

Changing in Patterns of Political Participation in China: a Historical Perspective

Lee, Hong Yung*

I. Theoretical Issues

The question of political participation has direct ramifications for two broader theoretical questions. First, it concerns the typology of the political system. Aristotle believed that the issue was important enough to be one of two criteria for his political typologies. His insight is amply demonstrated in the fact that contemporary typologies of democratic, authoritarian, and totalitarian systems are also partially based on political participation.

The controversy over the totalitarian model versus interest group model in the field of comparative communism can be, in one sense, reduced to the question of political participation: to what extent participation in communist society differ from that of the western pluralistic society. Advocates of the interest group model base their argument on empirical as well as theoretical grounds.¹⁾ Theoretically they subscribe to structural-functionalism which takes it as axiomatic that in every society policy cannot be made in vacuum and hence input from the society is a functional prerequisite. This theoretical assumption finds empirical support in the fact that even what we call the one Party

* Professor of Political Science, Yale University.

1) H.G. Skilling, and F. Griffiths, *Interest Groups in Soviet Politics*, Jerry F. Hough, *The Soviet Union and Social Science Theory* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1977).

system various institutional interest groups—e.g., the secret policy, the Party bureaucrats, the economic managers, the government functionaries—take part in the policy debate, carrying with them their distinctive interests and ideological perspectives. In addition, many research findings show that internally each bureaucratic institution is not monolithic; on the contrary quite often at least two or more groups within each institution compete to influence policy outcome. As a result, control from the top has been declining, and increasingly diverse groups participate in the decision-making process, frequently resorting to bargaining and compromise with each other.

However, adherents of the totalitarian model rejoin by pointing out that the existence of pluralistic institutional interest groups still does not make the system democratic unless the masses are allowed to organize their own associational interest groups and to have access to competing elites.²⁾ Moreover, they argue that pervasive political control from top to down and over society still persists. Whatever changes might have occurred, they were initiated by the ruling oligarchy to perpetuate their rule and were insignificant in altering the participation opportunity for the non-elite.

Second, political participation has been regarded as a major criterion of political development. As Bendix persuasively demonstrated, the evolution of modern nation-states in Europe paralleled the gradual extension of political rights to lower classes.³⁾ Once allowed to express their interests in the decision-making process, the lower classes used the opportunities to press for equality in socio-economic realms. Thus, political participation worked as a major vehicle for removing feudal class barriers and establishing the modern notion of citizenship. Much

2) Jeremy Azrael, "Varieties of De-Stalinization," in *Change in Communist Systems*, ed., by Chalmers Johnson (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1970) pp.133-151.

3) Richard Bendix, *Nation Building and Citizenship* (N.Y.: John Wiley & Sons, 1960).

more important, with the establishment of legal equality in political rights, the nature of political authority changed from a private to public one, thereby making it possible for the nation-states to command the ultimate loyalty of its people. In brief, political participation is a major vehicle through which supports and demands of the various political groups are channeled to political authority. Without a certain amount of active involvement of its citizens, no nation state can enjoy legitimacy on possessing a strong capability. However, political participation can be dysfunctional as is the case in many developing countries where exploding demands for participation—either precipitated by socio-economic change or induced by the elite for the purpose of building a nation-state—often result in political instability. To avoid this disruptive consequence, as Huntington argues, increase in participation should proceed hand-in-hand with institutionalization of the political process.⁴⁾

Despite the crucial theoretical implication of participation in contemporary political life, there is no general consensus on what exactly political participation means. The first controversy involves whether participation should be distinguished from mobilization.⁵⁾ Arguing that participation presupposes voluntarism largely aimed at raising demands, particularly at a policy making level, whereas mobilization involves inducement or coercion mainly designed for generating support, particularly for policy implementation, some scholars insist on narrow definition of political participation. Others however favor the inclusive definition for the reason that the distinction between participation and mobilization is hazy in reality and that the broad definition facilitates the comparison across the ideological boundary of capitalism and

4) Samuel Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968).

5) Joseph Lapalombara, "Monoliths or Plural System: Through Conceptual Lenses Darkly," *Studies in Comparative Communism*, No.8 Feb. 1975 pp. 305-322.

socialism.⁶⁾

The second dispute is over the question of whether participation should be regarded as means to influence policy outcome or as an end itself—e.g., self-realization of participant.⁷⁾ The classical democratic theorists advocate direct participatory democracy, whereas the liberal democratic theorists tend to underscore participation as a means of selecting representatives.

The third dispute evolves around the question of how to draw the line of demarcation between political activities and other activities—such as economic and social ones—and how socio-economic variables affect political participation.⁸⁾ Scholars of liberal persuasion tend to conceptualize politics as an autonomous activity less susceptible to influence by socio-economic factors, whereas others recognize the close interrelationship between politics and economics. This seemingly insignificant difference in their respective views of public and private affairs has profound implications for how to conceptualize political participation in political democracy within the context of a capitalist economic system.

The fourth issue centers on whether participation should be studied empirically or normatively (or legally). Traditionally the defenders of western democracy have underscored legally guaranteed political rights while neglecting inquiry into how these legal rights are actually exercised. Recent studies, however, address themselves to such crucial empirical questions as who participates and to what extent in western democracies.

The fifth debate involves whether focus of empirical research should be on group or individual. The liberal tradition focuses on the

6) Samuel Huntington, *No Easy Choice: Political Participation in Developing Countries* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976).

7) Donald W. Kein, "Participation in Contemporary Democratic Theory," in Ronald Pennoek and John W. Chapman, ed., *Participation in Politics* (N.Y.: Liben-Arheron, 1975, pp. 1-38).

8) Robert Franger, *Action, Symbolism, and Order* (Nashville, Tenn: Vanderbilt University Press) cited in *Ibid.*

individual as a basic actor, only dealing with group phenomena in so far as individuals are presumed to have free choice in joining groups (voluntary association), and multitudes of groups compete for influence in a pluralistic fashion.⁹⁾ In contrast the Marxist tradition tends to conceptualize participation as a class phenomena. Most of the existing writings combine these five sets of issues to develop a particular view of participation.

The fourth and fifth issues involve the question of the relationship between social hierarchy and participation. How to view the relationship is crucial to the definition of participation. How does the different distribution of socio-economic, and political resources affect the rates and efficacy of participation for the various social groups? As Almond and Verba discovered in their *Civic Culture*, not all social groups are equally active in participation, even in a democratic society.¹⁰⁾ This led them to the paradoxical conclusion that democracy can work effectively only when certain groups do not participate.

In their second major work, *Participation in America*, Verba, Nye and Kim demonstrate that the low socio-economic status groups tend to be less politically active.¹¹⁾ In their latest work, *Participation and Political Equality*, they elaborate on the close correlation between the political and socio-economic stratification hierarchies.¹²⁾ According to their findings, the equalization of opportunity for political activity does not necessarily result in equalization in the use of opportunity. In countries where the equal opportunity is legally guaranteed, but political institutions do not explicitly encourage the participation of

9) Carole Pateman, *Participation and Democratic Theory*.

10) Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba, *Civic Culture* (N.Y.: Little Brown, 1965).

11) Sidney Verba, Norman Nye, and Jae-on Kim, *Participation in America: Political Democracy and Social Equality*.

12) Sidney Verba, Norman Nye, and Jae-on Kim, *Participation and Political Equality* (Cambridge University Press, 1978).

the disadvantaged group, political inequality between high and low socio-economic status groups will continue. Since the high socio-economic status group will act individually even if there is no special institutional support, they do not need group based participation. In contrast low socio-economic status groups need group based processes of political mobilization if they are to catch up the upper strata in terms of the level of political activity. In brief, Verba, Nye, and Kim's findings indicate that equal participation opportunity without institutional intervention would help the elite to perpetuate their disproportionately large political influence even in a democratic system. This point is not entirely new; but it underscores the basic problems that the process of nation building in China has faced in the past one hundred years.

To anticipate the conclusion, this paper argues that, even though parliamentary democracy has never been seriously practiced in China, the legal right to vote has extended first to the upper echelon of the gentry class during the last days of the Ch'ing dynasty and then to the all Chinese when the Nationalist government enacted the local election laws in 1938. This legalization of political participation has been always considered as a means to strengthen the capabilities of the existing political system rather than to allow free articulation of various group interests. Moreover, extension of formal political rights to the lower class without any other institutional support did not resolve the increasing socio-economic hardship of the lower classes.

It was the Chinese Communist party that changed the rules of the game by actually mobilizing the peasants and other disadvantaged groups against the existing elites. This strategy, plus the united front strategy, which justified cooperation with selected groups of elites, helped the CCP to capture political power. Under the influence of the radical idea of Mao's thought, the CCP elite largely recruited from the rural areas pushed mass mobilization to the extreme. After 1949, particularly after the Cultural Revolution, the CCP gradually excluded

from participation a large number of social groups crucial to socio-economic development. This pattern stands out as a sharp contrast to the gradual universalization of opportunities for political participation in the West.

It is only after Mao's death that, with the shift of the regime's goal from revolution to economic development, the effort has been made to extend legal rights of political participation to the previously disfranchised "Class enemy", thus reviving the notion of citizenship. However, the clear distinction between the elite and the masses persists in China, and this makes Chinese political system closer to an authoritarian regime than to polyarchy in which the vertical cleavages among the various social groups rather than horizontal cleavage between the elite and masses predominate.

II. Historical Overview

Since China has been subjected to the external threats and pressure since the middle of the 19th century, the major concern of Chinese intellectuals and political leaders has been how to make China wealthy and strong enough to survive in the Darwinian international competition. Their suggested solutions varied in details, but at a general level of all of them shared a basic premise; namely, the need to liberate energy and creativity of the individual and redirect them to the collectivity. Many intellectuals—from early reformers to contemporary political commentators—viewed political participation and democracy as the major mechanisms for enlisting people's support for the political system.

Identifying the basic difference between the West and China as a question of energy, Yen Fu, the first Chinese scholar with deep interests in the Western learning, argued that the best way of developing people's loyalty and love for the nation was to establish popular

assemblies.¹³⁾ Wang K'ang-nien, a contemporary of Yen Fu, was more explicit on how people's involvement in public affairs would actually strengthen the existing political authority.

"If only democracy people's right or people's power is partially used, then there will be thousands of ears and myriads of eyes which cannot be covered or beclouded. When a thousand persons point to one object, it is impossible to avoid seeing it...Therefore one may say that there is no better way than practicing people's right for strengthening the emperor's authority."¹⁴⁾

Another influential reformer, Liang Chi-chao, further elaborated the relationship between the individual and the collectivity.

"We must not depend upon one emperor or minister to pacify the disorder...In order to lead our struggle for success, it necessary to make our people's virtue, people's wisdom, and people's power of four hundred millions equal to that of foreigners. Then they naturally cannot cause us trouble, and we need not worry about them."¹⁵⁾

He did not, however, fully grasp the basic principle of pluralism, the very idea that free competition of diverse interest and ideas would be to public interest.

The new intellectuals of the May Fourth period went one step further than their predecessors in recognizing the importance of individual rights, freedom in thought and speech, as well as the development of individuality. However, they did not reject the premise that the ultimate goal of emancipation of individual energy was to strength-

13) Benjamin Schwartz, *In Search of Wealth and Power: Yen Fu and the West* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1964).

14) Lin Yu-sheng, *The Crisis of Chinese Consciousness* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1979).

15) Hao Chang, *Liang Ch'i-ch'ao and Intellectual Transition in China, 1890-1907* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971).

en the Chinese nation. Chow Tse-Tsung summarized his study of the May Fourth movement with the following observation.

“The trend toward the emancipation of the individual, however, did not mean the same as the exaltation of individualism as in the West, nor was liberalism promoted as exactly in the Western sense. To many young Chinese reformers, emancipation of the individual was as much for the sake of saving the nation as upholding individual rights. The value of individual and independent judgment was appreciated more in the May Fourth period than before, yet the individual's duty to society and nation was also emphasized... Consequently the Chinese emancipation of individual from tradition, especially from the big family system was soon balanced by the demands for a well organized society and state and therefore a strong government.”¹⁶⁾

Whatever precarious balance the May Fourth generation tried to maintain between individuality and collectivity, it was completely destroyed in the ideology of the Chinese Communist Party. Partially due to the deepening international crisis and partially due to the intrinsic nature of Marxism-Leninism, the Communist Party—more specifically Mao Tse-tung—developed a radical ideology justifying the supremacy of collective interests. As we will see later, this trend intensified with the removal of all external checks on the Party, and reached its height during the Cultural Revolution.

The drawing various social groups into an active political process in China also reveals an interesting pattern. As is well known, political participation in traditional China was restricted to the upper stratum gentry scholar, those who had passed the civil service examination and had obtained government positions. The local gentry participated only in local community affairs not directly regulated by the central

16) Chow Tse-tsung, *The May Fourth Movement* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1960), pp. 360.

government. The rest of the population did not have any formal access to the political process. Even the wealthy merchant group had to purchase an official degree in order to obtain access to political influence.

However, intensifying foreign threats and rising protest by local gentry compelled the Ch'ing dynasty at the turn of the century to open formal channels of political participation by introducing local elections. The qualification for the electors and the elected were severely restricted by education and wealth. For instance, in the first election in Chinese history only 1.6 million out of 400 million population—1% of males over twenty five years of age—were granted the right to vote.¹⁷⁾ By 1921 the franchise was further extended by lowering the requirements of education and property ownership. As a result over 40 million persons representing about 10% of the total population were able to vote.¹⁸⁾ According to one estimate, almost 90% of those elected in the election were from gentry classes.¹⁹⁾

With the collapse of the Ch'ing court in the 1911 revolution, the scholar-gentry class yielded its political dominance to military men—what Laswell classes “violence specialists.” The rise of military men in politics was largely due to the weakening of central authority. In turn, it accelerated territorial disintegration, with each military leader entrenching himself as a warlord in the provinces. Once in power, the “violence specialists” relied on coercion rather than persuasion, thus making it necessary even for the Nationalist Party to promote its own military men into politically dominant positions.

Meanwhile, the inevitable process of modernization produced new classes and new occupational groups. The incipient capitalist class

17) John Fincher, “Political Provincialism and National Revolution,” Marry Wright ed., *China in Revolution: The First Phase, 1900-13* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973) pp.209.

18) *Ibid.*

19) P'eng-yuan Chang, “The Constitutionalist,” in *Ibid.*, pp.143-183.

responded to the prevalent chaos by organizing self-defense corps and providing funds to warlords. By the time of the May Fourth Movement, a new intellectual group, well versed in the Chinese as well as in Western intellectual traditions, gained political influence as a symbol manipulator. Advocating science and democracy as the solution to all of China's problems, the new intellectual group used mass media effectively to communicate its political views to other groups hitherto politically passive. In this sense, the May Fourth period marked a major turning point in the development of the Chinese attitude toward political participation. Inspired by nationalistic sentiment all segments of China's urban population—intellectuals, students, merchants, and workers—cooperated in political action to "save China." However, class conflict was bound to erupt. For instance, in the May Thirtieth Movement, the first significant political action by workers, workers cooperated with capitalists at the initial stage, but a conflict of interest soon separated the two groups from each other.²⁰⁾ After the breakdown of the United Front, the Nationalist Party was unable to unify all these politically activated groups largely because of its too close ties with the capitalists and landlords, and because of its ideological and organizational weakness.

The Nationalist's policy on participation can be best described as demobilization and depoliticization of the various social groups. Under the justification that Chinese people were not yet ready for participation and the government had to educate them for an eventual participation, the Nationalist Party set up a highly authoritarian tutelage government. Under this system, such various social groups as students, workers, peasants, and professional groups were organized into their own associations which were, theoretically, to represent the group interests in the political process. However, there was no sub-system autonomy because each association was under tight supervision of the

20) Jean Chasneauz, *Chinese Labor Movement*.

Nationalist Party. When the Nationalist felt strong enough to convene the National People's Convention in 1931, the combination of functional and territorial representation was used to select the delegates; each province elected a allocated number of delegates from such legally registered organization as peasant associations, labor unions, chambers of commerce, etc. In order to ensure the Party's control, all members of the Central Executive and Supervisory Committees of the Nationalist Party were qualified to attend the convention with the right to vote.²¹⁾ By 1938 the Nationalist regime enacted election law on provincial assembly. However, due to the war situation, only 19 provinces set up provincial assemblies. By this time, election was universal, but strict qualification was required for the elected. Moreover, additional measures were taken to ensure the Party's control. Each provincial assembly was to be composed of two different groups of members; one group was selected at the district level under the supervision of the district government which was supposed to cooperate with the local Nationalist Party organs and civic associations, and others was composed of the representatives of the various occupational groups selected by the provincial government. The provincial government submitted candidates of the both groups, through the Executive Yuan, to the Supreme National Defense Counsel for final approval. In order to give more discretionary power to the Supreme National Defense Counsel, the numbers of candidates submitted was twice larger than finally selected.²²⁾

Having failed several times with the orthodox revolutionary strategy dictated by Moscow, the Chinese Communist Party developed a more pragmatic strategy which had far reaching consequences on the existing pattern of participation. First, the CCP shifted its focus from industrial workers, a numerical minority concentrated in the urban areas where the Nationalist Party's influence was strong, to the poor

21) William Tung, *The Political Institutions of Modern China* (Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1964), pp. 126.

22) *Ibid.*, pp. 196-197.

peasants, the numerical majority in rural areas. Second, the Party further developed the concept of "mass line"—defined succinctly by Mao as "from the masses, to the masses"—designed to resolve possible differences between "the vanguard of the proletariat" and the masses. The principle of mass line helped the CCP to maintain "an adequate equilibrium between its fundamental, revolutionary interests which had to prevail and the immediate, economic interests perceived by the peasants which should not and could not be sacrificed."²³⁾ The elaboration of the mass line concept, plus the reinterpretation of the Marxist class line, extended political participation to the peasant population, the majority of the Chinese people who had seldom been involved in politics until that time.²⁴⁾ Third, the strategy of united front justified the participation of all social groups not included in the proletariat class but opposed to the Japanese aggressor. The strategy served as a balance against the concept of class struggle, which, if followed strictly, would have alienated many powerful socio-economic groups.²⁵⁾

These series of innovative measures provided from a forum for the lower classes to articulate their class interests, while enlisting the support of the various professional groups of middle class standing. The genuine popularity of the CCP can be readily seen in the exodus of the large number of intellectuals, professionals, and students to Yenan after the December 9th Movement.²⁶⁾ The credit for the CCP's success should go to its moderate programs and policies. In turn, the objective condition that the CCP was a minority Party competing with the more powerful Nationalist Party made it imperative for the communists to restrain whatever radical revolutionary inputs that Marxism-Leninism provided.

23) Tang Tsou, "Reflections on the Formation and Foundation of the Communist Party State in China." (unpublished paper).

24) James Townsend, *Political Participation in Communist China*.

25) Lyman Van Slyke, *Enemies and Friends: The United Front in Chinese Communist History* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1967).

The situation changed after 1949 when the CCP became the Party in power, there was no longer any organized competitor for the support of the people. Nonetheless, the CCP initially used newly acquired political power with cautious self-restraint. The urgent need for national reconstruction dictated that the CCP retain a large number of officials from the previous regime and allow the involvement of intellectuals, professionals, and technicians in politics.²⁷⁾ On paper, the regime extended universal suffrage, for the first time in China's history, to "all citizens of the People's Republic of China who had reached the age of eighteen, irrespective of nationality or race, sex, occupation, social origin, religion, education, property status, or residence."²⁸⁾

At the same time, the CCP used its newly acquired political power to carry out the social revolution. The land-reform eliminated landlords and rich peasants as independent socio-economic and political forces. The "three anti" and "five anti" campaigns established the categories of "counterrevolutionaries" and "bad elements" as "class enemy" to be subjected to surveillance. The property of "the bureaucratic capitalist" was confiscated and those of the "national bourgeois" were bought off. In the su-fan campaign, the regime checked political reliability of all government and Party cadres by screening their personal history.²⁹⁾

All the information collected through the campaigns entered into personnel dossiers, the system borrowed from the Soviet Union.³⁰⁾ The

26) John Israel, *Student Nationalism in China: 1927-1937* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1966).

27) Harry Harding, *Organizing China: The Problem of Bureaucracy, 1949-1976* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1981)

28) "Electoral Laws of the People's Republic of China for the All China People's Congress and Local People's Congress of All Levels," in Abert P. Laustein, ed., *Fundamental Legal Documents of Communist China* (South Hackensack, N.J.: Fred B. Rothman and Co., 1962) pp.193-214.

29) *People's Handbook*, 1958, pp.354-360.

30) Hong Yung Lee, "The Personnel Dossier System." (unpublished paper)

most important records in the dossier, at least for our purpose, were about one's "class status" and "family background". The type of economic activity that one had engaged in during the three years prior to 1949 determined one's class status. The family background usually referred to the class status of one's parents and grandparents. Thus, the great majority of the Chinese population had been classified into more than sixty class designations.³¹⁾

The purpose of this elaborate class designation system was to determine who were enemies and friends of the regime. Those from good class backgrounds were recruited into the Party after having proved their political activism in the campaigns. As a result, the Party membership increased from 4.5 million in 1949 to 10.7 million in 1956. The persons with undesirable class status—"the four-category elements" customarily used in China including landlords, rich peasants, counter-revolutionaries, and bad elements—were legally disenfranchised. There was no way of ascertaining the number of "class enemies." The regime has never published any complete statistics. Moreover, the class labels were not supposed to be permanent; on the contrary, they were supposed to adjust to changed situations. For instance, a landlord could be reclassified after five years of good behavior and a rich peasant after three years.³²⁾ The data of 1953 election reports that the total number of those who had lost political rights due to bad class status amounted to (8.6 million) 2.68% of the total 320 million registered voters.³³⁾ However, the 1956 election data reveals that only 6% of the registered voters—1.8 million—were denied the right to vote.³⁴⁾ If this figure is reliable, by 1956 a large number of former "class enemies"

31) Richard Curt Kraus, "Class Conflict and the Vocabulary of Social Analysis in China," *The China Quarterly*, No. 69, March 1977, pp. 54-74.

32) "Decisions Concerning the Differentiation of Class Status in the Countryside," in Albert P. Blaustein, ed., *Ibid.*, pp. 290-324.

33) *Gongren Ribao*, January 19, 1957; *Renmin Ribao*, 29 September 1957; *Cheng-fa Yen-chiu*, 1957, p. 6., pp. 27-30.

34) *Ibid.*

managed to have their hats removed.³⁵⁾ It seems that this situation constituted the background for Liu Shao-ch'i's remark that the primary contradiction was not class struggle but "between the advanced socialist system and the backward productive forces" and Deng Xiaoping's remark that the old system of class label "has lost or is losing its original significance."³⁶⁾

The trend of expanding participation opportunities to a broader segment of Chinese population was reversed with the anti-rightist campaign in 1957. When the regime called upon the Chinese people to speak out by granting them the "four big freedoms"—freedom to speak out, to air one's views, to hold debate, and to write big-character posters—the non Party intellectuals rose up to criticize the Party for, among other things, tightening its control over society. What alarmed the Party leaders most was the intellectuals' challenge to the Party's prerogative over personnel matters and to the dossier system.³⁷⁾ The Party responded by mobilizing its supporters. Certainly there were ample numbers of people willing to defend the Party. As noted, almost a half of the 10 million Party members joined the Party after 1949 and were eager to prove their activism and to be rewarded with cadre positions. As a result, about 400,000 person—mostly intellectuals—were labelled as rightists.³⁸⁾ This marked the end of the time where Chinese intellectuals could serve as watchdogs over the Party. With the silence of the intellectuals, there was no social group that could check the Party's abuse of its power, and the process of political penetration into society stepped up. Many party leaders were appointed to professorships at the universities. The subsequent collectivization further strengthened the state's control over society by transferring economic resources to the hands of the state bureaucrats.

35) *Renmin Ribao*, 26 September 1956, cited in Richard Kraus, *Ibid.*

36) *Ibid.*

37) *Jangjin Eao*, 22 August 1957; *Renmin Ribao*, 27 July 1957.

38) *Cheng Ming*, 1979, pp. 5-8.

To eliminate influence of non-Party intellectuals did not result in an end to the conflict. The social tensions and conflicts now crept into the inner Party debates. The disastrous failure of the Great Leap Forward produced a serious inner Party conflict which eventually erupted to the surface in the Cultural Revolution. In the unprecedented mass mobilization, Mao changed the existing rules of political participation. First, by removing the organizational control that the Party had customarily rendered to any mass movement up to that time, Mao allowed the various social forces to assert themselves more freely, at least for a while. Second, he rendered active support to the most disadvantaged social groups, the groups located at the bottom of social hierarchy and usually incapable of mobilizing themselves. Third, by redefining the meaning of "class" he directed his "class struggle" against the new elite, who were the veteran Party leaders supported by the intellectuals, academicians and professionals. Fourth, the participants in the CR aimed not only affecting the decisions made by political authorities but also exercising political powers with their own hands.

One of the ironies of the Cultural Revolution is that the mass movement that had started to some extent with the idealistic goals or releasing energy of the masses from bureaucratic control and rekindling revolutionary enthusiasm ended with what some China scholars considered a totalitarian system.³⁹⁾ Why?

To answer the question one has to look at the characteristics of the communist bureaucratic elite in the structural context of the political system. Largely recruited from the rural areas originally for guerrilla warfare, the overall educational level of the new elite was very low and very few of them had received any specialized professional training. Most of them were the reds rather than experts. From the

39) Tang Tsou, "Back from the Brink of 'Feudal' Totalitarianism" in *State and Society in Contemporary China*, ed., by Victor Nee and David Mozingo (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1983).

beginning they did not have any social power basis independent from the state, deriving whatever power, income, and status they did enjoy exclusively from the bureaucratic positions they held in the state apparatus. As a result, they had to be responsive to higher up rather than to ordinary people and perceived their interests to lie in expanding the authority and function of the state at the expense of society. Thus, the communist elites are quite different from the traditional elite, who had been recruited mainly from the landlords and wealthy families, had their own social and economic interests to defend. At the same time, as scholar officials, appointed by the imperial court after passing the civil service examination, they also represented the state authority.⁴⁰⁾ This dual role of the traditional elite had helped maintain the balance between society and the state.

III. The Current Reforms and Broadening of Policial Opportunity

The moving forces for the ongoing reforms in China are the rehabilitated cadres—those who were once purged and then returned to the active political life. Their bitter personal experiences of having once been victimized by the political system that they themselves helped to build up to the Cultural Revolution convinced them of the need for structural reforms in China. At the same time they are also dedicated communists who initially led the revolutionary struggle and subsequently enjoyed privileged positions in China as a new ruling elite. Their vested interests in the fundamental principles of Marxism-Leninism and the basic structures of the Leninist regime define how far the reforms can go. As demonstrated in their actions to close down the “western democracy wall, to suppress the underground

40) For the dual roles of the Chinese traditional elite in maintaining the social integration, see Lau Siu-kai, “Monism, Pluralism, and Segmental Coordination: Toward an Alternative Theory of Elite, Power, and Social Stability,” (Monograph, Chinese University of Hong Kong).

publications, to jail the human rights activists, and to abolish the "four big freedoms", they are not liberal in any sense. At the same time, as the victims of Mao's radicalism, they are keenly aware of the limits of political power as a means to bring about social change.

The notion of "class struggle" provided the basic theoretical justification for Mao's radicalism. Reversing his previous indication that the violent class struggle was over in China in 1962, Mao renewed the thesis of class struggle by advancing the slogan "never forget class struggle." The slogan however created many theoretical quandaries in China where, by that time, all the means of production were collectivized and the upper classes of pre-liberation era were eliminated as political forces to be reckoned with, but a new social hierarchy was emerging on the basis of unequal distribution of political power. In this context that did Mao mean by "class"? Mao's response was to politicize the concept of class by defining it in terms of political criteria rather than by the economic concept of ownership of means of production, and by underscoring the persisting influence of the old bourgeois ideas of the realm of superstructure.⁴¹ By the time of the socialist education movement, Mao's concept of class changed to include the Party leaders advocating the policies that Mao considered as revisionist. Mao's meaning of class became a little clearer when this thesis of class struggle justified the masses' attack on the party, government, and military leaders, "the power holders taking the capitalist road" during the Cultural Revolution. Later, Chiang Chun-chiao systematically elaborated the radical meaning of "class".⁴²

The radicals' intensification of "class struggle" produced many undesirable consequences. First of all, the number of "class enemies" has increased rather than decreased. Each political campaign since

41) For the details on Mao's concept of "class," see Hong Yung Lee, *The Politics of the Chinese Cultural Revolution* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1978).

42) Chang Ch'un-ch'iao (Zhang Chunqiao), "On Exercising All Round Dictatorship Over the Bourgeoisie," *Beijing Review*, 4 April 1975.

1949 produced new "class enemies". A brigade in Kwaungtung with 135 persons had only one person belonging to the four-category element at the time of land reform, but the number increased to 11 by 1976.⁴³⁾ A commune reports that "there were altogether seven occasions for reclassifying class status. The result was that more and more people came to wear the hats of four-category elements". Often the class status of those who had overseas connections was reclassified to a less desirable designation.⁴⁴⁾ Sometimes original regulations were changed to make it more difficult to obtain good class status. For instance, children younger than 18 years old in 1949 were not to be given the landlords hats of their parents, according to the 1950 regulations. But during the Socialist Education Movement, the regulation was changed to exempt only those younger than six years old. In some areas, the class labels of parents were automatically inherited by the children after the parents died. Starting with the Cultural Revolution, not only one's class status but also one's family background—which was determined by the parents' and grandparents' status—was emphasized and any one with a bad family background was politically persecuted. The cadres purged during the Cultural Revolution formed a new category of "class enemy" and the records of their purge entered even personnel dossiers of their children.⁴⁵⁾

In addition to these absurd consequences, the rehabilitated cadres had a personal incentive to repudiate Mao's "class struggle." After all, Mao had purged them in the name of class struggle. Moreover, waging class struggle is not conducive to economic development, the regime's new goal. The Third Plenum of the 11th Party Congress thus promised to "mobilize all positive elements" for economic development, while declaring that turbulent class struggle on a large scale had ba-

43) *Ming-bao*, 1 April 1979.

44) *Namfang Ribao*, 14 March 1979.

45) *Zhongguo Qingnian Bao*, 7 October 1978.

sically concluded. Later Hua Guofeng declared specifically that the landlord, rich peasant, and capitalist classes ceased to exist in China.⁴⁶⁾ Deng Xiaoping was more direct in criticizing Mao's politicization of "class."

"We oppose the overextension of class struggle. We do not admit that there is bourgeois class in the Party. We also do not admit that under socialist system after the effective elimination of the exploiting class as well as the conditions making exploitation possible, a bourgeois class or any other exploiting class can be produced."⁴⁷⁾

The present official line defines class exclusively on the basis of relations of production and system of ownership. This strict economic definition leaves no room for the existence of exploiting class in China where all the means of production are basically collectivized. The regime however refuses to officially declare an end to class struggle for the reason that there are still counterrevolutionaries and foreign agents in China.⁴⁸⁾

The changed official view on "class" and class struggle provided theoretical justification for de facto abolition of discriminatory class designations. The regime decided first to remove all the hats of rightists and then to reclassify the status of most of the four-category elements. The measure was intended to "mobilize all positive factors, transform negative factor into positive ones, to promote stability and unity, and to increase the contribution to the socialist modernization."⁴⁹⁾ The official newspaper emphasized that the former landlords and rich peasants were efficient producers and the former capitalists were able managers.

46) *Renmin Ribao*, 26 June 1979.

47) *Hongqi*, 1981, No. 20, p. 27.

48) *Beijing Review*, 16 November 1979, pp. 9-13; 23 November 1979, pp. 15-17.

49) *Jiefang Bao*, 29 January 1979.

We don't know what portion of the Chinese population was given undesirable class designations. The official media quite often used 5% as the basis for calculating the "class enemy" and in 1967 Mao specifically estimated its size to be about 35 million.⁵⁰⁾ According to another source, in 1979 there were about six million landlords and rich peasants, and a half million capitalists.⁵¹⁾ These figures, however, did not include the family members of the undesirable class elements.⁵²⁾ In addition, 400,000 people were originally labelled as rightist. After five readjustments since 1957, there were 130,000 rightists left in 1979.⁵³⁾ However, even those whose rightist hats had been removed often found themselves becoming targets whenever there was a political movement. Furthermore, there were large numbers of cadres and their family members purged since the beginning of the Cultural Revolution. According to one source, the Cultural Revolution adversely affected almost 40 million people and 2.9 million of them were so seriously persecuted that their cases required the formal process or rehabilitation.⁵⁴⁾

The decision to abolish the rightist label started in early part of 1978 when Deng Xiaoping, after having resumed active political life, instructed the party not to use the label of rightist. In order to implement the instruction, the Organization, Propaganda, and United Front departments and the Public Security, and Civil Affairs ministries jointly convened a meeting from June 16 to June 22, 1978 in Shangtung.⁵⁵⁾ Presiding at the meeting, Wang Dongxing set up three basic guidelines: 1) the overall direction of the anti-rights campaign was correct; 2) the process of the movement was basically healthy; 3) but there were some minor mistakes. After a heated debate between what

50) *Fei-ching Yueh-bao*, Vol. 22, No. 7 pp.42-47.

51) *Zhongguo Qingnian Bao*, 8 September 1979.

52) *Cheng Ming*, 1979, pp.5-8.

53) *Ibid.*

54) "Deng Xiaoping's Report on the Present Situation and Task," *Cheng Ming*, March 1980, pp.11-23.

55) *Cheng Ming*, 1979, pp.5-8.

was known later as "whatever faction" and the Deng's group, the meeting approved "Concrete Measures to Thoroughly Implement the Decision to Removal All the Hats of the Rightists."⁵⁶⁾

On November 17, 1978, the People's Daily reported the decision to remove all the rightist hats without mentioning the existence of the official document.⁵⁷⁾ The article urged the local Party leaders to make a distinction between the correction (gai Zheng) and the removal of hats (di mao). The first would be applied to a person who was given the label of rightist by mistake.⁵⁸⁾ In the case of "correction," the person was entitled to three restorations: restoration of Party membership, political honor, and former salary scale.⁵⁹⁾ For those whose case had not involved any error, the simple process of removing the hat would be used.

Judging whether one had been correctly or mistakenly labelled was to be based on the "Notice on Criteria for Classifying Rightist," the document originally used in the 1957 campaign. Reissued in 1978, the document specified six types of persons who should have been designated as rightist and six types of persons who should not have been. However, the criteria distinguishing between the two groups were very ambiguous. For instance, the document made a distinction between those who had opposed the Party and critical socialism on the one hand and those who held some opinions of the Party and its specific policies, those who had uttered a few critical remarks in a slip of the tongue, and those who had been genuinely repentant after having made mistakes on the other hand.⁶⁰⁾ The document also identified as mistaken ones the judgment based on the following types of evidence: 1) few incorrect remarks largely due to the problem of perception; 2) few

56) *Ibid.*

57) *Renmin Ribao*, 19 November 1978.

58) *Ibid.*

59) *Cheng Ming*, 1979, pp.5-8.

60) *Ibid.*

words uttered in the context of free discussion; 3) criticisms normally tolerated; 4) theoretical opinions and academic disagreements; 5) "good intended criticism."⁶¹⁾

It seems that the regime first planned to "correct" only the erroneous designations, but later decided to remove the hats of even the genuine rightists. Moreover, there are indications that the center put pressure to interpret the mistaken cases broadly. For instance, the Central Party school reported that 31 persons out of 97 rightists belonged to an incorrectly labelled case in January 3, 1978. But twenty days later another article reported that 93 out of 97 in the some unit represented a case of mistaken decision.⁶²⁾

The responsibility for checking the correctness of the original decision fell on the unit that made the decision, regardless whether the person was still with the unit or not, and whether the person requested a reexamination or not. The Party committee in each unit often organized one or several special investigation teams, depending on need. For instance, the History Department of the Peking University, the unit that had produced a large number of rightists in 1957, organized four investigation teams; one each for former students, professors, foreign students, and research associates.

Each investigation team would start its work by carefully reading the dossier of each individual rightist. Sometimes, the team would allow the person to review the evidence—including his own self-criticism—that the unit had used to render its original decision, and to defend himself. The investigation teams were authorized to look into the dossier of even those who were not labelled as rightist to determine whether it contained any false and incriminating materials. After grasping the basic facts in each case, the team would organize a meeting of the masses to explain the official policy and to listen to their opinions.

61) *Renmin Ribao*, 23 January 1979.

62) *Renmin Ribao*, 2 January 1979; 23 January 1979.

Then came an internal Party meeting which would write the organizational conclusion to enter into the persons' dossier. The newly drawn conclusions often include, for instance, such statements as "no rightist remarks is found," "should not be considered as rightist".⁶³⁾ The conclusion was then shown to the person, and if he agreed, it was sent to a higher level for approval. Once approved, the unit issued a certificate of correcting or removing the rightist designation to the person directly involved, and sent one copy to units where the person's spouse or children worked.⁶⁴⁾ In cases where the person migrated or fled to a foreign country, the certificate was sent by mail.⁶⁵⁾ If the person died, often a memorial service was held.

After that came the job assignment and salary decision. The former rightist was not automatically entitled to his previous position, but his new assignment was to be based on his ability, physical condition, and the needs of the units. His original salary scale was usually restored. However, unlike the rehabilitated cadres, the former rightist was not entitled to back-pay, but each unit seems to be authorized to take care of special needs of the former rightists. In addition, the regime made it clear that the past political records should not be used as the basis for future political discrimination by prohibiting the use of such terms as "former rightist", and "rightist whose hat is removed," and insisting that the former rightists and particularly their children should be treated in the same way as the others in "promotion, salary raise, wage adjustment, decision on bonus, and conferring job title."⁶⁶⁾

Understandably, some basic level cadres resisted the new measure on rightists on the ground that the policy constituted "rightist reversal" and "repudiation of the achievements of the antirightist struggle." However, the resistance did not spread widely, largely because the

63) *Namfang Ribao*, 13 January 1980.

64) For the sample of certificate, see *Ming-bao*, 30 August 1979.

65) *Ibid.*, *Namfang Ribao*, 15 April 1979.

66) *Renmin Ribao*, 17 November 1978.

labels had been given out almost twenty years before and the number of rightists was very limited. In dealing with the resistance, the regime emphasized the two points. First, it upheld the correctness of the movement by insisting that the campaign was necessary and the main direction of the movement was correct, but there were some minor errors in the actual process of carrying out the campaign. Considering the most of the rehabilitated cadres themselves were responsible for the campaign, this view is understandable. Second, the official media defended the policy on the ground that it represented a success rather than repudiation of Mao's policy of transforming the rightists. As a result, the process of removing the rightist hat was successfully completed by November 1978. The first plenary session of the newly organized Disciplinary Committee decided to review the implementation of the policy.

How successfully was the policy implemented? The answer depends on the definition of the policy's objectives. As far as the administrative procedure of removing the hat is concerned, it must have been thoroughly carried out. As noted, it is recorded in each person's dossier that the hat is removed or the original decision is corrected. This administrative procedure, however, leaves remaining in one's dossier all the past records, which made some people quite uneasy.⁶⁷⁾ As far as the objective of helping the victims of the past political campaign to set free their grievances and to dedicate themselves to the new task of four modernizations, the result is less clear. For some former rightists the new policy was not sweeping enough to make restitution for all the suffering they had endured. After all, how can the regime compensate for broken marriages, lost opportunities, and in some extreme cases, permanent bodily injuries.⁶⁸⁾ For the other former rightists, the removal of the discriminatory label was an anti-climax,

67) *Namfang Ribao*, 11 March 1980.

68) *Tan Su*, 1979, No. 5, pp. 68-69.

after which they had no incentive for hard work.⁶⁹⁾

Immediately following the completion of removing the rightist hat, the regime proceeded to remove the designations of the landlord, rich peasant, counter-revolutionary, and bad element, the group commonly called in China as the "four-category elements."⁷⁰⁾ The official policy toward them was not categorical because "extremely small numbers of those who are stubbornly upholding the counter-revolutionary stand-points and those who are not yet properly remolded" would continue to carry the labels. Moreover, only those who have met the following three requirements would have their class labels removed: 1) have abided by state laws and regulations; 2) have sincerely labored; 3) have not done any "bad things".⁷¹⁾

After the publication of the official decision in the newspaper, Minister of public Security, Zhao Zhangbi, elaborated on these conditions in an interview with journalists.⁷²⁾ Underscoring that most of the four-category elements have been successfully remolded in the past 30 years, and the new policy would help mobilize all positive factors for four modernization, the minister interpreted that the "sincere labor" requirement would be applicable only to those who can perform physical labor. He emphasized the condition of "have not done any bad thing" as the most important condition, and elaborated the "bad things" as "engaged in class retaliation", "involved in beating, smashing, and looting", and "carrying out counterrevolutionary or other criminal activities". According to him, the group that definitely should not be reclassified was the "extremely small number of people who had done bad things when Lin Piao and the Gang of Four was in power". At the same time he emphasized that all the people who earned the designation due to their opposition to the ultra-leftist policies and

69) *Ibid.*

70) *Namfang Ribao*, 29 January 1979.

71) *Renmin Ribao*, 30 January 1979.

72) *Ibid.*

regulations of the "Gang of Four" would be reclassified. For instance, the group would include all "those who promoted private plots and those who challenged the erroneous leadership of the radicals." He refused to state what percentage of the four category elements would be liberated, while pointing out that the concrete figure would vary from unit to unit. At the end he distinguished between cases requiring "correction" and cases which require simply removal of the hats. As was the case with the rightists, the difference is important, because "corrected" implies that the state made a mistake in rendering the erroneous label but he or she was now successfully reformed.

The procedure of examining each individual case was similar to that used for rightists; it involved the leadership and masses and requires public announcement. However, in the case of the four-category elements the masses' opinion carried more weight in arriving at the final decision than in the case of rightist, and the public security bureaus were also involved. Moreover, the final authority in each case was given to the county level revolutionary committee. The removal procedure also involved changing the class status, for instance, from a landlord to a commune member in all written records. The class status of the children of the reclassified person was also changed to commune member status. For the grandchildren of the original four-category elements, even their family background was changed into a simple commune member.⁷³⁾

After reclassification, "they should enjoy all the basic rights of citizenship as specified in the constitution". It is promised that they would not be discriminated against in such matters as entering school, obtaining a factory job, joining the Chinese Youth League and the Party, and receiving a job assignment. The only consideration properly considered for deciding such matters was one's own "political perform-

73) *Ibid.*: Also see *Namfang Ribao*, 11 March 1980.

ance".⁷⁴⁾ As was the case with the former rightists, reclassified people were not to be called "former landlord or rich peasant whose hat is removed." Moreover, even if the reclassified person were to commit a crime, he should not be discriminated against on the basis of the former class label. However, past records as well as the records respecting the change were not to be removed from the personnel dossier.

Expectedly, there was some opposition to the policy. Some people regarded the policy as the reversal of Mao's policy and repudiation of the achievements of land-reform. Others argued that since most of the four-category elements were very old, it did not make much difference in advancing the four modernizations whether or not their designations were removed.⁷⁵⁾ The resentment was particularly strong among the soldiers.⁷⁶⁾

Nonetheless, it seems that the policy was implemented without any serious resistance. By October, 1979, Kwangtung announced that it had successfully completed the task of removing the designations of the four-category elements. As a result, most of the former landlords and rich peasants had their designations removed. For instance, Huan Cheng commune in Kwangtung—with a population of 5300 as of 1979—initially had 828 landlords and rich peasants at the time of the land-reform. The number was reduced to 608 in 1965 and to 423 by 1979. All of the people, except two, had their designations removed.⁷⁷⁾ There were 11,000 landlords and rich peasants in Peking Municipality in 1957, but the population was reduced to 8,500 by 1979.⁷⁸⁾ Out of that number 7,800 had their designations removed. The *Zungguo Qingnien Bao* reports that only 1% to 2% of the former four-category elements failed to have their hats removed.⁷⁹⁾ Another source estimated that

74) *Namfang Ribao*, 9 February 1979.

75) *Beijing Ribao*, 10 April 1979.

76) *Renmin Ribao*, 24 August 1979.

77) *Namfang Ribao*, 9 February 1979.

78) *Beijing Review*, 21 January 1980.

79) *Zhongguo Qingnien Bao*, 8 September 1979.

only about 50,000 people are still carrying the labels of landlords and rich peasants.⁸⁰⁾

A commune in Honan reveals how mistakes were made in assigning class designation. In the commune there were 290 persons whose designations were "corrected." Among these, 43 persons inherited the class designations of their parents; 10 persons obtained the labels after having attended meetings as substitutes for their parents; 15 persons were given the class designations of their parents when they separated their household registration for no other reason than that every household had to have a class label; and since the Cultural Revolution, 115 people were considered as "class enemies."⁸¹⁾

Another group that regained full status of citizenship was industrialists and businessmen of the national bourgeois. From the beginning the CCP's policy toward them has been more lenient than toward the landlords and rich peasants, largely because of the small size of the group. There were about 720,000 national bourgeois in 1956 and the number was reduced to about half million by 1979.⁸²⁾ Even after the "peaceful transformation of industry," the former industrialists and businessmen continued to enjoy their wealth; they were allowed to draw fixed interest of 5 percent on their total verified assets, to retain their private property including houses and bank deposits, and to work as highly paid executives or technicians in the enterprises they had once owned. However, the Cultural Revolution not only brought an abrupt end to their economic privileges but also made them vulnerable to political persecution for their previous exploitation; their private properties were confiscated, the payment of interest stopped, and many of them lost their jobs or suffered cuts in salary. In 1979, the regime decided to return all their property, repay their high salary retroactively, and to reinstate them in the positions where they could fully

80) *Beijing Review*, 21 January 1980, pp. 14-20.

81) *Renmin Ribao*, 10 January 1979.

82) *Beijing Review*, 28 April 1980, pp. 21.

utilize their skills and knowledge.⁸³⁾

The regime's policy towards the overseas Chinese and their relatives in China has likewise changed. When the radicals were in power, anybody with overseas connections was politically suspect: they were discriminated against in admission to schools, job assignments, military draft, recruitment into the Chinese Youth League and the Party. In Kwangtung where many people had overseas connections, the radicals enacted "Six Articles on Handling the Cadres with Overseas Connections" which stipulated that no one with overseas connections would be made a cadre and the incumbent cadres with overseas connections had to go through investigation.⁸⁴⁾ Moreover, many of the houses and rooms belonging to the overseas Chinese were arbitrarily confiscated or forcefully occupied. In January 1978, the regime announced a new policy toward the overseas Chinese; it promised to stop all discrimination, to return the confiscated houses, to reopen special shops for overseas Chinese, and to take care of their special needs.⁸⁵⁾

IV. Summing Up

When viewed in a long-term historical context of modern China, the abolition of the rightist designation, removal of the hats of the four-category elements, restoration of legal protection for the capitalists and overseas Chinese, and other measures to end discrimination against particular social groups, constitute a giant step toward the fuller development of citizenship in China. As noted, since the Ch'ing dynasty legalized the political participation of the gentry class by carrying out local elections almost one hundred years ago, the various socio-economic classes and occupation groups that the modernization

83) *Renmin Ribao*, 30 January 1979; 19 March 1979.

84) *Ming Bao*, 20 February 1978.

85) *Ming Bao*, 3 January 1978; 27 January 1978; 29 September 1978.

process is bound to produce began to assert their interests in the political areas. The Nationalist government claimed to be neutral to the class conflicts in society. In reality, however, it was only the upper class and high socio-economic status groups that possessed enough resources to force the government to be responsive to their interests. As Verba, Nye and Kim would argue, the poor peasants and the workers, even though not denied the legal right to participate, could not have their interests properly represented in national politics.

Rejecting the legal concept of citizenship as bourgeois excuse for perpetuating class exploitation, the CCP made the notion of class struggle and mass line the central theme in its ideology. By definition, class struggle implies that some segment of the population is to be denied the opportunity for participation. The notion of mass line, as Tong Tsou aptly argues, underscores the interest of the overwhelming majority of the society, which always happen to be the lower classes.⁸⁶⁾ The concept also carries the connotation of the socio-economic entitlement of the majority—which is an aggregate of individuals rather than individual itself—rather than the abstract and equal rights of the individual.

After becoming the “party in power,” particularly after the anti-rightist campaign in 1956, the size of the segment of the Chinese population to which the Chinese Communist Party denied even the formal right to participate in the political process increased substantially. More people were labelled as the four-category elements. New labels were created: the rightists, revisionists, the power holders taking the capitalist road, etc. After Mao’s death, the process was reversed. The regime’s emphasis is shifted from “class” and “masses” to the concept of citizenship (*gong min quan*). This is partially due to the personal experiences of the present leaders, many of whom were persecuted in

86) Tang Tsou, “Reflections on the Formation and Foundation of the Communist Party State,” (unpublished paper).

the previous mass movements in the complete violation of what they considered their basic individual rights. Thus, it seems that unlike in the West where the citizenship started with civil and political rights and ended with social rights, in China the political rights came after the development of social rights.⁸⁷⁾

The universalization of the opportunities for political participation has provided hand-in-hand with other reforms. Having accepted the limit of political power to effect forced revolutionary changes, the regime is now trying to reverse the past trend of using political power to control every sector of society. Officially recognizing that every sector of the society has its own objective laws, the regime now allows certain amount of subsystem autonomy. The intellectuals are now declared to be a part of the working class, and professionals are allowed to organize their own professional associations. The regime promises to judge the performance of the intellectuals and professionals on the basis of professional rather than political criteria. Moreover, the criteria for recruitment and promotion of the state and Party cadres have shifted from the exclusive emphasis on political loyalty to a more balanced one that takes into account level of education as well as professional competency. The regime endeavors to recruit and promote the intellectuals, professionals, and other experts into the leadership positions at all levels of the ruling structure. Furthermore, in selection and promotion of the cadres at least at the basic level, the opinions of the masses are more frequently taken into account. In the series of bureaucratic reforms, a large number of technocrats have already been promoted to key leadership positions in both the state and Party apparatus.⁸⁸⁾

There are also structural changes that directly affect political participation. In order to avoid overconcentration of political power, the regime is now trying to institutionalize the separation of the govern-

87) *Ibid.*

88) Hong Yung Lee, "The 12th CC: Rehabilitated Cadres and Technocrats," in *Asian Survey*, June 1983.

ment and the Party. Toward this end, the regime has restored the legislative functions of the National People's Congress, which enacted a series of national laws and regulations including the revised constitution. Some of these laws are specifically designed to guarantee the individual rights and to make the citizen's participation more meaningful. Article 38 of the new constitution stipulates that "The person dignity of the citizens of the People's Republic of China is inviolable. Insult, libels, false charges or frame-ups directed against citizens by any means are prohibited." The local election laws specifically prescribes a system of more candidates than positions, direct election of delegates of the county people's congress, and a more open nomination.⁸⁹⁾ The responsibility system and introduction of a certain amount of market mechanism in the rural area makes peasants less dependent on the local bureaucrats, while allowing them more room to maneuver. If the peasants come to have more resources under their control, their ability to raise demands to the state will certainly increase. The widely discussed workers' councils in factory promise to offer really meaningful participation if they are fully implemented.

What do all these tell us about the emerging Chinese political system? Will the totalitarian model or the interest group model prove to be more useful for understanding the emerging political system?

In order to answer the question, one has to look simultaneously at the vertical and the horizontal cleavages in present China. By the horizontal cleavage I mean the demarcation between the elites and the masses. The vertical cleavage refers to the division along either functional, territorial, or ideological line. How do ongoing reforms affect these two cleavages? The first obvious point is that the reforms tend to give more autonomy to the vertically defined sectors, be they functional sectors such as economy, politics, and society, or paralleling

89) *Xinhua Yuehbao*, 1979, No. 6 and *FBIS*, Supplements to 27 and 30 July, 1979.

bureaucracies such as the Party, the Government, and the Military, or occupational groups, or functional ministries of the central government.

At the same time the horizontal cleavage across the demarcation line between the elite and the masses was strengthened. One of the most striking aspects of contemporary Chinese politics is the continuity of the political elite. Despite ten years of the Cultural Revolution that the Maoist radicals launched largely to weaken the political power of the bureaucratic strata, all the pre-cultural Revolution cadres are rehabilitated to their former positions, whereas most of those who made it to cadre positions since Cultural Revolution have been removed from their positions. Moreover, the pre-1949 social elites—former capitalists, landlords, and rich peasants—now have regained the legal opportunities for political participation. Certainly this group which once enjoyed the high socio-economic status will use the opportunities more effectively than the workers and ordinary peasants for articulating and representing their interests at the policy making level. Their children would certainly have a better chance than those of the ordinary masses to get ahead in the social hierarchy. The official emphasis on expertise and professional knowledge will certainly justify the increasing political influence of intellectuals and technocrats, while compromising the opportunities for laymen.⁹⁰⁾

In brief, the ongoing reforms give more autonomy to the vertically defined sector. This means more authority and opportunity for political participation to the elite rather than to the masses in that sector.

In this sense the readily discernable trend is the emergence of the pluralistic elites. It is not difficult to understand the reason. As Huntington eloquently argues, once the revolutionary Party succeeds in changing its social structure and bringing about socio-economic modernization, it inevitably paves the way for a pluralistic elite. This is the

90) Stephen Wexler, "Expert and Lay Participation in Decision-making," in Ronald Pennoch and John W. Chapman, ed., *Ibid.*, pp. 186-194.

result of developing structural differentiation. Thus, the crucial question is: what kind of conflict among the elites will result in a change of the horizontal cleavages between the elites and the masses? In China the technocrats are co-opted into the system. The common interests of the elites in the various sectors limit the pluralistic trend only to the extent that it would not undermine their common interests.