiang). The author was Zhong Xuanli, an apparent and awkward abbreviation of Zhongyang xuanchuanbu lilun ju — Central Propaganda Department Theory Bureau. The page-2 article was posted on Great Power a day prior to its publication on June 4, 2006 by forum moderators, who kept the article atop all other discussions and colored its topic red to attract browsers’ attention. With over 40,000 hits and 240 follow-up replies, a dominant majority of which voiced explicit discontent at particularly its outright emphasis that “The glorious achievements in the past 28 years demonstrated that reform is the only road for China to achieve prosperity. Without reform China could not make further progress, nor could it keep the achievements that have been scored” and bold claim that “The urgency and complexity of reform calls for absolute determination to advance the reform. A balance should be realised between reform, development and social stability. Reform should be the driving force, development the goal, and stability the prerequisite,” the article is the forum’s most widely-read piece to date. It can be retrieved at http://qglt.com.cn/bbs/ReadFile?whichfile=1407890&typeid=17.

I am referring to Geremie Barmé and Gloria Davies’ essay “Have we been noticed yet,” which relied on a case study of the Cheung Kong-Reading Award controversy in 2000 to “chart the course of recent net-based cultural manifestations and speculate on their historical and intellectual trajectories” through the lens of western liberalism. The essay generalized the matter to the Chinese web without acknowledging the concrete limitations of the neoliberal websites under discussion and their lurking counterpart of guerrilla leftist websites. Geremie R. Barmé and Gloria Davies (2004): 75-103.
3
The Internet: Breaking Through the Besieged Fortress

A "Brave New World"

That the capitalist system engendered the Internet in no way indicates that a social order contrary to capital is impossible with the emerging communication technology. Many have contended that the pervasiveness of new digital technologies will ultimately lead to the demise rather than consolidation of capitalism. Dyer-Witheford, for one, envisions "an information-age communism," where the communication channels of old and new "serve as routes for a flow of participatory decision making." Resistance is not merely a result of oppression; instead, it is embedded in it. Although technology naturally assumes a different character and thus fosters different impacts in different countries, structures of capital's intended exploitation of audience power are nonetheless relatively homogenous. Dallas Smythe's brilliant assessment of capital's intention to turn audiences into passive commodities notwithstanding, Dyer-Witheford argues that "the more interesting question is how it fails." This is because like labor power, which is never completely controllable, audience power too "is a disobedient subjectivity that evades, resists, and reshapes technological controls...The audience do not passively accept hypodermic injection with narcotic messages, but rather are active agents who engage in thousands of little lines of flight and fight" against capital's "ability to naturalize commodification, to impose its 'class-ifying' grids of surveillance, to suppress news of struggles, to censor, mystify, and deceive."
The same can be argued of the Internet in China. As with the transformative society in which it is nurtured and situated, Internet in China has internalized both the discourses and substances of neoliberal globalization. Indeed, although “virtually every government in the world directly manages important aspects of the Internet,” the Chinese government is among the most active and merciless. Jack Linchuan Qiu documents the historical legacy as well as the current state sponsorship and advocacy of “techno-nationalism,” a theme that he believes is rooted in Chinese indignation and humiliation in the ashes of the Opium War and has significantly intensified since 1949. Although global forces, the institutions and interests of which are cheerfully enmeshed in the country’s booming urban market, were instrumental in forming the Internet in China, the Party state has attempted to utilize the Internet as a means to improve material living while sustaining and reinforcing the authoritarian status quo by constructing it as a purely economic instrument free from the political, thereby maintaining a “depoliticized” “public sphere.” This attempt was reinforced by different state agencies and Party organs’ increasing attention to the web and claims to regulate it since 2000. Originally an assignment of the Ministry of Public Security, the Ministry of Information Industry, the Ministry of State Secrecy, and the State Council Information Office, as well as the State Administration Of Film, Radio, and Television, the State Administration of Industry and Commerce and the Ministry of Education have all “gained power in controlling specific types of Internet access, online content, or web-based transactions.” Most recently, Hu Jintao’s rhetorical emphasis on the “socialist moralities” of “Eight Honors and Disgraces” (ba rong ba chi) has led to a national promotion campaign in which the first grand-scale official project of regulating Internet content came into being. During Hu’s
April 2006 visit to the United States, Sina, Sohu, NetEase, and 11 other influential Chinese websites collectively drafted a “proposal to run websites in a civilized way” (wenming banwang changyishu). The next day, the “civilized Internet” (wenming wangluo) campaign was launched with the slogans “run websites in a civilized way, surf online in a civilized way” (wenming banwang, wenming shangwang). On April 12, The Internet Society of China (Zhongguo hulianwang xiehui) called on its 2,600-plus members and businesses to promote the healthy development of Internet businesses. Its proposal “calls for concerted efforts to supervise content, delete ‘unhealthy’ information and oppose acts that undermine ‘Internet civilization’, harm social stability and hamper development of Internet businesses.”

Social and psychological impacts of this campaign remain to be seen. Yet the reasons for its creation are sufficient to explain how the Internet has emerged as “a conduit through which the existing propensities of the Chinese society itself are set free.” As is revealed in previous chapters, enduring state efforts have not ensured entirely favorable situations. In most cases, they have produced consequences other than what the state authorities intended. The rise and development of ideological debates on the tightly controlled Chinese web is an ideal illustration. Year 2003 saw the reintegration of a unified Chinese leftism and its aggressive comeback online. A turning point in the development of Chinese leftism, it was from this time onwards that leftists rushed online to find room to breathe in a society dominated by neoliberalism and its various propagandists and representatives. The online discussion grew and began to reflect and affect the deepening tensions of Chinese society offline. The all-round outburst of resentment online was reinforced by the Party Left’s turn to cyberspace in the same year.
and joined with existing critiques by intellectual leftists offline. Thus China's polarized social realities that had been accumulating since 1978, which had not been discussed in the forced silence after 1989, and had been prohibited exposure beginning with full-scale market reforms in 1992, came finally into the light of the day on the Internet in 2003.

To further elaborate the significance of 2003, we must return to the earlier posed question as to why the 2001 open letter, which was essentially the same as the 2003 antiwar statement, never received adequate attention. There are two dimensions to the answer. One was the subjective tactic of the 20 scholars, all of whom were professors, doctoral candidates or social activists residing outside of mainland China. Not fully realizing the potential of a participatory Internet and their own limitations, the signers' method of drafting an open letter itself failed to correspond with the increasingly anti-elitist, pro-populist nature of the Internet in China.

The other was the objective situation of the year 2001, in which 9/11 and all the ambivalences it brought forward to the western world were overwhelmed by a quasi-frantic display of empty Han Chinese nationalism in both the China that was online and the one that was not. At least in the mainstream media, 2001 was marked by China's entry into the WTO and Beijing's winning of the right to host the 2008 Summer Olympic Games. The men soccer team's first-ever entry into the World Cup finals was another huge nationalist boost. Crazed youngsters on Beijing's streets spent little time in anything other than expressing their excitement for the alleged successes of the entire nation; urban folks elsewhere shared much of the same joy. Few bothered to note the content of such successes, and still fewer took the time to critically consider the underlying implications. Even the April 18th air force collision with the U.S. served little purpose
other than objectively preparing the amplification of optimism and nationalism in the months that followed.\textsuperscript{19}

This ultra-optimistic sentiment shifted in early 2003. China’s “entry into the world system” had little to contribute in bringing its ideological and social contradictions to an end.\textsuperscript{20} Those excluded and repressed in the country’s neoliberal reform process had “entered the world” (\textit{ru shī}) and “connected to the global track” (\textit{yu guoji jiegui}) along with its primary promoters and beneficiaries, and had begun to seek to “speak out in their own ways, with or without the mainstream press.”\textsuperscript{21} A year into the WTO, the peasant problem had been, contrary to the decade-old promise of mainstream neoliberal economists and the government, magnified rather than resolved.\textsuperscript{22} Li Changping, a former local Party official, published his struggles against corruption and exploitation with local cadres in January 2002. This compilation was the book \textit{Telling the Prime Minister the Truth} (\textit{Wo xiang zongli shuo shihua}), which became hugely influential for its depiction of the extent to which villagers suffered under the existing agricultural policies.\textsuperscript{23} As many on the Left and few on the Right\textsuperscript{24} had predicted, China’s social polarization was rapidly accelerated. Worse still to the urban population, the nationalist sentiment of 2001 lost favor to the “reverse nationalist” neoliberal elites in face of not only the Iraq war, but issues surrounding the U.S. in general. Following the loss of the American space shuttle Columbia on February 1\textsuperscript{st}, nationalist netters found themselves surrounded by the tearful elites not only in the traditional press, but more significantly online. The self-described “one-night Americans” (\textit{yiye Meiguoren}),\textsuperscript{25} who were overpower ed in the mass media and online in 2001, made an impressive comeback.\textsuperscript{26} This, in conjunction with the antiwar statement, was concurrent with the Chinese
government’s ambiguous stance towards the war and relations with the United States.\textsuperscript{27} Even less remembered by the public is the fact that the day the U.S. invaded Iraq in the name of “fighting terrorism” was also the day the third China-U.S. Anti-terrorism Dialogue (\textit{Zhong Mei disanci fankong cuoshang}) was held in Beijing. In this regard, at a time when the global antiwar campaign was becoming increasingly powerful while Chinese antiwar protest was heavily suppressed, when the Chinese Right did not even attempt to reconcile their interests with those of the commonfolk, and when the number of Chinese netters doubled,\textsuperscript{28} the 2003 events together marked a visible historical leap in the development of Chinese Internet power, which comprehensively elevated Left/Right debate from the conventional forums of the print press and television to the world online. The problematic distinction between the Old Left, Center Left, New Left, New Conservatives, and Liberals ceased to be accurate in reflecting this general trend; a new Chinese leftism (or rather, a broad alliance of Chinese “leftisms”\textsuperscript{29}) began to take shape.

\textbf{Figure 2 Chinese Netters}

\begin{center}
\textbf{Growth of Chinese Netters}
\end{center}

\begin{figure}[h]
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\end{figure}
The period from 2001 to 2003 saw one of the largest increases in the number of Chinese netters to date from 2.25 million in January 2001 to 7.95 million in December 2003. This dramatic rise of Internet popularity had a significant impact on its peculiar status today in the authoritarian context of Chinese society, where the neoliberal restructuring of the national communication and cultural industries has displayed the dual objectives of ideological legitimation and capital accumulation. The vast increase of netters in 2003 is also due to the fear of the SARS epidemic among urban Chinese, who were advised to—and most did—stay inside. Many youngsters turned to the web during this time of deep anxiety, which offered them not a space of escape, but one of relatively free expression and voluntary participation. By 2003, of all the dissenting forces that were desperately seeking such a space on the web, the leftists had begun to gain popular momentum in their distinguished critiques of Chinese society's underlying tensions and the potential dangers of neoliberalism, both of which urban middle class netters—not to mention segments of peasant-and-worker netters—could relate to their daily experiences. This trend was significant, especially in the context of the SARS outbreak, when many felt a need to be secured by, perhaps more than ever, the presence of a strong state administration. The Hu-Wen leadership responded to this implicit nationalist call in its rookie year, but was fairly slow in reacting to other criticisms of the government bureaucracy, which were considered threats to the Party state’s legitimacy. The online leftists occupied this very space that the new leadership was incapable of entering. They openly supported state measures in combating SARS and were at the same time harshly critical of the systemic inequalities that the epidemic revealed. They confidently asserted, not without support within the Party establishment, that the pathological consequences of
SARS were not due to mere incidental negligence, but to structural problems. Many pointed to how the nation’s medical services had deteriorated in poorer areas and falling state allocations since the Mao era. Some further argued that the outbreak of SARS itself is result of “the gradual demolition of the entire public health care system.” The leftists’ dual emphases of supporting the current administration and critiquing it in a historical perspective, as well as their elite representatives’ associations with the Party, were quite unmatched by neoliberals, whose malison met with and resulted in the explosion of online leftism.

In almost every way, the Internet represents a brave new world for China. It is Wang Hui’s observation that the Internet has brought three important gains: 1) it creates a space of direct exchange between mainland and overseas Chinese intellectuals; 2) it allows many directly political issues to be addressed, which the print media in the mainland cannot touch, and 3) it spreads information from local levels very quickly across the country, which otherwise would not receive national attention. In other words, the “information highway” carries a potential to link local, national and international spaces, and intervention in such spaces without having to bear absolute responsibility. Another important novelty created by the online space is that the Internet language carries much more emancipatory potential than the obnoxious jargon of academia. The language of “the professional” is brilliantly discussed by Pierre Bourdieu:

In secondary and higher education, it is taken for granted that the language of ideas elaborated by the academic and scientific tradition and also the second-order language of allusions and cultural complicities are second nature to intelligent and gifted individuals; or better, that the ability to understand and manipulate these learned languages – artificial languages par excellence – where we see the natural language of human intelligence at work immediately distinguishes intelligent students from all the rest. It is thanks to this ideology of
a profession that academics can vouch for professional judgments as strictly equitable. But in reality they consecrate cultural privilege. Language is the most active and elusive part of the cultural heritage which each individual owes to this background.\textsuperscript{35}

My view of intellectual jargon is not restricted to those used by the “New Left,” who are indeed often criticized as importing undesirable and unreadable discourses, but to all contemporary western terminologies alike that are primitively and unfairly translated (and some are awfully transliterated), mostly without the context in which they were historically produced, which makes them extremely inaccessible and meaningless for even the moderately educated urban Chinese. The professional discourse of the Chinese intelligentsia produces the primary form of the “besieged fortress” (\textit{wei cheng}), where a small inner group claims to speak for the vast outside group from which it is fundamentally alienated. The group on the inside attempts to reach out, while the outside group tries to break in. Both strive to make meaning of the conditions of their existence through such actions by \textit{preserving} the fortress on which those very conditions are socially constructed. This image, also historically explanatory of the “countryside surrounding cities” (\textit{nongcun baowei chengshi}) pattern of Chinese society, depicts the inherent contradictions of China’s intellectuals. \textsuperscript{36} The 1990s’ intellectual debates between Left/Right in the pages of \textit{Dushu}, \textit{Xueren}, \textit{Tianya}, and \textit{Twenty-first Century} were certainly inspirational, but they played no more historical role than that of harbinger of the intensification of such polarized exchanges online. The “audience,” the outer group, had no interest in “theoretical discussions” \textit{per se}, but when the debate began to focus on the most imperative issues of the day in a guerilla form of grassroots expression, it attracted their attention.
Protracted guerrilla warfare: leftists' space of survival online

Most of today’s popular online leftists did not voluntarily turn to the web. The first voluntary move came from a joint effort by overseas Party leftists and students in the 1996 nationalist movement among overseas Chinese to protect the Senkaku Islands (a.k.a. Diaoyu Dao or Fishing Islands in Chinese), a disputed territory between China and Japan. It was against this background that a number of senior Party leftists whose survival space were pushed overseas and several Chinese students in North America, including Tong Xiaoxi, then a PhD student and assistant researcher at the University of Chicago, launched the now-famous monthly netzine China and the World on October 1, PRC’s National Day. All of its moderators resided overseas, most within North America. The first of its kind, the journal was then composed of an electronic magazine, a website and a discussion forum. Its aim was no less ambitious than its name. China and the World’s initiators announced it as an independent, nongovernmental journal that analyzes current affairs and discusses theory and idea to 1) critically comprehend the global capitalist system; 2) earnestly revisit the historical experiences of the Chinese and the global socialist movement, and 3) explore an indigenous Chinese road of development beyond western capitalism. Most of the journal’s early articles were contributed by the students and like-minded individuals who emailed their works to the editors. Operated completely by volunteers, a huge chunk of the site’s initial funding came from overseas Chinese nationalists (including those from Taiwan and Hong Kong) who were at the same time activists in the Protecting Diaoyu Islands Movement (baodiao yundong) of that year. When they stopped donating shortly after the movement, however, the site’s moderators were left completely to themselves in sustaining the website. Most student

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contributors were busy with schoolwork and had little income, and its Party initiator, then a recent immigrant to the U.S., was still struggling to make a living wage.\textsuperscript{38}

Difficulties notwithstanding, \textit{China and the World} did receive particular attention from the Chinese government. In its earliest years, this attention was overwhelmingly positive. The Chinese Ministry of Education openly supported the website and once named it as one of the “recommended sites to Chinese youths.” Official support disappeared by the turn of the century, though, when \textit{China and the World} became increasingly associated with its mandate to “go against the tide amidst the international media monopolized by imperialist culture” (\textit{zai diguozhuyi wenhua longduan de guoji meiti zhong fan chaoliu}),\textsuperscript{39} a tide which Party officials are only eager to ride. The government no longer offered even rhetorical praise in the media and began instead to hunt it down. Although its servers were in the U.S., the website had to move its address, IP and the like time and time again with the government on its back. The severity of the situation was exacerbated by extensive disagreements among the site’s moderators. Most disagreements centered around three issues. The upfront concern was readership. Developed at a time when Internet in China was only beginning to take shape, some argued that because the site’s first readers were not the disenfranchised Chinese masses that they sought to reach, its target audience and configuration had to be restructured accordingly. A second issue related to censorship. During the last years of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century, in which diplomatic tensions between China and the U.S. reached a historical peak after 1978, student moderators contended that the site’s U.S. base was an invitation to government censorship. The last contention came with Beijing’s violent crackdown of Falun Gong in 1999. Some Falun Gong practitioners moved immediately online; their
rampant activities on *China and the World*'s forums brought moderators to a sharp divide between those who saw it as a threat and those who did not.

Such an internal struggle needs to be understood historically. While most of the first online leftists, however different in their visions and critiques, were forced together under the immediate banner of the overseas Party Left, because of the extent of rightwing domination within China, the collective leftist voice could not help but to be driven to the equally extreme Left with no real consensus, thereby sounding substantially more radical than the actual diversity within it suggests. For the earliest Chinese online leftists, the development of that presumed (in reality, "desired") collectivity was constantly brought to a standstill in the face of both state and self censorship.

The result was hardly advantageous for either party. *China and the World* closed its website and forum, leaving only the monthly netzine section. As its first student moderators graduated, moved back to China and began to be associated with the intellectual "New Left," a new generation of overseas students and other contributors filled in. The organizational and theoretical framework of the journal started to shift accordingly. As it was no longer censored by the Chinese government after it retreated to a mere electronic journal, *China and the World* became increasingly connected with popular leftism elsewhere online. The value of its existence thus declined to a mere symbolic one. The journal’s most radical critiques have gradually diminished and been displaced by more cautious criticisms, the core of which is termed by some leftists as the "Third Plenum Faction" (*sanzhongquanhui pai*)—a name given to the current remainders of the so-called Party Left who uphold Deng’s reform initiatives at 1978’s Third Plenum but applaud the very Maoist achievements that the Plenum denounced. Moreover, as
Internet power developed and leftist voices flourished elsewhere on the web, with its core original writers graduating or trapped with other work, the journal’s articles now are mostly cross-posted—and sometimes heavily edited—from other forums.40

While such a transformation indicated the intensity of official containment that the first online Chinese leftists together faced and the level of internal contention among themselves, the gradual decline of China and the World’s influence did not bring forth the state’s anticipated end to online leftism. It simply moved elsewhere. Because they were treated no better even in the online space occupied for the precise reason of fleeing neoliberal supremacy than in their offline lives, most leftist expressions were still inherently of a guerrilla form, and many proudly utilized the same tactic developed by the Communist army almost a century ago: “The enemy advances, we retreat; the enemy camps, we harass; the enemy tires, we attack; the enemy retreats, we pursue” (Dijinwotui, dizhuwora, dipiwoda, dituiwozhui). The Internet offers an ideal medium for such tactic of intervention without responsibility, and online leftists (as well as those on the Right) have made fine use of it.

That said, even the most competent guerrillas require a base area in which rehabilitation, production, education and development take place, and through which large scale organized operations can be initiated once their power allows. For the Chinese Communist army these were the Jinggang Mountains and Yan’an. For the present-day online Chinese leftist, these are the Great Power Forum and Xinhua Development Forum, especially the former, to which many earlier leftists fled. Both are established as online sections of the People’s Daily and Xinhua News agency, the most vital Party mouthpieces, but have nonetheless ironically grown into active leftist base areas. Like
China and the World’s creation in the wake of the 1996 nationalist upsurge, Great Power came into being during a similar but stronger nationalist wave in 1999. By spring 1999, People’s Daily Online had been in operation for nearly two years and had received minimal attention with its outdated and non-interactive content. The NATO bombing of the Chinese Embassy on May 8 changed it all. On May 9, in the hope of releasing and evacuating public anger, People’s Daily Online launched Protesting NATO Atrocity (kangyi beiyue baoxing) Forum. In a month, the number of its posts exceeded 200,000. By September, three months after being renamed to the Great Power (Qiangguo) Forum, it ranked first among all Chinese Internet forums in the number of posts. The angered, distressed, upset and concerned netters, some not yet aware of their leftist orientation, took advantage through participation on the mouthpiece forum in the Party’s first stab at utilizing the interactiveness of the net. Rightist articles were fragmented, marginalized and detested while leftist articles were welcomed, supported and cross-posted.

By 2000, Great Power enjoyed unparalleled popularity across Chinese Internet forums, which corresponded to the rise of other nationalist-triggered leftist discussion forums established around 1999. But after the initial blowout of nationalist sentiment in response to the NATO bombing, leftist voices were still essentially weak on Great Power by about early to mid-2001. It was during this time that a leftist netter by the pseudonym of Liangshanbo submitted various posts defensive and/or reminiscent of Mao to Great Power. Some of the articles were never passed and posted, and the ones that did triggered fierce debates in favor of the rightwing anti-Mao netters before deleted by the forum’s moderators. Seeing little room for expressing his views on Great Power, Liangshanbo opened his own Mao Zedong Forum (Mao Zedong luntan) for debates
around the late leader, an effort which paralleled that of *Mao Zedong Study* (*Mao Zedong xuehui*, http://www.maostudy.org), a U.S.-based netzine established in May 2000 for a similar purpose. With the support and participation of most of *China and the World*’s moderators, who were making a first attempt at cooperating with mainland Chinese leftists online, *Mao Zedong Forum* gained enormous popularity and its number of hits reached 500,000 in just a few months.

That cooperation, though, was not smooth. After all, the CPC “knows all-too well how communication can mobilize social movements.” As some of the new forum’s moderators reside in mainland China rather than overseas, government censorship was both convenient and effective. Censorship was not privileged against *Mao Zedong Forum* alone, of course; other emerging leftist sites too were either censored or closed. These included student-operated *Shanghai Red Flag* (*Shanghai hongqi*), which opened in August 2000 and was shutdown by *Etang*, the site’s server in June 2001; *Huayue Forum* (*Huayue luntan*), which was established in the U.S. and operated by several overseas Chinese that claimed no interest in politics, was and still is censored within mainland China, especially after its discussants published the meeting minutes from the March 2006 “Xishan Conference” and critiques of Zhong Xuanli’s June 2006 *People’s Daily* article on the necessity of persistent “reform”; Zhang Guangtian and his comrades’ various websites on working class literature such as *Music Dazibao* (*yinyue dazibao*), *Blackboard Tabloid Literature* (*heibanbao wenyi*), *Sunflower Literature* (*xiangrikui wenyi*), *Red Flag Literature* (*hongqi wenyi*), *Reading Notes* (*dushu biji*), and many more.
By fall 2002, when online leftism was at a critical point and offline social forces were accumulating for a substantial eruption in China,\textsuperscript{58} China and the World's moderators had been preparing for the launch of another website and a subsequent forum for over four months. Since Mao Zedong Forum was soon to be shutdown, its archives were transferred to http://cn.geocities.com/mzdbbsjh1. The new website Peasant-worker World and its discussion forum, Protagonist Forum, had been open for testing since April. The moderators made explicit their objective to unite domestic as well as overseas forces in organizing this latest base area. Of the new site's moderators, many were university students or recent graduates, who made up for the lack of technical skills of the senior administrator. Intensive exchanges took place between domestic and overseas students and the senior moderators of China and the World online as to how the site ought to be structured, how its layout should be designed, what the relevant network security procedures were and the ways in which they could be implemented. Since these activists, virtually none of whom were then close acquaintances in offline lives, vary quite sharply in age, education, background, experience and personality, the Internet provided a perfect medium through which they effectively communicated across international boundaries.\textsuperscript{59} Group communication on the Internet took the form of email exchanges, QQ (China's most popular online chatting service) and MSN chats and voice conversations.\textsuperscript{60} But the emancipation in communication technologies did not translate directly into the lived experiences of forum participants offline. It is said that some of the forum's moderators who reside in China were summoned by the government, a number of them were taken to local courts, and a few were briefly held in custody.\textsuperscript{61}
Shortly after it was launched for public access, *Peasant-worker World* moderators began to recognize disparities between China’s semi-dystopian realities and their own quasi-utopian visions. The administrator stopped updating *Peasant-worker World* and determined to concentrate on developing *Protagonist Forum* instead. This tactic worked well. Months into its operation, *Protagonist* had already earned a fame; meanwhile, *Great Power* was demonstrating decisive signs of a left-turn. By early 2003, *Great Power*’s pro-neoliberal moderators were categorically displaced by Left sympathizers. As the level of tolerance rose, the dominant majority of *Great Power* participants gradually turned leftist.

**Case study: Protagonist Forum and its associates**

An interesting microcosm of Chinese leftism in simultaneous reconstitution with the country’s social relations since the 1990s, *Protagonist Forum* is operated by neither orthodox Party leftists, critical intellectuals inside and out of the establishment, nor social groups disenfranchised by the post-Mao reforms. Its administrators and core participants span across a variety of political economic position, and are drawn together by a self-conscious view of the “united leftist front” (*zuoyi tongyi zhanxian*). Thus, while senior management cautiously encourages the “long suppressed discourse on social class,” it also modifies some of the more radical discussions by passionate students and off-post workers. In the online domain, *Protagonist* is tactically aligned with other philosophical sites and discussion-based forums as well as nationalist forums such as *Patriots’ Alliance* (*aiguzhe tongmeng*), which has been active in organizing online petitions and offline demonstrations pursuing a nationalist agenda. Some of *Protagonist*’s moderators hold administrative and/or editorial positions across many leftist websites, including *China*
and the World, Flag, China Workers’ Net, and Utopia. Among them, Protagonist is characterized by both its vast and timely news update, which gained its nickname as the online Reference News (cankao xiaoxi), and its firsthand coverage of ongoing social unrest by genuine peasant and worker participants and those who work with them. The sites’ cooperation is predicated on the consensus that Internet should be not only a space of self-expression (ziwo biaoda), but one of expanding networks (kuoda lianhuo).

Offline, Protagonist has since 2003 held in conjunction with Utopia and Flag a number of unofficial seminars and conferences on the undesirable consequences of China’s reform process and ad hoc discussion panels on particular social issues. Some of its members have also been active in ethnographic research with the peasant-worker public in different parts of the country. The forum’s senior administrator understands such praxis in the Maoist dialectic that “what has come from the masses must go back to the masses” (cong qunzhong zhong lai, bixu haiyao dao qunzhong zhong qu), that a “mass line” (qunzhong luxian) must be adapted with an emphasis on mobilizing mass enthusiasm, and that the Internet in such a scenario has a role in reflecting, conceptualizing and offering practical feedback on social contentions, all of which involve the essential question of the forum’s team organization (zuzhi duiwu).

It is in relation to the issue of organization that the problematic of effective resistance is articulated for the Protagonist management. In their own words: “No organization, no strength—indeed. But what is the organization, what does it entail under what conditions against what circumstances with what methods? These questions ought to be given critical consideration.” The senior administrator views online leftism and their participation in forming a united front and tempering revolutionary forces (duanlian
generating duiwu) in the Marxist dialectic as mechanisms by which humans strive for self-emancipation. While it claims it is imperative to “overcome anything that impairs this unity” of the leftist front, the group’s perception of the organization-strength dichotomy is presented with an emphasis on the active consciousness of leftists and the general public. Reference is constantly made to the 1999 anti-WTO protests in Seattle, which for *Protagonist* moderators highlight not the technical innovations in the organization through emails and short-text messages, but the anti-WTO consciousness of those who received such information and determined to participate.

Despite such concerns, *Protagonist* moderators are not ultimately interested in the quality and purity of the forum’s discussions per se. In responding to the issue of Chinese leftists’ survival space online, they urge the realization that besides the apparent question of whether any online existential space is officially permitted, a more important dimension is the activity and degree of success of leftist participants’ own quest for such space. Both are premised upon struggles—one external, the other internal. In their observation, Chinese Internet administrators (and perhaps the net police as well) are at an ideological divide as wide and as sharp as the one in “the real world” offline, which has been and should still be exploited by netters from both sides. Achievements notwithstanding, the forum moderators assert that the structural weaknesses revealed by leftist setbacks are results of “‘left-wing’ childishness” (zuoyi youzhibing) following Lenin’s critiques in “‘Left-Wing’ Childishness and the Petty-Bourgeois Mentality” and “Left-Wing Communism: an Infantile Disorder.” For them, the online sphere is but “a flank of the struggles in praxis” (xianshi douzheng de yige cemian), the conditions of which are far more favorable than the Communist revolution (1927-1949) thanks to
socioeconomic improvements since then. They see circumstances of living for Chinese peasants and workers as meliorating on the whole,\textsuperscript{72} which does not invalidate their struggles but reflects the different levels of demands disenfranchised groups raise in different historical periods.

As well, \textit{Protagonist} moderators stress the historical regression of the Chinese working class since the launch of Deng’s economic reforms in 1978 from a “class-for-itself” in the Maoist period back to a “class-in-itself” of the pre-1949 era.\textsuperscript{73} While giving inspiration to many similar sites, this line of observation on the part of \textit{Protagonist} is also carried forward by managers and discussants at other sites and forums. \textit{Communists Net} is one such example. Although the two shared no operational connections, \textit{Protagonist} administrators were actively involved in preparing the new site prior to its launch. Inasmuch as “there are too many fake Communists within the Party,” the senior administrator explicitly stated the new site’s aim was to stand against the fake (\textit{chang duitaixi}). It was also determined that the site should serve the purposes of uniting “true Party Communists” and the masses external to the Party. Contrary to conventional partisan distinctions, anyone equipped with a communist consciousness (\textit{gongchanzhuyi juewu}) is considered “communist” (\textit{Gongchandang ren})—thus the website’s name, which is intended to “draw a clear, outright line of demarcation with revisionism” (\textit{qizhi xianming de he xiuzhengzhuyi huazing jiexian}).\textsuperscript{74}

Yan Yuanzhang, a \textit{Protagonist} netter before becoming an administrator of \textit{China Workers Net}, holds a more radical view of the situation in line with his fellow comrades. In his 2003 research in the Northeastern mining city of Fuxin, Yan wrote:
Poverty and family as well as social problems incurred by it have pervasively infiltrated the day-to-day lives of the worker, and are habitually tolerated. The virus is diffusing in the body, [but] lethal forces have not yet come into being. In here, at least from the level of appearance, individual workers, pressured by day-to-day survival and education of their offspring, are incapable of considering other matters. Those who can practically shoulder the role of examining the history and future of the collective are not yet born within this class. As a class transforming from a “class-for-itself” to a “class-in-itself,” [the Chinese proletariat], being stripped off the economic conditions for its organization, with its class consciousness blurred and political quests manipulated, is no longer capable of influencing society as an active protagonist force and is instead seen as a potential threat that is on the accelerating road of being transformed to the employed laborer.75

*China Workers Net* was an attempt to update and discuss working class rights issues. During an interview by Stephen Philion of *Monthly Review* after the site’s shutdown, Yan commented:

...if you want to prevent attacks on the Communist Party, it’s best you do the right thing in the first place. So, if you’re going to violate the rights of workers, how do you get off complaining about attacks on your Communist Party? If you claim you’re the leader of the working class and then you turn around and lay off a huge mass of state-owned enterprise workers, without doing anything to protect power or interests of the workers’ unions, of course you’re going to face an angry response from workers...China today is basically controlled by a new capitalist class...The shutting down of a website like ours is, in effect, the silencing of workers who face hardships in today’s China. We can’t rely on intellectuals to accurately express the terms of those hardships. Nor can we expect them to lead the struggles to resolve the class conflicts that cause their pain...for us, *the* issue at hand is the right of Chinese workers to run their own web discussion lists to express themselves without having to encounter obstacles in their own country.76

The tragic encounters of *China Workers Net* prompted solid opposition from Yan and “a new generation of leftists in China who are actively involved in struggles of workers and farmers, stepping into the role that the Party rejected long ago.”77 Another more recent example is *Socialist New Countryside (shehuizhuyi xin nongcun, http://www.xncxnc.com)*, a website that had been prepared for some time before it
opened on March 10, 2006 following the shutdown of the three leftist sites. Although its moderators claim on the site that it is “a scholarly website created by a group of youths concerned about the fate of the Chinese countryside to research its contemporary problems,” they asserted in a follow-up post on Protagonist that “the primary incentives behind creating the New Countryside site are to sparkplug the developmental road of countryside collectivization and to reveal the authentic features of rural development in the Mao period.” Many involved in such a project are themselves Protagonist discussants or at least utilizing the forum’s rich variety of resources for their own struggles; most among them have been compelled to revitalize the historically rebellious character of the Chinese Left.

While they describe intellectual underdevelopment, intra-forum factional disputes, ongoing state censorship and spontaneous rightist sabotage, as well as other difficulties in maintaining the forum—in the four years of its existence thus far, Protagonist has had to change its “home address” (and everything in the original database) six times, the most recent relocation on June 20, 2006, from https://host378.ipowerweb.com/~gongnong/bbs to https://host518.ipowerweb.com/~gongnong/bbs—forum moderators proudly perceive Protagonist’s existence in the metaphor of a nail firmly hammered into the wood to force reexamination of the latter’s solidness. On the other hand, they also note Protagonist’s survival as the state’s deliberate opening for online leftists. Nonetheless, such an opening can always be closed by the state through post-Mao China’s ultimate containment by associating leftists with “the spectre of the Cultural Revolution,” because “the trope of
'leftism' in general (not just 'ultra-leftism')...[has] played the same and perhaps more effective role as the ideology of anti-communism in the U.S. or the 'evil of communism' in right-wing propaganda in Third World authoritarian regimes." As implications of "left" and "right" have shifted, and as rightist demonization of leftists as "attacking the reform" has become increasingly difficult and unconvincing, the implementation of such tactics in the popular press is already beginning to be seen. A case in point is a March 2006 article in Nanfang Weekend, which cited Li Xianyuan and Qiushike, both Protagonist netters—the first time ever in mainstream Chinese press—as members of an ill-named "popular cultural revolution group."

Case study: the Great Power model

The Great Power exemplifies the structure of most of today's Chinese leftist forums. Websites of such forums are in most instances multifaceted—even Great Power Community, which originated from the sole forum condemning the NATO bombing, has developed into a collection of sub-forums organized around nearly 20 categories such as current affairs, in-depth discussion, anti-corruption, economics, mainland-Taiwan, IT, science and education, sports, environmental protection, reading, love and femininity, media, health, travel, English discussions and so on. No set boundary is established between forum members and outsiders. Visitors are free to read every post, but only registered members can add posts, which are manually monitored and filtered by a handful of moderators, whose participation is generally constrained to the monitoring process. All site moderators have online pseudonyms, and their interaction with and knowledge of the discussants are constructed virtually. An article is either passed and posted to the forum (normally within half an hour of its submission) or not passed; some
are slightly revised. Because the moderators vary considerably in their views about what constitutes an “okay” article and what does not, and because they take shifts during the day when the forum is open (Great Power is open daily from 10am to 10pm), experienced netters often exploit and share their knowledge of the administrative personnel. An article rejected by one moderator may be posted by the next within a minute of submission.

Beside political restrictions, logistical regulations also apply. Great Power’s in-depth discussion zone (shenru taolun qu, http://qglt.com.cn/bbs/chbrd?to=17), its initial and most popular forum, requires each subject post (zhutie) to contain no less than 1,000 bytes. There are no restrictions on follow-up posts (gentie), which are not monitored as strictly as subject posts. Like the subject posts, the apparent first layer of each message, follow-ups are of different layers: some are initial “followers,” and “some are followers of the followers.” At any given moment, the forum’s homepage displays the titles of and links to the 100 latest subject posts and their respective follow-ups. Besides the title of each post, the author’s pseudonym, the date and time of submission and total bytes of the article are shown. Also illustrated are three numbers in brackets. The first describes the number of times the article has been rated positively by forum members, the second refers to the number of times the link has been accessed, and the third identifies the number of follow-ups to the post. The week’s 100 hottest posts, hottest daily posts and Qiangguo Weekly, a new electronic journal that compiles selected articles and pictures from its sub-forums, are exhibited on the top of the main page. Hottest posts of the prior week result from spontaneous computer-automated estimations, but the hottest daily
posts (which are typically posts of the earlier day), numbered anywhere from 13 to 50, are subject to administrative selection and filtration.

The *Great Power* in-depth discussion zone is important for understanding the trend of online Chinese leftism in many ways. As the single most influential online discussion forum in China today, *Great Power* is not only the earliest Party-backed discussion forum, but also one with some 455,000 registered members who actively participate in intense discussions around different topics of interest. Its influence is huge—so much so one often forgets that the forum has gone through several reformations (gai bian), after each of which its popularity was reduced significantly. Access to and search for articles in its older versions are both limited and fragmented, which depressed the passion of many early participants, particularly those who were daily contributors. Even its current version, which contains over 2,900 pages of discussions, where each page displays a hundred subject posts, is only accessible for the first 280 pages and dates back to only September 29, 2005. The search function offered on its homepage is only capable of tracking active netters’ posts since February 2006; the works of those who have not been active since then can no longer be found through the search function. This recurring self-restraining tactic can only be comprehended in light of the forum moderators’ absolute inability to control or even cope with its participants and the forum’s development. How is it that the mouthpiece forum, established as a convenient (management-wise) and obedient (to the current administration) space of temporary survival for the average Chinese nationalist in face of the NATO bombing gradually became a solid base area and hotbed for online leftists? How is it that the forum’s self-proclaimed rightists have degraded to the point where most of their contributions are but
1) cross-posting rightist rhetoric from other forums in subject posts, which are either unread or heavily contested, or 2) cursing and sneering at leftist subject posts in short and repetitive follow-ups that contain little to no information at all? How is it that while its rightist members provide very few original contributions, Great Power's leftist members' contribution have flourished in both quantity and quality? I suspect it is the very failure to address these trends that results in pressure on the forum's administrators to "reform" the site every now and then in order to keep its momentum at a presumably manageable level.

In addition to its steady turn towards a distinctive and increasingly critical leftist identity, Great Power also stands out for the massive volume of its original contributors, most of whom break determinately away from the neoliberal Right. These participants involve not mainstream personalities, but people across a wide range of professions, age groups and backgrounds, from off-post workers to professors, IT professionals, retirees and the like who have developed through their participation on the forum distinguishable virtual personalities and have become popular on the basis of their online work. No solid organizational identity can be readily determined among these rather unique individuals other than the common concern for social security, which has earned them the stern label of "leftist." But no tangible group identity is present, and no offline activities of any kind are organized through their participation at Great Power.

Established in 2001, Xinhua Development Forum (Xinhua wang fazhan luntan, http://forum.xinhuanet.com) copied much of the same approach as Great Power and adopted a structure that places most recently replied (rather than most recently posted) posts at the top of its homepage. While this feature leads to many more reads of particular
posts than the *Great Power* framework, it too often and too quickly drowns the majority of quality subject posts by short and meaningless replies. Such a structural inadequacy, coupled with the time in which it was built (being two years later than *Great Power* and coming at a time not of public anger, but public gratulation amidst widespread nationalist excitement during 2001, which resulted in comparatively less online participation), the relatively stricter monitoring regulations,95 and the lack of a group of long-lived, active original writers (many are cross-posted from *Great Power* and elsewhere), all contribute to its embarrassingly weak status compared with *Great Power* and forums of diversified themes.

**Case study: Utopia**

*Protagonist* was examined with an emphasis on its marginal, non-Party status; *Great Power* is contrasted because of its mainstream status as a Party organ. These case studies are so organized because such are the very bases of their popularity. The foundation of *Utopia*, on the other hand, is its intervention offline. Created in 2003 by Han Deqiang and a number of his students to promote their book bar (*shu ba*) in the same name,96 the *Utopia* website has evolved into a much more progressive base for academic praxis. The book bar began operation on September 6, 2003 as a subsidiary of Beijing Utopia Cultural Communications Corporation Limited (*Beijing wuyouzhixiang wenhua chuanbo youxian gongsi*).97 It intends to sell pan-Leftist books (*fan zuoyi de shuji*) published both in China and overseas and offer working-class individuals affordable refreshments. In an apparent reference to the Habermasian ideal of a bourgeois “public sphere,” the bar envisions itself as:
...a small platform through which social progress can be facilitated by pursuing for a fairness-first society and the formation and expansion of a responsible middle-class. The book bar wishes to become a meeting and discussion site for pan-Leftist scholars, cultural personnel, white-collars, entrepreneurs, university students and government officials, a distribution center for related books and information, and an open, idealized, and responsible public spiritual homeland.98

The book bar also holds weekly salons, sometimes in conjunction with Flag and Protagonist, which have attracted elite leftists Cui Zhiyuan and Yang Fan, leftist scholars Zuo Dapei and Han Deqiang, artists Zhang Guangtian and Hong Qi, cultural critics Kong Qingdong and Huang Jisu, state officials Li Changping and Su Tieshan, leftist netters Qiushike, Zhong Qing and Lao Tian, and many other such figures.

The Utopia website has been an important source of leftist discussion complementary to the book bar. With the absence of a discussion forum, the website’s great strengths are its mobilization of intellectual leftists and the quality of their discussions. It links to sites and blogs of 29 known leftists and intellectuals.99 Among them, the server spaces of personal webpages for those who do not have a site or blog of their own is offered by Utopia for free.100 The website is organized into different sections of interest such as the Utopia bookstore, Utopia, revisiting “the reform” (i.e., “journey of ideals,” lixiang zhi lù), theoretical critique (i.e., “thought collision,” sichao pengzhuang), news analysis (i.e., “observation of the times,” shidai guancha), critical globalization (i.e., “global horizons,” guoji zongheng), historical examination (i.e., lishi shiye), cooperative countryside development (i.e., hezuo zhi lù), nationalism (i.e., Zhonghua zhuyi), book review (i.e., dushu jiaoliu), and new art (i.e., wenyi xinsheng). With its slogans of “Fairness expands internal demand; justice creates wealth; equity sparks vitality; freedom enjoys passion” (Gongping kuoda neixu, zhengyi chuangzao caifu, pingdeng jifa huoli, ziyou xiangshou jiqing),101 the website has also been distributing its
electronic periodical since July 2004. Against the background of a rising voice alternative to the mainstream neoliberal discourse, the monthly periodical claims to “liquidate and criticize mainstream discourse and its prejudices.” Its editors also state that they “are not shy of the [journal’s] inseparable linkage to the legacy of the Chinese revolution and the stance of grave concern for China and her vast masses.”

The Utopia website is constantly hacked and its server highly unstable. It was censored and forced to shut down in September 2005 when it began an online petition calling for a better treatment for Wang Binyu, the Gansu migrant worker who turned himself in after murdering his foremen’s comrades after whom he failed to collect unpaid wages through other means. As Wang faced secret execution, the website opened again one month later at a different address (from http://www.wyzxwyzx.com to http://www.wyzxsx.com) on the condition that it would limit its activities to purely academic discussions.

From “base areas” to “liberated zones”?
The Chinese Internet, its BBS portion in particular, whereby timely, anonymous, and grassroots publication has been fostered, is clearly reminiscent of the dazibao culture officially outlawed by the rightwing leadership since 1980. Both allow even the least literate commonfolk to freely voice their views by pasting dazibao on walls or posting articles online, and both are monitored, albeit minimally, in the process: a dazibao torn down by managers and cadres can be re-pasted, and an article filtered by moderators of one forum can be posted on another. Moreover, similar to the dazibao, the Internet in China has “greatly enhanced the people’s source of news during a time when little information could be accessed,” although both have been critiqued as unreliable for the
anonymity of their sources. The reliability issue reveals a structural dilemma for netters: in instances where such reliability is assured by a consistently trustworthy virtual identity, the confidentiality of the message senders is inevitably jeopardized.

A second institutional handicap of the Internet is that despite technological optimism regarding its innovating, enhancing and liberating features, it is not the tangible social world in which we live and therefore does not and cannot solve “real world problems” as such solely in cybersphere without engaging with the everyday offline world. This then poses the question that if Internet can indeed assist in breaking through the besieged fortress by raising urban consciousness and organizing the progressive Left into distinct “base areas,” is online engagement itself sufficient to develop such base areas into “liberated zones”—i.e., sites by which offline movements can be consistently initiated in the conventional sense? Ultimately, then, the question returns to what Mao was asked by the young Lin Biao when the first Chinese Red Army base area was established in 1928: “How much longer can the red flag hold?” (Hongqi hai neng da duojiu?) Since many topics raised here require further and more timely research, we may not yet be confident enough to reiterate Mao’s response that “A single spark can start a prairie fire” (Xingxing zhi huo, keyi liaoyuan), but more instructive is perhaps his question in retort: “Why is it that red political power can exist in China?” (Zhongguo de hongse zhengquan weishenme nenggou cunzai?) — Why is it that online leftism can exist in China?

Notes
2 Barrett L. McCormick and Qing Liu. “Globalization and the Chinese media: technologies, content, commerce and the prospects for the public sphere.” In Chinese Media, Global Contexts, edited by


Located in Beijing and governed by Ministry of Information Industry, Internet Society of China (ISC) “was inaugurated on 25th May, 2001 with more than 130 members. ISC was sponsored by more than 70 sponsors, which include network access carriers, ISPs, facility manufacturers and research institutes. At present, there are more than 150 members, most of which are organization members.” Internet Society of China. (n.d.). Retrieved July 8, 2006, from http://www.isc.org.cn/English.


Qiu (2004): 118.

The Chinese media coverage of the nation’s WTO entry is a fine example. With all the energy, meaning, and emotion invested in the trade deal, its content was absent in the entire coverage. Likewise, the potential pay-offs of the Beijing Olympics and the structural deficiencies of men’s soccer were never discussed in the media. The content of alleged successes is thus little more than “an empty sign.” Zhao (2003a): 35.

On April 1, 2001, a U.S. Navy EP-3E surveillance plane, which China later claimed to be spying on Chinese military facilities, was intercepted by the PLA Navy’s J-8IIM fighter jets about 70 miles off the Chinese island of Hainan. One of the J-8 fighter jets hit the wing of the EP-3E. Its pilot, Wang Wei (1968-2001), ejected from the plane and was never found. Chinese military boarded the EP-3E, which was carrying sensitive listening equipment, after it landed in Hainan. The EP-3E crew of 24 was detained and released April 11 after the U.S. issued a letter that contained two “sorries,” which the
Chinese media translated as “apologies.” On April 14, after a search that covered an area of 83,000 square kilometers for the missing pilot, Chinese officials declared Wang Wei presumed dead. The diplomatic crisis accompanied a brief nationalist upsurge, and was soon forgotten. In the face of China’s “successful” entry into the WTO, a scenario in which the U.S. played no small part, the few Chinese media that referred to the April 1 incident as if it served as a catalyst for China’s accession process into the WTO.

For Wang Hui, the opening of the agricultural market has exposed “the scale of the rural crisis, and the lack of any channels for peasants to voice their grievances in a public political sphere.” Wang Hui (2003b): 82. This point is further elaborated in many other studies by Chinese agrarian experts. Huang Ping, for instance, worries that Chinese peasants will suffer as those in some of the Third World did, from landless to jobless and eventually to homeless. See Huang Ping. (n.d.). “The Rural Puzzle in the Structure of Unbalanced Development.” (Bupingheng fazhan geju xia de nongceun kunjing) In Analects of Thought 2004 (Sixiang wenxuan 2004), edited by Luo Gang. Guilin: Guangxi Normal University Press (Guangxi shifan daxue chubanshe), 2004: 233.

Li Changping had filed an official complaint to Zhu Rongji in 2000, who was then Premier. The letter was passed along to Hu Jintao and Wen Jiabao, yet no real action was taken. Li was forced out of his job in September and has since become an intellectual specializing in agrarian studies.

This neoliberal hegemony also resulted in uncritical support among sections of the Chinese public. Following the Columbia incident, groups of university women in Beijing, who never showed the slightest sympathy toward those workers and peasants that suffer on their own land, devoted “flowers and sincere condolences” to the U.S. Embassy. This was echoed in some reports of secondary school students’ call for donations to the U.S. President and NASA.


Its historical ancestor in the May 4th Movement in 1919 was essentially of the same unorganized but connected character.


This has been a blind spot of western media coverage of the issue. Many simply presented the Chinese state as an unwanted liar.


The low level of historical contribution (if not the absolute failure) of the professional discourse of Chinese intellectuals to improving the conditions of the outer group in the past 150 years has been well reflected and documented.


A Party leftist driven out of China, the individual nevertheless still possesses widespread Party affiliations among the existing “Old Left.”


There are currently over ten volunteers to the netzine. China and the World (n.d.).


According to Guo Liang, a CASS Internet researcher and acquaintance of Jiang Yaping, the chief architect of People’s Daily Online, “Jiang and People’s Daily Online had been considering setting up a BBS forum with a ‘brand name’ and had contracted with software developers to make preliminary technical preparations to do so. Nonetheless, they encountered difficulties in finding an entry point that would attract strong responses from Internet users, an issue further compounded by People’s Daily’s reputation as the official organ of the CCP.” The 1999 bombing thus “provided a perfect opportunity, and it was seized right away.” Zhou (2006): 148-9.


One example illustrates this leftist weakness on Great Power at the time. In late 2001, PLA doctor Cai Guangye (1964-) of Hospital 222, an outspoken promoter of class struggle for the socially disenfranchised in the medical system and beyond and a Great Power netter with the pseudonym Xiangangongrenleilianghang (tears of the “off-post” workers), was segregated by Jilin Military Zone Political Department. Cai was sentenced to three years in labor camps in July 2003. His experiences
were never allowed to be discussed on Great Power. Cai was released in December 2004. For more coverage in Chinese, see discussions on Protagonist Forum at https://host378.ipowerweb.com/~gongnong/bbs/read.php?f=3&i=9650&t=9650 as well as https://host378.ipowerweb.com/~gongnong/bbs/read.php?f=3&i=52710&t=52710. With Great Power’s growing leftist influence since this event, none of the forum’s left-leaning discussants, a number of whom are indeed no less militant than Cai was, has been treated similarly.

46 The two sites shared no affiliations.


49 The closest academic piece to date on this particular issue written in Chinese is communications professor Zhang Chunlin’s short piece “Problem[s] and Countermeasure[s] to Communication of Marxism [on the] Internet.” The work, which does not contain explicit discussions on the issue of government censorship, is published on Zhang’s blog. Zhang Chunlin. (September 1, 2005). “Problem[s] and Countermeasure[s] to Communication of Marxism [on the] Internet.” (Lun Makesi zhuyi wangluo chuanbo de wen ti ji du) Zijin Blog (Zijin boke). Retrieved April 1, 2006, from http://www.zijin.net/blog/more.asp?name=zhchunlin&id=3495.

50 The site’s operator explicitly stated that “The purpose of Flag is but one—to break through the monopoly of liberalism in the domain of civil ideology and defend Marxism!” (Hongqi de mudi zhi you yi — dao ziyouchui si chao zai minjian yishixing tai lingyu nei [de] sixiang long dian! Wei Makesi zhuyi bian hu!) According to him, access to Shanghai Red Flag’s cached content on Etang (accessible from http://redflagsh.myetang.com during its operation) was restricted beginning the morning of June 19, 2001. Its FTP account was deregistered at noon. The site’s earlier address at Soha was also censored. Shanghai Red Flag was officially defunct on June 28 after the shutdown of its backup site at http://redflagsh.yeah.net. In their response, Etang’s censors said that the site was blocked inasmuch as it contained content violating relevant state laws. Bao Min. (2001). “Shanghai Red Flag site was blocked.” (Shanghai hongqi wangzhan bei feng) Mao Zedong Study (Mao Zedong xuehui) – Renmin chunqiu electronic journal. (July 15, 2001). Retrieved March 28, 2006, from http://www.mao.org/larticle.php3?article=2001-07/N_SHHQ.txt. Shanghai Red Flag was known for its active introduction of third-world socialist movements and the Nepalese Maoist revolution. Its core moderators were the first Chinese translators of Li Onesto’s works on the Nepalese civil war, including her book Dispatches from the People’s War in Nepal.

51 Accessible at http://washeng.net/HuaShan/BBS/shishi/gbcurrent.html, the political affairs sub-forum has attracted more than 7,040,000 hits (as of July 17, 2006) since its most recent reformation on August 3, 2003. Articles are posted immediately upon submission, but are subject to administrative moderation. Links to Huayue’s other sub-forums, theme forums, and works of a number of the forum’s netters are shown on top of the homepage. Its most famous netter is Yuchunxiaozhu (foolish small pig), a Japan-based engineering PhD who is also active on Great Power. Yuchunxiaozhu’s real name is Zhong Qing. In September 2005, the 35-year-old published Washing Dishes or Reading? Revisiting the Chinese and Japanese Roads to Great Power (Shua panzi, haishi dushu: fansi Zhong Ri qiangguo zhi lu). Since it is not sold by any state-run bookstore, the book is hardly attainable.

52 Created by Zhang Guangtian in earlier 1999 to promote “people’s aesthetics” (Renmin meixue), its original address at http://dazibao.yeah.net, as well as sub-sites at http://www.my169.com/~dazibao and http://dazibao.myrice.com are all defunct. The site gave room for solidarity of like-minded artists, including Hong Qi, a Uigur singer who was an armed police officer at a remote Xinjiang labor education farm before becoming associated with Zhang Guangtian’s new folksong movement. For Hong, “since the opening of the website Tanyue Dazibao, a group of friends who shared similar ideals and aspirations with me have united together. I found like-minded friends, and began a meaningful

53 Created by Wang Pei and Zhang Guangtian in 1999, the site’s link at http://www.heibanbao.com is now defunct. Also defunct is its blog version created in April 2003 at http://tads.cosoft.org.cn/heibanbao/today. Its electronic journal, which is no longer updated, is still accessible at http://images.jingbao.com/images/ezine/cool/2boards.html. Its editors are Wang Pei, Zhang Guangtian, Wang Xiaoshan, Lin Lei, and Lao Xin. Boasting 120,000 subscribers during its prime time, the site’s name was adapted from an article from Wang’s 1998 site Wang Pei’s Walnut Shell (Wang Pei de hetao ke), the original link of which was http://wangpei.yeah.net and later moved to http://member.netease.com/-wangpei. Heibanbao was created by combining Wang’s Walnut Shell and Zhang’s Dazibao. Its creation was what Zhang claimed “the turning point of the literature revolution.” Zhang Guangtian. (July 24, 2003). “My Proletarian Life: Chapter 11.” (Wo de wuchanjieji shenghuo: di shiyi zhang) Sina. Retrieved March 21, 2006, from http://ent.sina.com.cn/h/2003-07-24/1815176042.html. Wang Pei, whose pseudonym is Hongxinshashou, is columnist of The Beijing News (xin jing bao) and Sina, and a freelance screenwriter. Lin Lei is co-founder of Changyou Net (Changyou wang, http://www.changyou.com), a trekkers’ site established in 1999 with the aim of becoming China’s National Geographic. The site’s theme song is Zhang Guangtian’s leftist piece “Walk the Road, Sing the Road” (yilu chang). 54 The only active “new art” website remaining, Sunflower (http://www.xrkxrk.com) was created by Xiao Yu, Wang Pei, Lin Lei and several others. The site links with Utopia and occasionally sends out electronic editions to its subscribers. The website’s mandate is a vast collection of quotes from its moderators, philosophers such as Karl Marx and Jean-Paul Sartre, literary figures such as Vladimir Mayakovsky and Jose Marti, and Chinese giants such as Lu Xun and Mao. Interestingly, a quote from Jiang Qing—Madam Mao—in her 1974 praise of the film Blinking Red Star (Shanshan de hongxing) was also used: “Let those bourgeois bastards take a look—how expressive our proletarian works are!” (Rang naxie zhanjunjie de wangbadan kan kan, women wuchanjieji de zuopin duome shuqing a!) Sunflower Literature. (May 29, 2004). “Sunflower Declaration.” (Xiangrikui xuanyan) Retrieved March 24, 2006, from http://www.xrkxrk.com/ShowArticle.asp?ArticleID=1628. 55 Founded in 2002, the site (http://hqwyb.di.yiyrice.com) is an online journal which features columns for Zhang Guangtian, Hong Qi and his colleague He Li. Its most recent update was on October 19, 2003. The site links with Utopia, Mao Zedong Memorial, Taiwanese leftist literature site China Tide Net (xiachao wang, http://www.china-tide.org.tw), Sun Heng’s Folksong Tour (minyao zhili, http://go3.163.com/minyaozhili) and so on. China Tide Net has not been updated since fall 2003, and Folksong Tour is now defunct. Sun Heng, a 30-year-old migrant worker from Henan, created “Migrant Youths Art Group” (dagong qingnian yishu tuan) on May Day, 2002. He sings voluntarily for migrant workers at different construction sites and factories across many cities, and has been extensively reported by CCTV. Sun’s works include “Migrant work, migrant work, most glorious!” (dagong, dagong, zui guangrong!), “All migrant workers are family” (tianxia dagong shi yijia), “Song of migrant working juniors” (dagong zidi zhi ge), and the much less mainstream “A person's
encounters” (*yige ren de zaoyu*), a segment of which describes migrant workers’ struggles to demand delayed wages from foremen.

56 Created in 2002 and maintained by Xiao Yu, *Reading Notes* is still accessible at http://refeng.diy.myrice.com/dsbj. Most of its links are defunct. It links to *Revolutionary Digits* (*Geming shuzi*), another site created by Zhang Guangtian, Wang Pei, Hong Qi and Xiao Yu in that year in succession to *Blackboard Tabloid Literature*. The site’s link at http://music.xjol.net/bbs1 is defunct.

57 Zhang Guangtian’s most recent creations are *Yuanmingyu* and *Ideal 2005* (*lixiang 2005*). *Yuanmingyu* (http://www.yuanmingyu2006.com) promotes Zhang’s new play *Yuanmingyu*, which was shown in Beijing from July 14 to August 5, 2006. *Ideal 2005* is devoted to promote the director’s “Ideal Trilogy” and other works. The trilogy refers to Zhang’s 2005 editions of his famous works *Che Guevara* and *Saint Confucius* (*Shengren Kongzi*), and a new play *Left Bank* (*Zuo’an*). The remodeled *Saint Confucius* was shown in Vienna in June 2005 on the occasion of the European Art Festival and, according to Zhang, was an enormous success. Simultaneous interpreters were hired for the Austrian audience. German translations of the play are accessible on the site at http://www.lixiang2005.com/Article_Show.asp?ArticleID=126 and http://www.lixiang2005.com/Article_Show.asp?ArticleID=127. The “triology” can be viewed for free through online streaming video at http://www.ziyouzhiyui.net/myhome/zhangguangtian.

58 I am referring to the various strikes and protests in China 2002, including those in Liaoyang, Daqing, Guangyuan, Shenzhen, Urumchi and so on.

59 This has also helped to offset the structural limitations of resistance and protests within China, which “have been largely cut off from parallel social struggles in the rest of the world...[and] remain sporadic, localized, disconnected, and single-issue-driven.” Zhao (2005): 73.

60 Beginning 2005, many discussions also took place in the form of voice conversations through Skype (http://www.skype.com), a new popular software for voice chats and online phone calls.

61 To be sure, such state surveillance on leftist websites and offline activities predated 2002. The experiences of two individuals illustrate this. The first is Fujian elementary school teacher Li Qinglin (1936-2004), known for his letter to Mao on the adverse situations “intellectual youths” (*zhishi qingnian*, a.k.a. “*zhiqing*”) faced in the countryside. Mao responded on April 25, 1973 by mailing 300 RMB to Li as “compensation for Li’s poverty” and commenting that his problems were common in China and must be resolved collectively (*Quangguo cilei shi shen duo, rong dang tongchou jiejue*). Considered a “hero against the tide” (*fan chaoliu yingxiong*), Li was promoted as a NPC delegate, NPC Standing Committee member, and member of the State Council Intellectual Youth leading group (*guowuyuan zhishi qingnian lingdao xiaozu*), and published “On against the tide” (*Tan fan chaoliu*) in *Hongqi* in 1973. Following the arrest of the Gang of Four in 1976, however, Li was arrested and sentenced to life imprisonment as a “counterrevolutionary.” He was released in 1994. Xu Xiaomin. (June 10, 2004). “Mixed memories of ‘Zhiing’.” *Shanghai Star*. From *China Daily*. Retrieved April 21, 2006, from http://appl.chinadaily.com.cn/star/2004/0610/cuit=18-1.html; Mobo C.F. Gao. “Factional Politics in the CPC: A Case Study of the Rise and Fall of Li Qinglin.” *China Report*, 35.1 (1999): 41-59. Another example is Wang Shiji (1944-, pseudonym Mao Jidong—i.e., “to inherit Mao”). A former soldier and a recent retiree, he was arrested in August 1999 by Shijiazhuang Intermediate People’s Court of Hebei Province for writing and distributing Maoist essays. Three months before his arrest, Wang established a CPC Revolutionary Committee (*Zhongguo Gongchandang geming weiyuanhui*) after several years of planning. Charged with “suspected subversion of the state” (*shandong dianfu guojia zhengquan*), he was sentenced to three years in prison and one year of deprivation of political rights. Since his release in August 2002, Wang has become an active *Protagonist* discussant. He was expelled from the Party in October 2005. Most recently, Wang published “Proposal to Form People’s Democratic Supervisory Committee of China” (*Fagi chengli Zhongguo Renmin minzhu jianduhui changyi shu*) on *Protagonist* on June 11, 2006, co-initiated and signed by 68 other netters. Also published was a subsequent “Democratic Supervisory Committee Constitution (initial draft),” which was mailed to the Party Central Committee through registered letter on April 10 with the proposal. See https://host378.ipowerweb.com/~gongnong/bbs/read.php?f=3&i=156941&t=156941.
The role of pragmatic considerations in the face of ongoing government censorship of the Left online is also important. Of the over thirty leftist sites and forums linked to Peasant and Worker World on its homepage at http://www.gongnong.org, less than a third is still accessible as of July 2006.

This observation was made by many interviewees and confirmed through my own participation since 2000. In my view, there is enough reason to suspect that such a left-turn was a result of grassroots pressure unexpected by the forum's administration and their Party superiors.

Most of the forum's 25 recommended Qiangguo netters at http://www.people.com.cn/GB/32306/33607/index.html are clearly identified as leftists. However, ideological struggles across other websites and forums persist and deepen. On April 28, 2006, 19 self-described leftist forum moderators (ban zhu) at Netease (Wangyi)—one of the three most popular gateway websites in China—resigned collectively when far right moderators were suddenly and massively appointed without notice by Netease forum head (zhanzhang) Yiren (real name Li Xiaotian), an unshy rightist who had plotted the infamous "thanking Japan for aiding China" (ganxie Riben dui Hua yuanzhu) columns at the forum. Some leftist resignations were forced; others followed and turned to Sohu. Yiren's Netease message records—"scrip" (zhitiao)—with rightist moderators and discussants were released and circulated after ChinaHockers (Zhongguo hongke, http://www.chinahonker.com) hacked into his email system on April 27. More detailed coverage of the so-called "Script Gate Incident" (zhitiao men shijian) can be found from Sohu at http://club.news.sohu.com/T-Focus-338949-0-19-0.html, from Huayue at http://washeng.net/HuaShan/BBS/shishi/gcurrent146531.shtml, and from a personal blog at http://lulua.blog.hexun.com/3391734_d.html.

Which is indeed what forced dissent scholars such as He Qinglian into exile. She was forced to flee to the U.S. in 2001 following her statistical analyses of social divisions constituted by the post-Mao reforms. Zhao (2005): 62. She is severely condemned by both mainstream Chinese neoliberals and the majority of leftists. Some leftist theoreticians, however, have emphasized the need to incorporate her and like-minded scholars into the united front—a need that has not been realized.

Established in 2002, the site is accessible through http://www.1931-9-18.org. Its open mandates are to "love the country and her people, support polity and the Party; against the Japanese Right and Japanese militarism; maintain state and national interests, and carry forward social justice" (Aiguo aimin, yongzheng yongdang; fandui Riben youyi he Riben junguozhuyi; weihu guojia he minzu liyi, hongyang shehui zhengyi). The site also "supports the diplomatic tactics of the Chinese Government. Civil diplomacy is supportive of governmental diplomacy—we are inclined to perform in areas where direct government intervention is inappropriate" (Zhichi Zhongguo zhengfu de waijiao celiu. Minjian waijiao shi dui zhengfu waijiao de zhichi, women yuanzi yu xiyi zhengfu bubianyu zhijie chumian zuo de shiqing). Patriots Alliance. (n.d.). Retrieved April 30, 2006, from http://www.1931-9-18.org.

The website is known for its collection of 1.12 million online signatures—the largest in Chinese Internet history—in a September 2003 petition requesting Japanese compensation for Chinese victims of Japan's chemical warfare in World War II. It also pioneered the anti-Japanese shikansen (xinganxian) petition of 2004, after which it was briefly censored by the Chinese state. The site moderators' open letter to all Aigouzhe netters at the time of the censorship, dated August 30, 2004, can be accessed from http://mariner.cs.ucdavis.edu/china.blog/railway-statement.html.

It is said that some editors dropped their positions at such websites to work for Protagonist.

This includes the triad's seminars and salons in support of the Zhengzhou Four, Wang Binyu, and Liu Guoguang. All three were mentioned in the previous chapter. In Wang's case, public opinion weighed decisively against the court ruling when the news spread online. The three leftist sites coincided in a series of actions in support of Wang, including two seminars regarding the case at the Utopia bookstore.

The notion of persistent struggle is stressed, not least because of their own experiences of persistent repression as leftist activists since 1976. The forum management does however iterate the extent to which their "art of struggle" (douzheng yishu) and work methods have improved as the struggle intensified. With its mandate in "studying the Chairman, inheriting the Chairman" (xuexi Zhuxi, jicheng Zhuxi), the management attempts to revive Mao’s heritage of class analysis and persistent struggle with an emphasis on raising popular consciousness and mass engagement. It considers Deng’s removal of the “Four Greats” as simply stupid (juchun) and reflexive of only his “level of gap with the Chairman” (he Zhuxi shuiping de chaju).

It is purported for instance that they found the Zhengzhou Four living in fairly affluent environments when they were there for research.

Mao’s discussion of the transformation from a “class-in-itself” to a “class-for-itself” serves as a basis of class observation for many respondents. In Mao’s words: “In its knowledge of capitalist society, the proletariat was only in the perceptual stage of cognition in the first period of its practice, the period of machine-smashing and spontaneous struggle; it knew only some of the aspects and the external relations of the phenomena of capitalism. The proletariat was then still a ‘class-in-itself’. But when it reached the second period of its practice, the period of conscious and organized economic and political struggles, the proletariat was able to comprehend the essence of capitalist society, the relations of exploitation between social classes and its own historical task; and it was able to do so because of its own practice and because of its experience of prolonged struggle, which Marx and Engels scientifically summed up in all its variety to create the theory of Marxism for the education of the proletariat. It was then that the proletariat became a ‘class-for-itself’.” Mao Zedong. (July 1937). “On Practice: On the Relation Between Knowledge and Practice, Between Knowing and Doing.”


Communists Net and the other two banned sites were perceived by Protagonist moderators and some others as much milder and much less Maoist compared to the other active leftist sites. The senior moderator perceives the banning of the three sites as an official warning on famed “Old Leftist” writer Wei Wei, who was actively involved in forming the three websites. Wei’s written response to their shutdown on March 11, 2006, a militant critique of the official decision as “anti-Constitutional,” was posted on Protagonist Forum on March 24 at https://host378.ipowerweb.com/~gongnong/bbs/read.php?f=3&i=152584&t=152433 along with several open letters against the shutdown by off-post workers across the country.


Ibid.


In critiquing the post-Mao administration and its revisionist tendencies, references have been made to Mao’s 1965 assertion that “What would you do if revisionism was born in the Central Committee? If this happens, then you rebel.” (Zhongyang chu le xiuzhengzhuyi, nimen zemenban? Ruguo Zhongyang chu le xiuzhengzhuyi, nimen jiu zaofan) Xinhua News. (n.d.). “Communist Party of China

81 In Chinese, “dingzi yiyang zha xiaqu, rang ni zhuomo zhuomo xiang yi xiang.”


83 Li Liang (2006).

84 Of the aforementioned leftist sites and forums, the posting of articles to Protagonist and Huayue Forum are not monitored; those to Utopia and Flag are.


86 Cursing and vulgarity are not uncommon in Great Power’s follow-up posts, and some openly and persistently disdain the Communist regime.

87 Guo (2005).

88 Since June 2005.

89 The primary moderator, Qiangguoshequ (Great Power Community), compiles each edition, which illustrates a predominately leftist tendency. The feature of its 40th edition (April 1-7, 2006)’s “viewpoint cross swords” (guandian jiaofeng), for example, was an introduction named “online speech affecting state policy?” . Accessible from http://bbs.people.com.cn/bbs/ReadFile?whichfile=133162&typeofid=17, the moderator introduces neoliberal netter [cfdI7s April 5th post “[We] must not let online speech affect state policy!”, a post which cited famous neoliberal economist Fan Gang’s concern regarding the particularities of Chinese netters and their inability to represent true public opinion, and further stated that “some people’s attack on the ‘reform and opening up’ and disordered opinions online have pushed decision-makers into loose ends.” The post attracted over 10,000 hits and 269 follow-ups within 24 hours, a historical record for Great Power at the time. The number of subject posts on the same issues reached over 20 within a day. It was the moderator’s claim that “of all the replies, we have discovered that voices in critique and opposition are an overwhelming majority.” The introductory article itself received over 30,000 hits and 137 follow-ups, most of which pointed to the democratic nature of Internet participation and, although implicitly, neoliberal hegemony in the Chinese mainstream.

90 As of July 17, 2006. This number is shown at top of Great Power Community’s homepage at http://qgl.t.com.cn/bbs/start.

91 2,982 pages as of July 17, 2006. Accessible from the forum homepage.

92 As of July 17, 2006.

93 A few can, however, be found in the archives through a search on Google; most are deleted.

94 This is not to suggest that leftist cursing is not found on the forum, only that they are overwhelmed by rightist swearing.

95 Many cross-posts are heavily revised; some are even cut by half. This is confirmed by many other accounts; my own experiences suggest the same. For experimental purposes, I cross-posted 13 articles from Protagonist to Xinhua Development Forum – once every other day – between December 2005 and January 2006. 12 of those 13 were fully posted on Great Power after 16 attempts, but only eight were posted on Development Forum after the same number of submissions. Of those eight, two had their conclusions cut, one had three paragraphs removed, and one was relocated after three days to another sub-forum. After another recent reformation at Great Power, however, none of the posts are accessible through search on its homepage.

96 The bookstore was located beside Beihang University, where Han teaches. It is currently located to
outside the southeastern gate of Peking University.


98 Ibid. Despite the level of their cooperation, such ideals are not shared by *Flag* and *Protagonist* moderators. *Protagonist* management claims them to be petty-bourgeois utopians, who are “far off” from their own ideals, but nonetheless still stresses the necessity for strategic alliance under the current conditions.

99 These “non-leftist” intellectuals include liberal dissident Wang Lixiong, herbalist doctor Lü Jiage, Tsinghua University Communications professor Li Xiguang, senior Xinhua journalist Cong Yaping, military commentator Song Xiaojun and so on.

100 Such webpages are a collection of the chosen individual’s work into different topics. If any, registered members’ commentaries, which are slightly monitored by site moderators, are shown on the bottom of each article. A number of netters turned to *Utopia* for its offering of the free space and open sphere for polemic exchanges. Lao Tian, for instance, created his website *Bumpkin Sees the World* (*Xiangbalao kan shijie*) following the 1999 U.S.-led NATO bombing at http://tlw.easthome.net, the server of which was offered by *Easthome* (*Dongfang jiayuan*) for free. He then applied for similar free server spaces elsewhere, and settled at 3322’s pay space at http://tlw.3322.net. Lao Tian closed the site when *Utopia* offered free server space. Lao Tian. (April 6, 2006). Email exchange.

101 The slogans are written on top of each of its webpages.


103 Ibid.

104 Wang’s case developed against the background of Liu Yong and Ma Jiajue’s cases. The original petition letter for Wang Binyu, initiated by *Utopia*, *Flag*, *China Workers Net*, *Protagonist*, and *Left Bank Culture Net* (*Zuo'an wenhua wang*), is accessible from *China and the World* at http://www.zgysj.com/2005/200510c.htm#刀下留人.

105 With *Utopia*’s ongoing social activism and intellectual involvement since, it would not be a total misjudgment that such a condition has been contravened.


**Conclusion**

Neoliberal globalization has brought different openings and closures of social change to countries around the world. For China, it has assumed1 substantial political relevance in the ongoing ideological battle between “socialist roaders” and “capitalist roaders,”2 abandoned by the Party since 1978.3 To recall Mao’s observations of the political struggles between Left and Right (the Party element of which he described as “revisionists”), “things are beginning to change”4—only in different terms. From 2003 onwards, the increasingly restless mainstream rightist insistence on “persistent reform” (jixu gaige) amidst deep and wide social contestation has ironically validated Mao’s call for “persistent revolution” (jixu geming), which now appears equally, if not all the more, justified. Against this background, with broadly shared commitments to social security, a new breed of leftists are beginning to “gain adherents among millions of disenfranchised workers and farmers”5 under China’s rightwing leadership. This thesis contextualizes their resurgence and shift in the historical context of Chinese development and discusses in particular their online forces. It has demonstrated that while such a leftist revival and the surfacing of its online portion are inevitable rather than contingent, the intense tensions between existing leftists new and old, online and offline, domestic and overseas, all invariably bound by the historical legacies of the communist revolution and Chinese socialism, make difficult, although not impossible, a sustained collective ideological challenge “against the Party’s capitalistic economic and social policies.”6
Ideological tensions aside, relying on participation in cyberspace for praxis offline—a utopian tactic shared by a good number of online leftists—is itself a contentious issue, because the new digital technologies, however powerful, will not eliminate "real life" problems in any meaningful way. Internet participation can mirror current social issues, reflect in a general way the shifting attitudes among different social groups and, in China's case, help undermine the influence of the Party-controlled market-driven media. Yet this has its own limits. There have been speculations regarding "the existence of significant effects of the Internet on political and democratic mobilization;" the link between the interconnectedness fostered by the new media and "a positive effect on the political transformation and democratization of authoritarian countries" is also an unsettled subject of discussion. In any event, the sustainability of such online "base areas" in websites and forums is questionable, and the intrinsic social and political potential of the Internet, particularly under China's transformative context, ought to be studied in more detail. To what extent is the Internet a mere medium of free expression, rather than a medium where effective resistance can be organized? After all, the most representative image of a Chinese netter is a single, male, early twenties college student with little to no income sitting with his home computer browsing online news; the vast majority of disenfranchised populations are not yet connected to the Internet, and only a fraction of the politically aware people among those who are connected are using it for practical purposes offline, where dissent and protest is strictly monitored.

That said, the Internet does indeed hold great potential, not only as a means to arouse urban youth consciousness and empower those "who construct web pages and create content solely out of a desire to create, report, and communicate, whether for
personal expressive, political, charitable, or more narrowly self-interested reasons,” but also as a mechanism to mobilize such active consciousness into practice. The role of organization is essential, since the disorganization, deconstruction and marginalization of leftist, mass organizations and institutions as well as the return to pre-1949 authoritarian-laissez-faire economic configurations are the very foundations of post-Mao China’s mutually inclusive social structure of marketization and authoritarianism. The new social structure, predicated upon the negation of the CR and much of the communist revolution, has begotten—in Marx’s words, “with the inexorability of law and Nature”—its own negation with the rejuvenated leftist challenge. This new negation has been difficult because the Chinese state, which is still officially under the leadership of a Communist Party, is, however unwillingly, the product of a most violent leftist revolution; as such, all domestic leftist commitments are inevitably appropriated by the Party on the one hand and logic of accumulation on the other. As this thesis depicted, the emergence of the Internet in China has promised a breakthrough for their quest of survival and need for mobilization, which has thus far linked in one way or another struggles of the marginalized Party Left, ambivalent intellectuals, students and urbanites, as well as fractions of disenfranchised social groups such as migrant and “off-post” workers and the rural poor, into a whopping leftist alliance, which seems to be bringing to life the embryo of a collective, massive social upheaval.

However, such a mobilization is limited, and the potential of the Internet in China stops there at the embryo stage. The embryo is formed because of the vast inequalities created by the existing power structure, the neoliberal reforms and China’s clumsy dance on the stage of globalization; it is formed due to persistent post-Mao campaigns against
leftism and class interpretations, because the “post-revolutionary Party-state, once claiming to represent the counter-bourgeois publics of farmers, workers, and other oppressed social groups, is re-engendering a capitalist class and claiming to represent this class as well;” it is formed against the Party’s moral bankruptcy and Chinese society’s ideological and identity crises following 1989, plus the emergence and suppression of Falun Gong as well as the ongoing popularity of other popular belief systems, which well and truly reflect Marx’s famous observation that “Religious suffering is, at one and the same time, the expression of real suffering and a protest against real suffering. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the opium of the people;” it is formed on account of the rich, undercurrent leftist heritage in China’s political life, and the rising popularity of new digital technologies and, on an international level, it is ultimately formed for “The Communist Party state itself is the dominant domestic capitalist, ready to do business with transnational media barons...and acting as a ‘responsible’ state within global capitalism.” Although these complexities are constantly facilitated and reshaped in cyberspace and sequentially affect offline realities in many ways, none of them can be meaningfully dealt with solely in the online domain. If anything, the resurgence of online leftism is but “the first step in a long march of ten thousand li.”

If the rise of Chinese online leftism is of any analytic value, it is because they are rejoining domestic opposition forces and voicing grievances from below—the often misread “masses”—in the same manner the Party once did but now contains; if such is any indication in praxis, it is that they must go back to the masses, wherein lies the greatest potential for progressive change. Such is precisely the historical rationale for
popular leftists’ increasing incorporation of and engagement in what can be effortlessly equated with an old school Maoist critique.²⁰ This thesis has made the case that instead of serving as a mechanism for totalitarian nostalgic reinterpretations of the socialist past with “a romantic incandescence,”²¹ the lurking commitment has determinately assumed meanings out of the enthusiastic reach of marketization under the direction of the Party-state. What has recently been put into practice by online leftists around Protagonist, Flag, Utopia and China Workers Net and most importantly, by increasingly organized offline struggles of the socially disenfranchised in the Zhengzhou Four, unsettling rural hostility, and urban workers movements in Daqing and Liaoyang at 3403 and beyond, is no longer the popular, commercialized images of the Mao period in hats, badges, uniforms, bags, tapes, television series and films designated for the aged urban middle class consumer enmeshed in the country’s ongoing transformative mess, but the more rebellious Mao past that acknowledged structural inequality²² and rejected normalization in favor of anarchism,²³ elitist politics in favor of mass participation,²⁴ revisionist development in favor of persistent revolution,²⁵ legitimating propaganda in favor of class analysis,²⁶ and the bourgeois right capitalist-roaders in favor of the marginalized contesting leftists.²⁷ All such endeavors are pressured against the inverted T-shaped structure of contemporary Chinese society,²⁸ which atop all its complexities is still constitutionally “led by the working class and based on the alliance of workers and peasants.”²⁹ In an outright negation of the current, then, the reawakening of the leftist legacy serves the purpose of “glorifying the new struggles, not of parodying the old; of magnifying the given task in imagination, not of fleeing from its solution in reality; of finding once more the spirit of revolution, not of making its ghost walk about again.”³⁰
This thesis focuses on such a reawakening in the online world, which illustrates at best a half-complete picture of the new counter-bourgeois publics in their “struggles for communicative power and individual and collective autonomy among various social forces” inside China, where the media continue to “serve as agents of social control and channels of communication of, by, and for the hegemonic bloc of the reformed party state, a rising middle class, and transnational capitalist interests.” A fuller examination of the entire picture than this and other existing studies is long overdue, for the Chinese leftist resurgence is a second negation—and an effort at a second fanshen. Indeed, the conceptual classification of Left and Right is always arbitrary and superimposed. Yet the current division not only implies an inherent power relation in favor of the rightwing Chinese establishment, but also serves as a reflexive guide for the socially marginalized “to size up people and...make it easier to win over the middle elements and isolate the Rightists.” The integration and mutation of online Chinese leftism is an intrinsic part of that multifaceted, collective challenge. With all eyes on China’s uneasy flow in the tide of neoliberal globalization, the historical role of online leftism is prefigured by Mao in his poem on the winter plum:

Sweet and fair, she craves not Spring for herself alone.  
To be the harbinger of Spring she is content.  
When the mountain flowers are in full bloom, 
She will smile mingling in their midst.
Notes

1 Or in leftist terms, "reassumed."
2 This is not a consensus within the broad left circle; a number of intellectual leftists have somewhat different takes. Yang Fan, for one, argued in an April 2004 speech in Wuhan that the neoliberal logic is concurrent with the "old left" on this issue of "institutional determinism" (zhidujuedinglun)—i.e., that the system of ownership (suoyouzhi) overrides all else—hence the "old leftist" insistence on protecting the socialist ownership system and the rightist insistence on overthrowing it in order to fully establish a capitalist one. For Yang Fan, "Old leftis[m] is Stalinism; neoliberalism is reverse Stalinism." (Lao zuopai shi Sidainzhuyi, xinziyouzhuyi shi nixiang de Sidainzhuyi) Among others, this observation has been explicitly supported by Lao Tian. See http://www.wyzxss.com/Article/Class16/200404/171.html for an abstract of Yang Fan's April 2004 speech notes and http://washeng.net/HuaShan/BBS/shishi/gbcurrent/148468.shtml for Lao Tian's June 2006 essay in support of Yang's critique.
3 Zhao (2004a): 68.
4 Mao (1957).
8 I consider blogs much more a medium of self-expression than active mobilization.
9 Of all Chinese netters, females comprise 41.3% versus males' 58.7%; the married comprise 42.1% versus singles' 57.9%; people under 30 compose 71%, people under 25 comprise 51.7%, and those aged 18-24 comprise the greatest portion of Chinese netters at 35.1%; those with a secondary school education comprise the greatest portion at 30.2%, followed by university bachelor degree holders at 26.3% and college diploma holders at 24.4%; those with monthly incomes of 500 RMB or less constitute the great portion at 21.8%, followed by those of 501-1000RMB at 15.7% and those of 1001-1500RMB at 13.4%; students are the greatest bulk of netters at 35.1%, followed by business workers at 29.7% and teachers and administrative personnel at 7.3%. CNNIC (January 2006). The average netter spends 15.9 hours online per week; 41.6% are active forum/BBS/discussion group participants.
10 Rural netters account for only 17.4% of the Chinese Internet population (19.314 million out of 111 million), an equivalent of a mere 2.6% of the urban population as opposed to urban netters' 16.9%. These numbers rest upon the premise of a 2004 statistic which claimed that the scale of urban and rural populations in China was 42% against 58%. Yet these numbers apply strictly and narrowly to those who live under urban and rural administrations, and do not therefore tell the whole story. Ibid.
12 To rephrase Mao's observation, "It is mainly because of the unorganized state of the Chinese masses that the government dares to bully us. When this defect is remedied, then the revisionist oppressor, like a mad bull crashing into a ring of flames, will be surrounded by hundreds of millions of our people standing upright, the mere sound of their voices will strike terror into him, and he will be burned to death." Mao Zedong. (May 1938). "On Protracted War." In Selected Works of Mao Tse-Tung, Vol.2. Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1967: 180. The original quote was an explanation of Japan's success in the initial stages of the Chinese War of Resistance against Japan (1937-1945).
13 Marx originally used this notion of "the negation of negation" in discussing private property and capitalist production. Karl Marx. (1867). "Part VIII: Primitive Accumulation; Chapter 32: Historical Tendency of Capitalist Accumulation." In Capital Volume One: The Process of Production of Capital.

Zhao (2004a): 44.


The predominant belief system among Chinese rightists is Christianity, a stance politically supported by the U.S. Government. On May 11, 2006, U.S. President G.W. Bush received Yu Jie, Wang Yi and Li Baiguang, appearing as “Chinese House Church Christians,” in one of his private guest rooms.


Many mainstream rightwing intellectuals in China are tremendously hostile to the emergence of Maoist “great debate” (da bianlun) and “great critique” (da pipan) on the web. Li Daokui, economics professor of School of Economics and Management (SEM) Tsinghua University and Director of Tsinghua’s Center for China in the World Economy (CCWE), for example, commented in a February 24, 2006 speech that “represented by the Internet, discussions in the form of ‘great debate’ and ‘great critique’ have emerged. Historically, such discussions never helped the Reform in essence, but instead have affected it in negative terms.” He also commented that the way to resolve contradictions among interest groups is not to publicize the contradictions, but to make relevant policies behind closed doors, because otherwise, “negative effects would result.” Zhuang Shiguan. (February 25, 2006). “Scholar: forms of great debate and great critique are futile to the Reform.” (Xuezhe: da bianlun da pipan xingshi de taolun wuzhu yu gaige) The Beijing News (xin jing bao). From Phoenixtv.com. Retrieved February 26, 2006, from http://news.phoenixtv.com/phoenixtv/83886191669149696/20060225/752557.shtml.


In his June 21, 1975 meeting with Pol Pot, for example, Mao asserted that “China...may become revisionist, but will eventually return to the road of Marx and Lenin. We now are precisely what Lenin described as a bourgeois state without capitalists. This state is to protect bourgeois law right with unequal wages. [It is to] sustain an unequal system under the cover of inequality. That’s what we are now.” Mao Zedong. (June 21, 1975). “Conversation with Secretary of Cambodian Communist Party Central Committee Pol Pot.” (Yu Jiangong Zhongyang shuji Bo 'erbute de tanhua) From China and the World. (October 9, 2005). Retrieved November 19, 2005, from http://www.zgysj.com/2005/200510a.htm.

As Arif Dirlik detects: “Marxism...entered the revolutionary discourse in China through anarchist ideological activity and [was] initially identified with an anarchist vision of social revolution...it is possible that these associations lived on in revolutionary memory in spite of their formal repudiation.” The early years of the CR indeed carried such associations to the apex. Arif Dirlik. (1991): 295. Anarchism in the Chinese Revolution. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Zhao (1998): 156. The domination of rightwing elite politics in today’s China and social contestations against it have to be noted on a relative scale. During an interview with China Business
Times (CBT) on October 26, 2005, Hong Kong University of Science & Technology sociology professor Ding Xueliang argued that there are “no more than five” qualified economists in China, and that “A real economist should make academic research the first priority, not personal wealth, fame and rank.” A follow-up public opinion survey by China Youth Daily revealed that 83% of their respondents supported Ding’s criticism, another 10% were hesitant to support or oppose it, and that 69.7% of the respondents felt that scholarly expressions are made on the stance of interest groups (liyi jituan). Online criticisms were much harsher and considerably more one-sided than the results of the survey. The mainstream response came a month later with Liu Ji’s scorn at Ding, the survey, and online criticisms. In December 2005, Liu commented that “Cognizance of economists is absolutely not to be reliant on public opinion surveys and laypeople” (Jingjixuejia ju bu neng kao minyi diaocha he waihang ren rending), that “Not every Tom, Dick and Harry can be the public respondents of a stringent, scientific survey on the public trust of economists” (Yange kexue di diaocha jingjixuejia gongxin li de gongzhong xinrenli chaoguo 10%), and that “those who don’t understand economics should respect economists in the same way scientists and writers are. That’s the scientific attitude.” (Budong jingjixue de ren ying zunzhong jingjixuejia, zheng ru zunzhong kexuejia, zuojia yi yang, zhe cai shi kexue de taidu). Liu’s comments have since been taken to task by various popular leftists across different forums online. Hector Lee (rnrtanti). (November 11, 2005). “Qualified Chinese economists no more than five?” China Daily. Retrieved March 19, 2006, from http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/english/doc/2005-11/11/content_493904.htm; Dong Wei. (November 7, 2005). “Two economists’ public trust rate exceeded 10%.” (Liang ming jingjixuejia gongzhong xinrenli chaoguo 10%) China Youth Daily. From Sina. Retrieved March 19, 2006, from http://finance.sina.com.cn/g/20051107/06542097640.shtml; Liu Ji. (December 30, 2005). “Cognizance of economists is absolutely not to be reliant on public opinion surveys and laypeople.” (Jingjixuejia ju bu neng kao minyi diaoacha he waihang ren rending). Outstanding Talents (ying cai). From Sina. Retrieved March 19, 2006, from http://finance.sina.com.cn/review/20051230/14102241228.shtml.

25 Kraus, for example, makes reference to Mao’s 1976 vision that “There are always sections of the people who feel themselves oppressed: junior officials, students, workers, peasants and soldiers don’t like bigshots oppressing them. That’s why they want revolution. Will contradictions no longer be seen ten thousand years from now? Why not? They will still be seen.” Kraus (1981): 165.

26 Ibid., 17. Kraus observes that “Rather than observe the transfiguration of Marxist class theory into a device for legitimizing the new socialist order, Mao refashioned the concept of class into a tool with which to contest the accretion of privilege by a new class of dominant bureaucrats.”

27 In 1976, Mao was quoted as saying of Party cadres: “With the socialist revolution they themselves come under fire. At the time of the cooperative transformation of agriculture there were people in the Party who opposed it, and when it comes to criticize bourgeois right, they resent it. You are making the socialist revolution, and yet don’t know where the bourgeoisie is. It is right in the Communist Party—those in power taking the capitalist road. The capitalist-roaders are still on the capitalist road.” Ibid.


30 Marx (1851-52): 399.

31 Zhao (2005): 75.

32 Mao (1957). For Mao: “Wherever there are masses of people—everywhere except deserts—they are invariably divided into the Left, the middle and the Right, and this will be so ten thousand years hence. Is that contrary to how things stand? This division will serve as a guide for the masses to size up
people and will make it easier to win over the middle elements and isolate the Rightists.”

## Glossary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aiguo aimin, yongzheng yongdang; fandui Riben youyi he Riben junguozhuyi; weihu guojia he minzu liyi, hongyang shehui zhengyi</td>
<td>爱国爱民，拥政拥党；反对日本右翼和日本军国主义；维护国家和民族利益，弘扬社会正义</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aiguozhe tongmeng</td>
<td>爱国者同盟</td>
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<td>Angang xianfa</td>
<td>鞍钢宪法</td>
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<td>An Ti</td>
<td>安替</td>
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<td>版主</td>
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<td>Baodiao yundong</td>
<td>保钓运动</td>
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<td>Baogang</td>
<td>宝刚</td>
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<td>Bao Min</td>
<td>鲍民</td>
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<td>Ba rong ba chi</td>
<td>八荣八耻</td>
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<td>Bayi</td>
<td>八一</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beijing Huachen paimai youxian gongsi</td>
<td>北京华辰拍卖有限公司</td>
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<td>Boxun</td>
<td>本报讯</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budong jingjixue de ren ying zunzhong jingjixuejia, zheng ru zunzhong kexuejia, zuojia yiyang, zhe ca shi kexue de taidu</td>
<td>不懂经济学家的人应尊重经济学家，正如尊重科学家、作家一样，这才是科学的态度</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bu gao zhenglun</td>
<td>不搞争论</td>
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<tr>
<td>Busuanzi yong mei</td>
<td>卜算子 咏梅</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
不要自己知足了，就不管广大人民群众
不知情的人以为该报纸是为工人说了几
句话，实质上完全在否定工人们的真实
要求。那就是自己管理自己的工厂。它
以客观的方式，给读者的是个什么图景
呢？工人搞内讧，不团结。搞不了集
体企业，企业还要资本家搞才对

Cai Guangye
( Xiaganggongrenleilianghang )

Caogen jingjixuejia

Cao Zhenglu

Chang duitaixi

Changjue

Chaoyue zuo you yi

Chen Boda

Chen Duxiu

Cheng Enfu

Chen Tianhua

Chongman le tanlan, canren de
jingshen he dui xiantai shehui, xiantai
kexue de wuzhi

Chongzheng heshan dai houzheng

Chuqitong

Cong Habeimasi kan xifang "zuopai"

Cong qunzhong zhong lai, dao

蔡广业（下岗工人泪两行）

草根经济学家

曹征路

唱对台戏

猖獗

超越左右翼

陈伯达

陈独秀

程思富

陈天华

充满了贪婪、残忍的精神和对现代社
会、现代科学的无知

重整河山待后生

出气筒

从哈贝马斯看西方“左派”

从群众中来，到群众中去

185
Dangshi wo xiang, gaige kaifang jiushi wenti zaiduo, ye yinggai shi gongdayuguo de, zhishao bi wenge qiang. Zuoren zuodao gei wenge jiaohao, bianhu, na weimian ye tai jiduan le. Suoyi, suiran you bushao zuoyi de pengyou zai BBS qiajia de shihou jingchang bang wo, dan wo zemen ye bu gan chengren ziji shi zuopai, geng bu gan jieshou tamen de lichang he guandian, shengpa yi bu xiaoxin ziji ye chengle yao bei ren kanbuqi de wenge yinie... Wo... renwei "jianjue fandui wenge" shi wo zuihou de dixian, guole zhe tiao xian jiu jianzhi bushi ren le... Zhida 2004 nian xiatian, Chongqing 3403 chang shijian fasheng, wo de lichang fasheng le turan de zhuankanbri

Da guoce

Daming, dafang, da bianlun, dazibao (sida ziyou)

Daode shichang jingji

Da pipan

Daqing

Dazhai

Deng Xiaoping

Deng Xiaoping wannian zhi lu

Diaoyu Dao
Diceng shehui minzhong
敌进我退、敌驻我扰、敌疲我打、
敌退我追

Dijinwotui, dizhuworao, dipiwoda, dituiwozhui

Ding Xueliang
丁学良

Dingzi yiyang zha xiaqu, rang ni zhoumo zhoumo xiang yi xiang
钉子一样扎下去，让你琢磨琢磨想一想

Dizhan qu
敌占区

Douzheng yishu
斗争艺术

Duanlian geming duiwu
锻炼革命队伍

Dui Ri xin siwei
对日新思维

Dushu biji
读书笔记

Fan chaoliu
反潮流

Fan chaoliu

Fandui Meiguo zhengfu dui Yilake zhanzheng jihua de shengming
反对美国政府对伊拉克战争计划的声明

Fan Gang
樊纲

Fan Ning
房宁

Fan jingshen wuran yundong
反精神污染运动

Fazhan shi ying daoli
发展是硬道理

Fan zichanjieji ziyouhua yundong
反资产阶级自由化运动

Fan zuoyi de shuji
泛左翼的书籍

Faqi chengli Zhongguo Renmin minzhu jianduhui changyi shu
发起成立中国人民民主监督会倡议书

Fu di chou xin
釜底抽薪

Gaige gongjian nian
改革攻坚年
Gaige kaifang  
对外开放

Gaige neican  
改革内参

Gaige zhong mianlin de wenti, zhineng yong jinyibu gaige lai jiejue  
改革中面临的问题，只能由进一步改革来解决

Gan Yang  
甘阳

Gao jia cun  
高家村

Gao Mobo  
高默波

Gao Shangquan  
高尚全

Gaoshan xia de huahuan  
高山下的花环

Geming jun  
革命军

Geming shuzi  
革命数字

Genjudi  
根据地

Gentie  
跟帖

Geren zi sao menqian xue, moguan taren washang shuang  
个人自扫门前雪，莫管他人瓦上霜

Gongchandang ren wang  
共产党人网

Gongjianfa  
公检法

Gong Xiantian  
巩献田

Gongping kuoda neixu, zhengyi chuangzao caifu, pingdeng jifa huoli, ziyou xiangshou jiqing  
公平扩大内需 正义创造财富 平等激发活力 自由享受激情

Guantian chashe  
关天茶舍

Guanjian shi fangzhi “sanzhong ren” jinru geji lingdao banzi, yaohai bumen he disan tidui, yi jinru de yao jianjue qingchu chuqu  
关键是防止“三种人”进入各级领导班子，要害部门和第三梯队，已进入的要坚决清除出去
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>姓名</th>
<th>标题</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Guanyu</td>
<td>关于三年文革与十年文革的区别及其意义</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gu Chujun</td>
<td>顾雏军</td>
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<td>Guojia</td>
<td>国家主义</td>
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<td>Guoqi</td>
<td>国企私有化终将激发革命-致中共十六届四中全会的公开信</td>
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<td>Guomindang</td>
<td>国民党</td>
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<td>Guo Minghu</td>
<td>郭明虎</td>
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<td>Guyong ziyou, jiedai ziyou, zulin ziyou, maoyi ziyou (sida ziyou)</td>
<td>雇佣自由、借贷自由、租赁自由、贸易自由（四大自由）</td>
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<tr>
<td>Guoyou zichan</td>
<td>原有资产</td>
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<tr>
<td>Habeimasi tan Zhongguo xin zuopai</td>
<td>哈贝马斯谈中国新左派</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Han Deqiang</td>
<td>韩德强</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Han Shaogong</td>
<td>韩少功</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Han Yuhai</td>
<td>韩毓海</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haobudongyao de jianchi gaige fangxiang, wei shixian “shiyi wu” guihua mubiao tigong qiangda dongli he tizhi baozhang</td>
<td>毫不动摇地坚持改革方向 为实现“十一五”规划目标提供强大动力和体制保障</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He Qinglian</td>
<td>何清涟</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He Weifang</td>
<td>贺卫方</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He Xin</td>
<td>何新</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hengmei lengdui qianfu zhi, fushou ganwei ruziniu</td>
<td>横眉冷对千夫指，俯首甘为孺子牛</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hexie shehui</td>
<td>和谐社会</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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洪启

“红旗”的目的只有一个 - 打破自由主义
思潮在民间意识形态领域内的思想垄断！为马克思主义辩护！

红旗还能打多久

红旗文艺

胡锦涛

胡耀邦

华国锋

华岳论坛

黄平

江青

建立新农村的主要目的是倡导农村集
体化发展道路，介绍毛泽东时代农村发
展的真实面目

建设社会主义新农村

焦国标

揭发、批判、清查（揭批查）

解析民生三座大山 - 医疗、住房和教育

近距离看美国

继续改革

继续革命

极左路线
Juezhan

Kaidi

Kangyi beiyue baoxing

Kanjian fangfan

Kanlai, “bu zhenglun” shi zaiye buxing le. Zhongguo de zhengzhi hefaxing wenti, yi jingji zengzhang yijing buneng yangai, bixu zhengmian tichu taolun le.

Ke chixu boxue

Kuang Xinnian

Kulao wang

Kuoda lianluo

Laoshi

Laoshu duo le, jiu xiangqi le mao

Lao zuopai shi Sidalinzhuyi, xinziyouzhuyi shi nixiang de Sidalinzhuyi

Lei Yi

Liang ge fanshi

Liangshanbo

Liaoyang

Li Changping

Li Dazhao

Li Jiaqing

Lilun dongtai
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<td>Li Minqi</td>
<td>李民骑</td>
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<td>Lin Biao</td>
<td>林彪</td>
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<td>Lin Biao, Jiang Qing fangeming jituan</td>
<td>林彪，江青反革命集团</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lin Chacyang</td>
<td>林朝陽</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lin Yanzhi</td>
<td>林炎志</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Li Qiang</td>
<td>李强</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Li Qinglin</td>
<td>李慶霖</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Li Tuo</td>
<td>李陀（孟克勤）</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liu Di (buxiugang laoshu)</td>
<td>刘荻（不锈钢老鼠）</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liu Guoguang</td>
<td>刘国光</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liu Ji</td>
<td>刘吉</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liu Shaoqi</td>
<td>刘少奇</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liu Xiaobo</td>
<td>刘晓波</td>
</tr>
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<td>Liu Yazhou</td>
<td>刘亚洲</td>
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<td>Liu Yong</td>
<td>刘涌</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Li Xianyuan</td>
<td>李宪源</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Li Xiaotian (Yiren)</td>
<td>李啸天（邑人）</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Li Xiaoyu (Li Ning)</td>
<td>李小雨（李宁）</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lixing de fansi gaige</td>
<td>理性地反思改革</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Li Yang</td>
<td>黎阳</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liyi jituan</td>
<td>利益集团</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lu Xun</td>
<td>鲁迅</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Luo Gang

Ma Jiajue

Makesi zhuyi jichu yanjiu he jianshe gongcheng

Ma Licheng

Maoyan kanren

Mao Zedong

Mao Zedong qizhi

Mao Zedong xuehui

Meiti tongqing sharenfan Wang Binyu shi weixian xinhao

Meng huitou

Miewu xingzi

Miezi xingwu

Minfeng wang

Mingong liansha sirenyu yu yu sushi tai di

Minjian wenge pai

Minzhu de linian yijing dao tamen de shengming zhong, xueye li, gusui zhong

Minzu zhuyi

Na'er (yingtenaxiongnaier)

Nanfang dushi bao

Nanfang ribao baoye jitian

Mao Zedong zuotou

Media tongtong henglong shenfandai yuanyu xinshang xinshang

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Minjian wenge pai

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Minzu zhuyi

Na'er (yingtenaxiongnaier)

Nanfang dushi bao

Nanfang ribao baoye jitian
Nanfang zhoumo

Nanfang zhoumo jizhe de zhiye diode nali qu le?

Nanjie Cun

Nianging de pengyou lai xianghui

Nifan

Nixiang zhongzuzhuyi

Nongcun baowei chengshi

Nongcun hezuo yiliao

Pang Xianzhi

Pantu, neijian, gongzei

Peiyang wuchanjieji geming shiye de jiebanren

Peng Dehuai

Peng Shuzhi

Pipan yu zaizao

Qiangguo luntan shenru taolun qu

Qian Zhongshu

Qiao ye bu zheng chun, zhi ba chun lai bao. Daidao shanhua lanman shi, ta zai cong zhong xiao

Qie Gewala

Qihong

Qilü deng Lushan

《南方周末》记者的职业道德哪里去了？

南街村

年轻的朋友来相会

逆反

逆向种族主义

农村包围城市

农村合作医疗

逢先知

叛徒、内奸、工贼

培养无产阶级革命事业的接班人

彭德怀

彭述之

批判与再造

强国论坛深入讨论区

钱钟书

俏也不争春，只把春来报。待到山花烂漫时，她在丛中笑

切格瓦拉

起哄

七律 登庐山
Sanzhongquanhuipai
Sanzhong ren (Zhuisui Lin Biao, Jiang Qing fangeming jitian zaofan qijia de ren, bangpai sixiang yanzhong de ren, dazaqiang fenzi)

Shanghai hongqi

Shanghai hongqi

Shanghai hongqi

Shanghen wenxue

Shanghen wenxue

Shanghen wenxue

Shehuizhuyi xin nongcun

Shehuizhuyi xin nongcun

Shengren Kongzi

Shengren Kongzi

Shi dafu

Shi dafu

Shi dafu

Shijishi Zhongguo

Shijishi Zhongguo

Shijian shi jianyan zhenli de weiyi biaozhun

Shijian shi jianyan zhenli de weiyi biaozhun

Shiyijie sanzhong quanhui

Shiyijie sanzhong quanhui

Shourong qiansong zhidu

Shourong qiansong zhidu

Shua panzi, haishi dushu: fansi Zhong Ri qiangguo zhi lu

Shua panzi, haishi dushu: fansi Zhong Ri qiangguo zhi lu

Shu ba

Shu ba

Shuiluzhou

Shuiluzhou

Shuxue

Shuxue

Sina

Sina

Sige xiandaihua (sihua)

Sige xiandaihua (sihua)

Sirenbang yidu

Sirenbang yidu

Sixiang jiben yuanze

Sixiang jiben yuanze

Sohu

Sohu
Song Yongyi
Sun Heng
Sun Liping

Ta zhi you guo jiang, mei chu guo hai.
Juxianxing shi xian'eryijian de

Tian Liwei (Lao Tian)
Tianxia zhi ben zai guo, guo zhi ben
zai jia, jia zhi ben zai shen

Tianya
Tianya zongheng
Tong Xiaoxi
Wang Binyu
Wang Chaohua
Wang Dongxing
Wang Hongwen
Wang Hui
Wang Shijii (Mao Jidong)
Wang Wei
Wang Xiaodong
Wang Xiaoming
Wang Yi
Wangyi

宋永毅
孙恒
孙立平

他只游过江，没出过海。局限性是显而
易见的

田力为（老田）

天下之本在国，国之本在家，家之本在
身

天涯
天涯纵横

童小溪
王斌余
王超华
汪东兴
王洪文
汪晖

王士吉（毛继东）

王伟
王小东
王晓明
王怡

网易
Wanyanshu

Wei cheng

Wei Meiguoren chuqi

Wending yadao yiqie

Wen Jiabao

Wen Jiayun

Wenming banwang changyishu

Wenming banwang, wenming shangwang

Wenming wangluo

Wenyi li lun yu piping

Wo guoqu jiangguo yijuhua: "Weishenme qiongren shang bu qi daxue, yinwei xuefei tai di"...women yong di xuefei de fangfa shiji shang butie de shi furen, er bushi buji qiongren. Ruguo women ba xuefei shidang de tigao, ranhou guiding xuefei duoshao bili bixu yongyu zhuxuejin, zhexie wenti jiu henhao de jiejue

Women buyao yige jingcha shijie—wenge zhong de kanjian fangfan yu Mao Zedong de "qunzhong zhuanzheng" guan qiantan

Women guojia de zhengzhi shenghuo, you liumanghua de qingxiang. Liumanghua yiban laishuo shi zhuanzhi zhengzhi yi you sixiang luxian xiang jiehe de chanwu

Women shi yixie wei gongnong fuwu de ziyuanzhe, yeshi yixie qiongguangdan, meiyou 1000 wan. Yinci, zhineng jieshou wangzhan bei
xuanbu wei feifa de jieju

Women yao huoming, buneng huoming shi jiu zhiyou pinming

Women zhexie ren, baokuo ruoshi qunti zainei, doushi gaige de jide liyi zhe

Women zhe yidairen de sixiang quzhe

Wozhenbuzhidao

Wu Faxian

Wu Guanjun

Wuyou zhi xiang

Wuzhi shi wuxian ke fen de

Xiachao wang

Xianggang

Xianzai shi you fa wu fa, you qian bian shi fa. Guoqu Mao zhuxi nage shidai shi wu fa you fa, you li bian shi fa

Xiao Dong

Xiaogang Cun

Xiaqi zongli

Xiao Xidong

Xiao Jingxiang
Xiao Wu (Leiyankanren) 萧武（泪眼看人）
Xingganxian 新干线
Xinhua wenzhai 新华文摘
Xinhua wang fazhan luntan 新华网发展论坛
Xing jing bao 新京报
Xin lixiang zhuyi 新理想主义
Xin Maozhuyi 新毛主义
Xinxinkuku sanshi nian, yiye huidao jiefang qian 辛辛苦苦三十年，一夜回到解放前
Xin zuolian Renmin ziliao guan 新联人民资料馆
Xin zuopai 新左派
Xu Jilin 许纪霖
Xu Jinru 徐晋如
Xu Xianglin 徐湘林
Xu Youyu 徐友渔
Xueran de fengcai 血染的风采
Yanda 严打
Yang Bin 杨斌
Yang Fan 杨帆
Yange kexue di diaocha jingjixuejia gongxin li de gongzhong duixiang bushi a’mao a’gou dou keyi de 严格科学地调查经济学家公信力的对象不是阿猫阿狗都可以的
Yan Yuanzhang 严元章
Yao ganyu fan chaoliu. Fan chaoliu shi maliezhuyi de yi ge yuanze 要敢于反潮流。反潮流是马列主义的一个
在帝国主义文化垄断的国际媒体中反潮流
在任何时候任何情况下
Zaixiuxianshangtanzou
Zalan gongjianfa
Zaofanpai he "sanzhong ren”—yige jidai shenru yanjiu de lishi keti
Zhang Chengyi (Zhang Ermao)
Zhang Chengzhi
Zhang Chunlin
Zhang Chunqiao
Zhang Guangtian
Zhang Ruquan
Zhang Weiyi
Zhang Zhengyao
Zhanlue yu guanli
Zhao Lei
Zhao Yuezhi
Zhao Ziyang

在弦上弹奏
砸烂公检法
道反派和“三种人”——一个亟待深入研究的历史课题
张成义（张二毛）
张承志
张春林
张春桥
张广天
张汝泉
张维迎
张正耀
战略与管理
赵蕾
赵月枝
赵紫阳

这次不是直接进行意识形态斗争，而是集中攻击经济现象和所谓的“主流经济学家”。他们自称是代表弱势群体的“草根经济学家”，说“主流经济学家是一批新自由主义经济学家”，“主流经济学家误导了中国改革开放”。这就是说党和政府被误导了，不仅全面否定党和政府领导的这场伟大的社会主义改革开放，
maotou zhijie duizhe dang he zhengfu

Zhenli de zhuixiu
Zheng Bijian
Zhenglun

Zhichi Zhongguo zhengfu de waijiao celue. Minjian waijiao shi dui zhengfu waijiao de zhichi, women yuanyi zuo yixie zhengfu bubianyu zhijie chumian zuo de shiqing

Zhidu juedinglun

Zhi Meiguo bing
Zhishifenzi de xinbing
Zhilitao men shijian

Zhongguo de hongse zhengquan weishenme nenggou cunzai
Zhongguo de xin wuchanjieji
Zhongguo keyi shuo bu

Zhongguo geming lishi wenxuan jiaoliu luntan
Zhongguo geming lishi wenxuan ziliao
Zhongguo geming zhong zhi zhenglun wenti
Zhongguo gongren wang
Zhongguo hongke
Zhongguo hulianwang xiehui

而且把矛头直接对着党和政府
真理的追求
郑必坚
政论
支持中国政府的外交策略。民间外交是对政府外交的支持，我们愿意做一些政府不便于直接出面做的事情
制度决定论
致美国兵
知识分子的心病
纸条门事件
中国的红色政权为什么能够存在
中国的新无产阶级
中国可以说不
中国革命历史文献交流论坛
中国革命历史文献资料
中国革命中之争论问题
中国工人网
中国宏观经济与改革走势座谈会（“西山会议”）
中国红客
中国互联网协会
Zhongguo linian panchu xingshi anjian zongshu 中国历年判处刑事案件总数
Zhongguo tese de jingji ziyouzhuyi 中国特色的经济自由主义
Zhongguo wenge yanjiu wang 中国文革研究网
Zhongguo: yibu gaishancong'e de lishi 中国：一部改善从恶的历史
Zhongguo yu shijie 中国与世界
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Zhu Xueqin 朱学勤
Zhurengong luntan 主人公论坛
Zhutie 主帖
Zhuxingu 主心骨
Zibenzhuyi fubi 资本主义复辟
Zi chao
Zijue rentong
Ziwo biaoda
Ziyou zuopai
Ziyou youpai
Zou Rong
Zuichan
Zuo'an wenhua wang
Zuo Dapei
Zuoyi tongyi zhanxian
Zuoyi youzhibing
Zuoyi zuojia lianmeng
Zuo zhuan
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自我表达
自由左派
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