CHAPTER V
DISSENT, HEGEMONY, AND THE STATE

The collapse of the Maoist grand theory as the ideology of the People's Republic, by the late 1970s, was punctuated by the sprouting of various dissent movements. As the official Mao canon ceased to remain the dominant intellectual force in China, the doctrinal homogeneity hitherto maintained by the CPC vis-a-vis the society was rendered unsustainable. Consequently the CPC's political domination over the centres of knowledge production, for example, the universities, has been weakened considerably. Certain intellectual groups and social organizations transgressed the ideological and cultural orthodoxy instituted by the CPC. In addition, the state faced serious crises in maintaining its patronage over many intellectual associations and social agencies and was gradually losing control over the discourse that was constituted in the public spaces. At another level, the economic reforms have been accompanied by the public expression of quite unorthodox views and social practices. As Tony Saich has noted, the public discourses were breaking free the codes and linguistic phrases established by the Party-State. And in the context of the protest movements the popular sensibility moved increasingly towards the idea of democracy and economic justice. All these have contributed to the erosion of power of the Chinese state within the society.

1 In this connection many scholars have attempted to identify the emergence of an embryonic civil society in China. See, F.Wakeman, "Civil Society and Public Sphere Debate, Western Reflections on Chinese Political Culture", Modern China, vol.19, no.2 (April 1993), pp.108-38.

Although the rhetoric of the economic liberalization and modernization was partially successful in appropriating the language and vision of the popular dissent, it rendered the Chinese working class more vulnerable in terms of wages, social security and political power. The official rhetoric of the CPC in the reform era was symptomatic in its abandonment of the working class as the central category from its historical vision. What has been replaced was a new class of managers, technical elites, white collar professionals and the *nouveau riche* entrepreneurs.

The growing popular disenchantment against the regime made consistent outbreaks at many places. A cross section of the Chinese society has participated in the protest demonstrations in varying degrees. The workers emerged as the most radical critics of the regime. The students proved to be the most coherent social group to oppose the government. The state encountered the people's opposition by using not only the internal coercive apparatus but the standing army as well.

Taking the above into consideration, this chapter shall examine the location of hegemony in post-Mao China. It involves, firstly, an inquiry into the ideology of the dissent movements in general and, secondly, an analysis of the Chinese state vis-a-vis the popular protests. The scope of this chapter does not include a detailed discussion of the democracy movements which are too well known to be documented here but only deconstruct the rhetorical sites of this movements. In order to contextualize the central concerns of this chapter, three theoretical discussions are included (1) a critique of the post-revolutionary state, (2) a brief introduction to Nicos Poulantzas's analysis of the state power, and (3) the concept of hegemony in Antonio Gramsci.
THE POST-REVOLUTIONARY STATE: A CRITICAL INTRODUCTION

The theoretical literature on the concept of the state in post-revolutionary societies is far from comprehensive. The Marxist political studies have been for the most part, engrossed in the analysis of the state and class in capitalist societies. The researches in this field have produced exceptionally insightful works. However, in the context of the present study, these works offer little assistance, that apart from the capitalist state being their central concern these works are irredeemably Euro-centric.

From the vantage point of the present, it will be rewarding to take note that there had been sceptical views about the nature of the workers state even before it become a historical reality. In the First International of the 1870s, the principal source of conflict between the anarchists and Marx and Engels was the issue of revolutionary governments in the form of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Michael Bakunin, one of the most eloquent spokesmen of the idea of anarchism, accused Marx that what the latter proposed with his scientific socialism was 'the organization and the rule of the new society by socialist savants ... the worst of, all despotistic governments!'³ And in one of his famous maxims Bakunin insisted that 'freedom without socialism is privilege and injustice, and socialism without freedom is slavery and brutality'.⁴ The anarchist critique of the Marxian proletarian state as the despotism of experts and 'representative' politicians over the working class has been developed as a systematic theory by Jan Makhaisky, the Russian-Polish radical exiled to Siberia in the 1890s. He discerned from reading Capital, the dangers represented by the new class of 'white hands' with their 'intellectual capital',

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⁴ ibid, p.298.
exploiting manual labour through their higher salaries and who aimed to establish both their dictatorship and their privileges through state office.  

In the pre-revolutionary Russia many Socialist thinkers were apprehensive about the country's specific conditions, such as, longer history of the autocratic state and agrarian backwardness to have on the future organisation of the state. George Plekhanov, in the early 1880s had alluded to the possibility of a new form of oriental despotism, 'on communist foundations'; a perceptive premonition about the concentration of power in the hands of an 'asiatic' state which, later, caused him to oppose the policy of nationalizing the land.  

This suggestion has been developed at length by Karl Wittfogel, in Oriental Despotism which resurrected the 'asiatic mode of production' identified by Marx. The previous chapter has touched upon this aspect. The connected notions of oriental despotism and the asiatic mode of production underscore the existence of forms of society in which both the political dominance and economic exploitation occur through the state, without any considerable role for the private property. Rosa Luxemburg, the leader of the German Social Democratic Party, had made incisive criticism of Lenin's party thesis for its advocacy for ultra-centralism within the working class party. She, again, disapproved the violent suppression of democracy by the Bolsheviks following the capture of state power in October 1917.

6 ibid, p.145.
9 ibid.
This background discussion is intended to underline a significant aspect of the development of the theory of state within the early socialist thought and practice; that many leading figures of the international socialist movement and their intellectual fellow travellers had prophetic insight into the nature of the future communist state. These states have later become, to varying degrees, centralized, bureaucratic and militaristic, ruled by a largely self-appointed and self-reproducing elite.

Incontrovertible is the fact that Marxian inspired social movements organised political power in a different way. But a comprehensive analysis of this quasi or proto-socialist state is yet to emerge. As noted in the beginning of this chapter, the Marxist scholarship did not pay serious attention to the problems of power in these societies. Therefore, the state largely evaded serious academic scrutiny. The official literature provided only fictional view of the realities of power under what came to be called socialist societies.\(^\text{10}\) The liberal critics were too eager to reject this form of political power as a credible alternative to representative democracy. The contribution of creative literature in the form of novels, memoirs and reports helped, albeit partially, to understand the nature of state in these societies.\(^\text{11}\) Nevertheless, there are some realistically critical conceptions of the state in socialism and the most influential work was to come from none other than Leon Trotsky the most eloquent defender of the Bolshevik regime in the 1920s. The notion of the 'degenerated workers state' developed by him was to make clear imprint on many other studies to follow. Trotsky identified

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\(^\text{10}\) See for example, A. Lashin, *Socialism and the State* (Moscow, 1977).

the essential degeneration of the Soviet state in the growth of a privileged bureaucracy which found its political representative in Stalin. A host of factors including the isolation of the Russian revolution, general economic backwardness and scarcity had produced, not a new type of capitalist ruling class, but a bureaucratic caste. This rested both on the existence of socialist economic foundations which depends on the Party’s monopoly of political powers and also on the hostile pressure of a surrounding capitalist world.\textsuperscript{12}

Another important concept evolved out of critical examination of the post-revolutionary state is ‘totalitarianism’. This liberal theory emphasizes the capacity of the state bureaucracy to dominate society directly, independently of roots in property forms or ruling classes. The word ‘totalitarianism’ was actually introduced as a term of approbation. It represents a key word in the language of the Italian fascism since the mid 1920s when Benitto Mussolini made ‘lo stato totalitario’ denoting his intention of principle to eliminate political opposition and form a one-party state. Before the second world war the western social science literature then adopted this term as a descriptive of the Stalinist party-state in the former Soviet Union.\textsuperscript{13} Concentration of political power is essential to the concept of totalitarianism. According to many of its exponents, the concentration is not only in the hands of the individual leader who, subordinating the party to his own subjective interests, rules through a network of more personal connections. Fascist states are exceptionally clear examples of this, but the ‘Fuhrerprinzrip’ is also present in the cults of Stalin’s or Mao’s personality. Closely linked to the concentration of power in the state is the attempt to destroy it at alternative levels. In this sense, totalitarianism aims at the elimination, containment and assimilation

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{12} Leon Trotsky, \textit{The Revolution Betrayed: What is the Soviet Union and Where is it Going?} Tr. by Max Eastman (London, 1957), pp.222-38.}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{13} Westoby, n.5, p.140.}
of intermediate social institutions which could act as rival source of power. At a more micro level, totalitarianism seeks to weaken direct connections and solidarity between individuals, thus atomizing society. In the absence of civil society, the state's monopoly of control over social institutions render a direct dependence of the individual. The social atomization is seen as a means for direct control of the central state power over individuals.

**EVOLUTION OF THE CHINESE PARTY-STATE:** SOME PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS

The post-revolutionary Chinese state was shaped out of the CPC's instrumentalist conception of the state, according to which state apparatuses are nothing but tools for class rule. As the vanguard of the coalition of classes which made the revolution successful, the CPC appointed itself as the agency for the possession and exercise of the state power. Taking the cue from the late Bolshevik practices, the CPC gave birth to an ultra-centralized unitary state under which the management of the society was entrusted with the privileged members of the Politburo Standing Committee. This huge structure erected over the Chinese society immediately after the revolution was to remain there, uncontested, and acquired an interest of its own over the years. The CPC controls all levels of power organised as the state. This political monopoly was not officially recognized in the first constitution of the PRC in 1954 which contained the stipulation (Article 2): "All power in the People's Republic of China belongs to the people. The organs through which the people exercise power are the *National People's* congress and the local people's congresses."\(^{14}\) However, later constitutions have shown a more

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realistic approach to acknowledge the true location of power in China. Article 2 in the 1975 constitution drafted under the strong influence of Maoism, reads as follows: "The Communist Party of China is the core of leadership over the whole Chinese people. The working-class exercises leadership over the state through its vanguard, the Communist Party of China."\(^{15}\) This explicit declaration of the CPC's control over the state has been retained in the same wording in the 1978 constitution as well. Considering that the 1978 constitution was drawn up by a different leadership faction, the reappearance of the same statement indicates that there has been a strong consensus over this principle regardless of other differences within the Party.

The CPC documents are more precise and explicit about the extent of Party dominance in the matters of the government. The Party constitution of 1973, for instance, stipulates that "state organs, the People's Liberation Army and the militia, labour unions, poor and lower-middle peasant associations, women's federations, the Communist Youth League, the Red Guards, the little Red Guards and other revolutionary mass organizations must all accept the centralized leadership of the Party".\(^{16}\) These principles underlie the CPC's gradual extension of its organizational control throughout the society and the state since 1949.

The CPC exercises its vanguard role over other sectors of the state through a hierarchically organized system of committees, branches, and groups, each of which is subjected to one of the specialized departments under the central committee and the Politburo. The function of each party unit has been delineated in 1956 as follows: "to assume the responsibility of carrying out Party policy and decisions, to fortify unity with

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\(^{15}\) ibid, p.573.

non-Party cadres, to cement the ties with the masses, to strengthen Party and state discipline and to combat bureaucracy”. The role of the Party in relation to the administrative organs of the state was defined as, "The leading role of the Party finds expression in such ways as these: (1) the Party gives exact directives to the organs of the state power on the nature and direction of their work; (2) the Party enforces party policies through the organs of state power and other work departments and exercises supervision over their activities; (3) the Party selects and promotes loyal and capable cadres (Party and non party) for work in the organs of state power.”

Unlike the liberal democratic states in Western Europe, the Party-state in China does not derive its legitimacy from a written constitution or law. According to the Marxist and Leninist theories of the state, law in any given society represents the will of the dominant class or alliance of classes that rule that society. In a capitalist society, for instance, law is the codified will of the bourgeoisie as a class. As a consequence, law protects the interests of that class and entails the intervention of the state repressive apparatus for its implementation. However, it is a fact to be acknowledged, that the constitution of the liberal democratic state has conferred certain privileges and rights to the individual which are inalienable and inviolable. An individual member of the society has been defined as citizen whose rights and privileges are defended against the state, at least, in theory.

In stark contrast to the above, the political systems of the Communist Party regimes do not provide any legal protection whatsoever to an individual member of the


18 ibid.
society neither in theory nor in practice against the state. A concept of citizen with certain inalienable rights and privileges does not exist in these societies. The absence of a meaningful legal regime which can restrain the state further makes an individual too vulnerable to be abused. It appears that Marxist and Leninist theories of the state offered a critique, surely incisive, of the bourgeois law, but failed to suggest any remedies. This terrain left unexplored by the authors of the revolutionary idea was to remain unattended again after the revolution. As a result the Communist Party states failed to evolve a system of governance wherein the individual is protected from the abuse of state power.

Keeping the above context in view, this chapter shall examine the approach of the Chinese Party-State towards its critics and opponents. One of the first pieces of statute law promulgated immediately after the revolution provided the legal basis for the campaign against the opponents of the newly established regime. On 21 February 1951, the authorities in Beijing promulgated the Regulations for the Punishment (or suppression) of "counter-revolutionaries". These regulations contained a long list of vaguely defined punishable acts including, \textit{inter alia}, "provoking dissension among the various nationalities, democratic classes, democratic parties and groups, people's organizations or between the people and the government", and "conducting counter-revolutionary propaganda and agitation and making and spreading rumours."\textsuperscript{19} The strategic considerations in the context of the Korean war, and the domestic reaction seemed to have influenced the drafting of these regulations. However, what remains to be examined is the way in which a state deals with its opponents. The offence, "counter-revolutionary activities" has not been delineated clearly in the regulations. Moreover,

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a "principle of analogy" was introduced in Article 16 that allowed the state to penalize persons whose actions were not covered by the provisions of the regulations, but whose behaviours were "analogous" or "comparable" to proscribed acts. The Chinese Party-state has taken recourse to these regulations repeatedly to silence and eliminate political opponents.

In the post-Mao era, these regulations have been invoked in the context of the democracy movement, and Wei Jingsheng became its celebrated victim who was the most forthright advocate of the legal protection of civil and political rights. He was charged with criminal culpability as a "counter-revolutionary". On 16 October 1976 he was brought to trial and charged with "writing counter-revolutionary articles and editing a counter-revolutionary magazine" whose aim was to "overthrow the government of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the socialist system." He was charged under Article 2, 10 and 17 of the 1951 Regulations. Article 2 spoke of acts "designed to overthrow the government of the people's democracy or to undermine the people's dedication to the people's democracy." Article 10, paragraphs 2 and 3, referred to "incitations" and "propaganda" that provoke "division" among the various classes, parties and organizations in the PRC.

Vivienne Shue maintains that the traditional institutions of the Chinese associational life were subjected to extraordinary strain and erosions in the first half of the twentieth-century. A multitude of factors were in operation in the twentieth century which distorted the customary forms of civil association both in rural and urban China.

20 ibid, pp.122-3.
21 ibid, p.129.
22 ibid.
They include a rapid but uneven economic development and the expansion of heavy industries, dynastic ineptitude and collapse, imperialist military and financial meddling, of warlordism, missionaries and Christian converts, opium trafficking, banditry, famine, refugee migration, occupation by the Japanese and finally the civil war. When the CPC achieved state power in 1949, what they inherited was a society made of mostly decayed and poorly integrated institutions. The most vigorous associations were of course the CPC and its frontal organizations like the peasant associations, mutual aid associations, women's associations and labour unions.

The agrarian reforms, collectivization, and the nationalization of business and commerce deprived the members of the old socio-economic elites of their wealth, privileges, political influence, and social status. As Vivienne Shue has put it, the social hierarchy of the ancient regime stood on its head.

The party-state immediately undertook a monumental political task of reinventing the Chinese society. The Party imposed its own class categories on individuals and social institutions such as national bourgeoisie, rich peasants, landlords, workers, intellectuals, religious practitioners, criminal elements, and so on. The personal history of every Chinese is investigated, documented and classified into dossiers. In the immediate postwar atmosphere which instilled a sense of insecurity in the minds of the new state, the classification not only reconfigured the previous social structure but also helped the secret police to identify the friends and the enemies of the state.

Apart from this the boundaries of communities and other social units were redrawn during the immediate years after the revolution. The rural social space which

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was previously constituted by temple associations, lineage organizations, market towns and hamlets were replaced by mutual-aid teams, collectives and then communes. In the cities people were given permanent assignments to certain workplace and were given residence rights in specific blocks and neighbourhoods officially designed as basic units of social life.

As a result of the reconfiguration of the Chinese society in accordance with the Marxist categories of social class, the society segmented into numerous small and discrete cells or parcels. Vivienne Shue calls this post-liberation organization of the Chinese society as social cellularization. 24

For the vast majority of the Chinese people, the life was effectively confined so much so that the social experience became an entirely local experience. 25 The household registration system of 1958 forbids travel without permission and thus strictly circumscribed the opportunities for physical and social mobility. The restrictions on mobility virtually imprisoned the entire population in their respective localities and deprived of any social interaction with other communities. Old networks of trade and exchange of religious worship and even marriage which traditionally functioned as a link between the desperate small peasant communities were effectively weakened and even dissolved. The highly centralized apparatus of state, arching over and penetrated into the social cells, was intended to coordinate and connect their activity. The social interests and issues had to be conceived and articulated in the categories of the state's own ideology - categories of class struggle, anti-imperialism and anti-revisionism. The party-state relied on its organs of mass mobilization - the peasant associations, labour unions,

24 ibid, p.68.
25 ibid, p.69.
the women federation, the youth league etc. - to insist on those categories of social analysis and instill it into the popular mind.

The political authoritarianism in China is firmly rolled in the more than two-millennium old imperial bureaucracy. Its organizational structure and the operational logic has been elaborated by Gorden White. To quote:

"Within the state apparatus, the hierarchical distribution of power was legitimized by both Confucian and legalist norms; the system of bureaucratic ranks was reinforced by complex differentiations in modes of address, dress, rank and other symbolic attributes. The relation between the state and the general population was both distant and hierarchical, expressing a sharp distinction between superior officials to whom defence and unquestioned obedience was due and a populace that had no formal rights to influence the decisions of the official stratum. A position in the state apparatus enabled official to appropriate resources, both public and private, to improve their position within the bureaucracy, and to spread the benefits of power to their relatives, friends and clientele." 26

The authoritarian predispositions created by this pattern of state power reappeared, albeit in new forms, in the Chinese politics after the revolution. According to Gordon White the adoration of Mao Zedong in the 1960s and in the 1970s was striking similar to the emperor cult of the old China. Further, the views the kind of state structure erected by the CPC in terms of a resurgence of traditional forms of bureaucratism. 27

The theory of the state which the CPC inherited during the early period of the liberation war appears to have drawn considerably from the Soviet writings. However, that was not the only intellectual source. The Marxist-Leninist theory of the state which prelocated into China in the 1920s, through the 1940s had three components:

27 ibid.
a Saint-Simonian strand of rational administration by exerted coexisted with Marx's conception of the participatory proletarian state based on the Paris Commune (a theme later to be appear in Lenin's uncharacteristic *state and Revolution*) and Lenin's conception of the leading role in the state played by the elite Party professional revolutionaries.28

This Bolshevik model had structural antipathy towards participatory political institutions, responsive bureaucracies or egalitarian power relationship. It was essentially elitist in conception and authoritarian in operation with too little provisions for inner-party democracy.

The establishment of the state apparatus in China was completed between 1948-1956. The CPC had to rely, to a great extent, on the administrative and technical personnel of the former Guomindang government as the Party lacked experienced and skilled cadres in matters of state administration. By 1955, retained officials were mostly replaced or moved to less responsible posts. In the cities, the problem of management, coordination and control had far greater magnitude and complexities than in the rural areas. In order to establish a multilayered organizational system to tackle these problems, the CPC adopted the Soviet institutions as primary models. This meant that China was imparting many of the inegalitarian, hierarchical elements of the Stalinist political system.

THE STATE AS THE LOCATION OF POWER: CONSIDERATIONS OF NICOS POULANTZAS

As this chapter has already noted, the state in post-revolutionary societies seldom figures as a serious concern for Marxist theory. On the other hand the contemporary historical records have revealed beyond doubt, the inefficacy of the socialist states; that the maintenance of a huge coercive structure and the way in which the state power has

28 ibid.
been organised in these societies had too little popular consent. In this context, the writings of Nicos Poulantzas become relevant to the present study. The subject of his structural Marxist inquiries is capitalist states, and they provide - a great deal of insights into the strength of political power in capitalist societies. Reading Poulantzas is helpful in understanding the relative weakness of the state in a 'post-socialist' society like the post-Mao China.

One variant of Marxism equates the state with political domination, where each dominant class constructs a state according to its requirements. In that sense, every state is nothing but class dictatorships. Poulantzas argues that this instrumental conception of the state reduces the state apparatus to state power. This criticism does not deny the 'class nature' of the state, but points out that the heart of the matter lies elsewhere. The above referred instrumental conception of the state fails to explain, for example, as regards to the capitalist state, as to why does the bourgeoisie seek to maintain its domination by having recourse precisely to the national-popular state, with all its characteristic institutions. At a time when, the state's activity reaches into all spheres of everyday life, the task political theory encounter is in explaining the complexity of domination. Any enquiry in this direction will soon reveal that the image of the state as a mere product or appendage of the dominant class is an inappropriate representation of the state as the location of power. However, the legacy of the political science has been such that the theorists have invariably acknowledged the existence of a free-standing state which is only afterwards utilized by the dominant classes in various ways. Leaving


behind all these, thematic representations Poulantzas has attempted to answer as to what constitutes state power. He maintained that:

The state really does exhibit a peculiar material framework that can by no means be reduced to mere political domination. The state apparatus - that special and hence formidable something - is not exhausted in state power. Rather political domination is itself inscribed in the institutional materiality of the state. Although the state is not created *ex nihilo* by the ruling classes, nor is it simply taken over by them; state power (that of the bourgeoisie, in the case of the capitalist) is written into this materiality. Thus, while all the state's action are not reducible to political domination, their composition is nevertheless marked by it.31

The role of the state in a society, according to Poulantzas, does not confine to the exercise of organized physical repression. The state plays an equally specific role in organizing ideological relations and the dominant ideology. And ideology does not consist merely in a system of ideas or representations; it also involves a series of *material practices*, encompassing the customs and way of life of the agents which cement in the totality of social practices including political and economic. Ideological relations are themselves indispensable to the constitution of the relations of production and to the social division of labour. The state cannot reproduce political domination exclusively through repression and violence. The political power is organized by directly calling upon ideology to legitimize violence and contribute to consensus of dominant classes and fractions.

The dominant ideology is embodied in the state apparatuses. Their functions include, among other things, to elaborate, inculcate and reproduce that ideology. Poulantzas attaches considerable importance to this function in the constitution and reproduction of social classes, class domination and the social division of labour.32

31 ibid, p.14.
32 ibid, p.28.
Louis Althusser has termed those web of organizations which articulate and reproduce the dominant ideology as *ideological state apparatuses* irrespective of their judicial character, private or the state. For example, religious organisations, the educational institutions, the official information network of radio and television, and the cultural apparatus etc.\(^{33}\) The efficacy of the capitalist state can be partially located in what is termed ideological state apparatuses. At one level these 'private' organizations/apparatuses conceal the political economy of the capitalist state. An individual member of the society has been 'turned' through ideological training as an agent of the state. In other words these apparatuses help an individual to internalise the logic of the existing political domination. The dominant ideology is also present in the organizations of other apparatuses such as, army, police, judicial system, prisons, and state administration, whose principal responsibility is the exercise of legitimate physical violence.

Poulantzas has pointed out that, in every state, law is an integral part of the repressive order and of the organization of violence. The state establishes an initial field of injunctions, prohibitions and censorship and thus institutes the practical terrain and object of violence. This is achieved primarily by issuing rules, regulations, acts, ordinances and decrees. The law organizes the conditions for physical repression, its modalities, devices and methods by means of which it is exercised. In this sense, law is the *code of organized physical violence*.\(^{34}\) And in all modern societies, the state holds a *monopoly of legitimate physical violence*, the law plays a decisive role in organizing power.

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34 Poulantzas, n.24, p.77.
The physical repression plays a far greater role in the functioning of the state. Poulantzas has rejected the widespread notion that modern power and domination is no longer grounded on organized physical violence but on ideological-symbolic manipulation and organization of consent.\textsuperscript{35} Even if violence is not concretized in the every day exercise of power it occupies more than ever a \textit{determining} position. For the very monopolization of legitimate violence by the state induces forms of domination in which a host of methods establishing consent play the decisive role. As he puts it:

State-monopolized physical violence permanently underlies the techniques of power and mechanisms of consent; it is inscribed in the web of disciplinary and ideological devises; and even when not directly exercised, it shapes the materiality of the social body upon which domination is brought to bear.\textsuperscript{36}

\section*{THE POST-MAO CHINESE STATE: COERCIVE APPARATUSES AS THE LOCATION OF POWER}

Jude Howell has observed that the expansion of China's economic relations with the capitalist world economy has contributed towards the emergence of a 'market-facilitating' state.\textsuperscript{37} It signifies the functional remodelling of the Governmental institutions vis-a-vis the international monetary organizations, courts of business arbitrations and the multinational corporations. The key features of these changes are; firstly, bureaucratic procedures are minimised so as to ensure prompt responses to changing market conditions; secondly, the state itself engages in entrepreneurial activity; thirdly, economic relations with foreign companies are legally defined and economic

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{35} ibid, pp.78-80.
  \item \textsuperscript{36} ibid, p.81.
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disputes are settled according to existing laws by specialized legal bodies; finally, the
state's economic organs are staffed by technically and professionally qualified people.\textsuperscript{38}
However, these changes, had no bearing upon the other components of the state. It will
be argued that the liberalization of the economy did not facilitate corresponding changes
in the political structure. In an apparent contravention to the political reform ideas
officially announced at the Thirteenth Party Congress, the control of the CPC over the
Government institutions were made more effective and strong.

From the early 1980s till the outbreak of the democracy movement in 1989 Deng
Xiaoping was a prominent advocate of political liberalization. His 1980 speech in the
Politburo, "The Reform of the Party and the State Leadership structure",\textsuperscript{39} was a key
reference point and inspiration for not only the democratic elite within the CPC but like
minded intellectuals as well. But after the June 4 crackdown in Tiananmen Square, Deng
made a \textit{volte-face} by stating that the "separation of Party and government" was a
manifestation of bourgeois liberalization.\textsuperscript{40} And the early 1990s marked serious
attempts to strengthen the police-state apparatus.

At the Eighteenth National Public Security Meeting held in Beijing in November
1991, Public Security Minister Tao Siju maintained that the role of the police and other
organs of the People's democratic dictatorship was to fight the enemies of the Four
cardinal principles. "In the coming five to ten years, class struggle will manifest itself

\textsuperscript{38} ibid.


in the contention between those who uphold the cardinal Principles and those who uphold bourgeois-liberal values."\(^{41}\)

The Party-state effected significant reorganisation of various coercive apparatuses. In all important urban areas public spaces were more visibly occupied and kept under surveillance by the police and other security agencies. The People's Armed Police (PAP) formed in 1983 was to supplement the army and was under the joint administration of the PLA and the state council. But soon after the Tiananmen Square incident, the PAP came under the direct control of the Central Military Commission (CMC). The powers of the PAP was strengthened in Beijing and other large cities. Nationwide, the establishment of the PAP and the regular police was expanded. Concurrently, anti-riot, anti-terrorist and other crack units were formed in various cities. It has been reported that, they often held exercises in town areas to instil fear among the potential "trouble makers."\(^{42}\) An article in the Hong Kong based *China-Watch* magazine, *Contemporary* reported in mid-1990 that police, secret police and other security officers made up 24 percent of the personnel establishment of China's province and directly administered cities. *Contemporary* revealed that staff working in the police, national security, and reform through-labour departments of the provinces and the three major cities (Beijing, Tianjin, and Shanghai) exceeded 50,000 out of a total establishment of more than 210,000.\(^{43}\) These statistics only referred to personnel with cadre or officer ranking employed by the provincial and municipal governments and exclude the PAP or lower-level employees such as policemen and agents working at the national headquarters of

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43 Cited in Willy Wo-Lap Lam, n.33, p.257.
the Ministries of Public Security and state security. Based on these statistics the magazine *Contemporary* remarked that China can be called a police state, and that it has earmarked a startling amount of resources for the purpose of controlling its people.

In parallel with the expansion of the "Socialist Market Economy", hyperinflation, unemployment and unequal distribution of income were exacerbated. Against this context, it will be argued that the economic reforms did not render the state more acceptable to people. The extensive deployment of the internal security agencies and the unbridled use of violence against the dissident community suggest that the state's increasing dependency on coercion as a means to maintain its domination over the society.

The legal establishments in the PRC never had any pretensions of being independent. The judicial authorities in China, such as the Supreme Court, special courts, local courts and the procuratorate functioned as any other coercive agency of the state. In the post-Maro era, especially after the clampdown on the participants of the democracy movement in 1989, the political state strengthened its control over the judicial apparatus. The indications of the same have became too clearly evident at a meeting of senior judges and court officials, held in January 1990. At this major judicial conference, Ren Jianxin, concurrently the President of the Supreme People's Court and a member of the CPC central committee made very explicit the "political" nature of the practice of law in China: to guarantee political stability, in other words, the CPC's monopoly of state power. In no uncertain terms Ren maintained specifically that

44 ibid, p.258.
45 ibid.
"judicial cadres" must abide by the instructions of the party as much as legal codes. The chief judicial officer indicated that in addition to the law books, the judges have to delve into "Marxist-Leninist theories on the state and law as well as chairman Mao's writings on class struggle." 47

The CPC's iron-clad control over the judicial system was further reinforced by conferences and speeches by high ranking members of the Chinese nomenklatura. At a national conference on public security held in 1991, Justice Minister Cai Cheng said that the Chinese law must be at the service of "class struggle" and that judicial cadres must reject the theory that "the laws are supreme", because the judicial code and system should be at the service of the proletarian class.

As a class tool, the law cannot be divorced from politics.... It cannot but subserve the political needs of (a certain class).... Since our law is socialist law, it will without question serve the politics of the proletarian class, socialist construction, reform and the open door, as well as the consolidation of the dictatorship of the proletariat. 48

The economic policies of the Government under Deng Xiaoping have systematically widened social inequalities in wages, power and prestige. James P. Brady has observed that the legal developments in the PRC have lend permanence to existing uneven property relations (particularly capitalist), outlaw key forms of political dissent developed during the cultural revolution, weaken the power of workers and citizens in government and production centres. 49 The new Legal codes in China are primarily designed to restrict dissent and to guarantee the unequal property relations and political power. In many cases the penal codes are written to outlaw precisely those tactics evolved during the

47 ibid.


Cultural Revolution. For example, the new criminal law enacted in January 1980 stipulates a term of detention or imprisonment of up to three years for anyone who:

1) Uses threats or violence to obstruct state functionary from carrying out his lawful duties;
2) Disturb public order by any means;
3) Gathers a crowd which seriously disturbs public order at rail road station, airport, department store, or any public site;
4) Flagrantly disrupts public order by gathering a crowd to engage in an affray;
5) Commits acts of vandalism against cultural relics or historic sites protected by the state.50

The cultural Revolution began with the students gatherings in public places. The centuries old religious shrines and historical relics were attacked as the Red Guards considered them to be the remnants of feudal superstition. An important practice has been the writing and posting of "big character posters" and "wall newspapers" critical of local authorities. These practices are also increasingly restricted and declared criminal offences. Following small protest demonstrations in March 1979 in Beijing and Shanghai, the local authorities pronounced decrees nullifying the rights of free individual expression guaranteed in the 1978 constitution. The proclamation reads as follows:

In order to strengthen the socialist legal system and protect the people's democratic rights, the Security Bureau with the approval of the municipal committees, issued a notice to the effect that participants in public assemblies and demonstrations must obey the direction of the People's police and that no one is allowed to intercept trains, create disturbance in government institutions or stir up trouble.51

It is stipulated that except in designated places, no one is allowed to put up slogans, posters, or wall newspapers on public buildings and the printing and selling of reactionary or pornographic books, journals and pictures were prohibited.

51 Cited in Brady, n.43, p.237.
owing to the pernicious influence of anarchism of the last ten years and more, some people mistake democracy for absolute individual freedom and they oppose all kinds of discipline and authority. While much of this influence is still in evidence today, many people are not accustomed to exercising their democratic rights or do not know how to use them in a correct way.\textsuperscript{52}

The government increasingly took recourse to repressive judicial measures to eliminate, one after another, those practices of political dissent. The method of public criticism was marked out and included for prohibition in the criminal code. The new law introduced by Peng Zhen, the Director of Legal Affairs for the National People’s Congress reads as follows:

The Draft Criminal Law stipulate that, whoever insults another person by violent or other means, including the use of 'big character posters' or 'small character posters' or fabrication of facts to libel another person, to a serious degree, shall be sentenced to imprisonment for not more than three years or to detention.

We must defend the right to criticism and counter-criticism, to refute opposing views in discussion... all of which must be strictly distinguished from libel and insults.\textsuperscript{53}

It is needless to mention whom such laws and proposals are designed to protect. Ordinary citizens are unlikely to be the object of mass criticism at a public meeting or demonstrations, rallies and critical wall posters. The whole history of "mass campaigns" are testimony to the fact that political dissent and popular justice mounted against corrupt officials and leading Party cadres.

James P. Brady has pointed out that the new legal system serves not only to control dissent but also to standardize the regimes modernization strategies.\textsuperscript{54} The

\textsuperscript{52} ibid.


\textsuperscript{54} Brady, n.43, p.240.
Maoist tradition of workers participation was abandoned in favour of "expert" management. The new strategy relied heavily on increased material incentives, encouraged peasant capitalism, regarded profitability as the central criterion for evaluating production units and invited large scale foreign investment from multinational corporations. Each of these policy changes has been confirmed in new legal statutes and contracts, and the new constitution guarantees against any further redistribution of property. The new penal code introduced in 1979 by Peng Zhen asserted that:

One of the major purposes of the criminal law was to defend socialist property owned by the whole people and by the collective and the legitimate property of individuals, including income savings, houses and other means of livelihood, and means of production such as plots of land, animals and trees owned or used by an individual or family according to law.55

The PRC's criminal law put into execution on 1 January 1980 has two conspicuous features. Firstly, the new legislation purports to redress the wrongs of the Cultural Revolution. Accordingly it explicitly provides that the "right of personal, democratic and other rights of citizens shall be protected against unlawful infringement by any person or institution."56 It also states that extortion of confessions through torture is strictly banned, as is the gathering of crowds to beat, smash and loot. Unlawful incarceration and frame-ups on false charges are proscribed. Whoever fabricates evidence to accuse another person, even a convict, shall be held accountable in the light of the nature, seriousness and consequences of the act. Secondly, the criminal law attaches an overriding importance to what is termed as counter-revolutionary acts aimed at "undermining the People's Republic of China and overthrowing the political power of the

55 Peng Zhen, n.47.

proletarian dictatorship and the socialist system."\(^{57}\) The law lists 20 specific actions (Article 91-102) which come under this provision:

- Conspire with foreign powers
- Plot to topple the government
- Instigate officials to rebel
- Desert to the enemy
- Organise a mutiny
- Stage armed insurrection with many people
- Break Jails
- Spy for the enemy
- Steal information for the enemy
- Deliver arms to the enemy
- Form feudal or superstitious bodies to stage counter-revolution.
- Hijack common carriers
- Signal targets for the enemy
- Manufacture, rob or steal ammunition
- Blow up dikes, set fire to factories or military depots.
- Seize state archives by force
- Poison people to counter-revolutionary aims
- Abet crowds to resist officials
- "Use counterrevolutionary slogans or circular or other means to spread words around with an intent to overthrow the proletarian dictatorship and socialist system."\(^{58}\)

The majority of the activities listed above can attract penalty under the internationally approved criminal procedure codes remaining in force in any country. But the principle defect of this provision lies in the gross ambiguity in defining the term counter-revolution. The last quoted item in this context poses a serious question that to what extent slogans and circulars can endanger the state. This cannot be construed as a mere legal lacuna but the ideology and nature of the Chinese state in which coercion plays a dominant role. Without respite the Chinese Government continued the political repression of the dissident community in the 1990s. The State Security Law, promulgated in 1993, gave sweeping powers to the State Security Bureau - a coercive

\(^{57}\) ibid, p.465.

\(^{58}\) Peng Zheng, n.47.

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apparatus for internal surveillance. On 4 June 1994, the fifth anniversary of the Tiananmen crackdown Premier Li Peng signed into law new rules called the "Detailed Implementation Regulations for the Security Law"\(^5\) [hereafter the Regulations]. The principal objective of this document appears to intimidate the dissident activists as it effectively criminalize virtually all of the strategies that human rights activists in China have evolved to work openly within the narrow confines of Chinese law. The Regulations specifically outlaw the cooperation of activists in the PRC with Non-Governmental Organizations outside the country and make receiving assistance from any independent group as a "hostile organizations" a criminal offence. They also define writings and statements criticizing the Government of the PRC as detrimental to "state security" and hence an act of "sabotage". The articles in the Regulations are clearly aimed at suppressing the freedoms of expression, association, religion and at outlawing assistance to Chinese dissident activities, including human rights organizations, either from abroad or from domestic business establishments.

THE CONCEPT OF HEGEMONY IN ANTONIO GRAMSCI

Gramsci's inquiry into the efficacy of the capitalist states in the Western Europe contributed richly to the understanding of the concept of power. Luciano Pellicani has argued that, Gramsci did not accept the Marxian theory of social order, which according to the former is essentially a coercive theory.\(^6\) In the *Prison Notebooks* the domination of one social class over others has been explained with the help of radically different conceptual categories which are normally absent in Marxist literature. The

\(^5\) For the full text see Appendix II.

argument of historical materialism, that the society is composed of hierarchically structured social classes that are differentiated on the basis of their position and function in the productive organisation has been modified by pointing out that a common position in the socio-economic organisation and identity of interests are not enough to provide compactness, efficiency and autonomy to the action of a class. By using Hegelian terminology Gramsci observes that for a class to constitute a "historical subject", it must become distinct, and independent per se, in other words, acquire a "critical self-consciousness" of its role within the social structure and of its concrete political prospects. The process by which a class becomes conscious of itself take place through various moments that transforms it from an indeterminate entity into a political force of national standing. A class by relying its own organization and ideology can propose itself as a candidate for the administration of state power. A social group becomes hegemonic when it escapes the confines of its own corporate interest and enlarge its political basis by accommodating the aspirations of the subordinate classes which enable them to:

become a "party" and they come into confrontation and launch a struggle, until one or at least a combination of them tends to prevail, to impose itself, and to spread throughout the whole social surface, determining not only the unity of economic and political ends, but intellectual and moral unity, by placing the questions of intense struggle not on the corporate level but on a "universal level" and thus creating the hegemony of a fundamental social group over a series of subordinate groups.\(^{61}\)

A social class transforms itself into a ruling one when it solicits and obtains the consent of other classes and reorganizes society and erects a judicial apparatus capable of protecting the society from extraneous threats and of guaranteeing stability to the new order. Thus it is clear that according to Gramsci the ascendancy of a class to the position

\(^{61}\) Quoted in ibid, p.30.
of a ruling class is not merely an economic affirmation, as historical materialism suggests, but an ethical-politico expansion of a social group. Therefore, the power of a dominating class derives not so much from control of the coercive apparatus and possession of means of production but from its creative elite that it is able to produce from within. This conception of power, Luciano Pellicani points out, is obviously a clear overturning of the Marxist conception of state and society.62

Marx and especially Lenin had considered every form of state a ruthless dictatorship, more or less explicit, with the classes who owned the means of production ruling the working masses. Accordingly the violent conquest of the coercive state apparatus and its dictatorial use became the real and immediate political problem Gramsci's inquiries while operating in the terrain of Marxist theory but also informed by the work of Benedetto Croce and Gaetano Mosca made radical innovation in the explanation of power. He emphasized the so-called spiritual aspect of the state and underscored its ethical substance. One of his prison notes states that, "The supremacy of a social group manifests itself in two ways, as 'dominion' and as 'intellectual and moral direction'."63 This statement explains that the political power of a class is based not on force alone, but also and above all on the intellectual and moral superiority of the elites that discipline, form, and govern the masses. What Gramsci called hegemony is precisely this form of command based on the consent of subordinate classes.

The genealogical origin of the term hegemony is from the Greek hegeisthai, which means "to be a guide" or "to be a ruler". With the deployment of this term, Gramsci sought to articulate the idea that the domination of one class over others cannot

62 ibid, p.31.
63 Quoted in ibid.
be reduced to a relationship of mere coercion; on the contrary it is based on the capacity of the upper class to satisfy certain objective needs of a society, such as legal administration, management of economic activities, and cultural production. A social class remains hegemonic so long as it is able to produce from within or to co-opt an overwhelming number of intellectuals, political, religious, and artistic, and to obtain the consent of the subordinate classes. Therefore, every hegemony is founded on a historical bloc, i.e., on an organic system of social alliances held together by a common ideology and culture. Thus the historical bloc is the objective basis of hegemony and is not simply a structured set of social classes but a cultural, political and ethical phenomenon as well.\textsuperscript{64} This suggests that the hegemony of a class lasts as long as it is able to ensure the cohesion of the system of alliance on which its rule is exercised.

To reconstruct the Gramscian notion of hegemony, the key concept, is civil society. His theory introduces a profound innovation with respect to the Marxist tradition. Norberto Bobbio argues that, civil society in Gramsci does not belong to the structural moment, as in Marx, but to the superstructural one.\textsuperscript{65} One of the well-known passage in the \textit{Prison Notebooks} succinctly explains this point. To quote:

What we can do, for the moment, is to fix two major superstructural "levels": the one that can be called ‘civil society’, that is the ensemble or organisms commonly called ‘private’, and that of ‘political society’ or ‘the state’. These two levels correspond on the one hand to the function of ‘hegemony’ which the dominant group exercises throughout society and on the other hand to that of ‘direct domination’ or command exercised through the state and judicial government.\textsuperscript{66}

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\itemindent=0.5cm
\item 64 ibid, p.32.
\end{thebibliography}
This is supplemented by a great historical example: civil society in the Middle Ages was the church, understood as "... the hegemonic apparatus of the ruling group. For the latter did not have its own apparatus, i.e., did not have its own cultural and intellectual organization, but regarded the universal, ecclesiastical organisations as being that."67 For Gramsci, civil society includes the whole of ideological-cultural relations and the spiritual and intellectual life.

It appears that Gramsci was well aware of the complexity of the relations between structure and superstructure, and was against simplistic deterministic interpretations. He wrote in an article in 1918:

Between the premise (economic structure) and the consequence (political organization), relations are by no means simple and direct: and it is not only by economic facts that the history of a people can be documented. It is a complex and confusing task to unravel its causes and in order to do so, a deep and widely diffused study of all spiritual and practical activities is needed.68

In the *Prison Notebooks* the relations between the economic structure and political action is represented by a series of antitheses among which the following are the most important: economic moment/ethical-political moment; necessity/freedom; objective/subjective. The relevant extract which discuss this problematic introduces 'catharsis' as its explanatory category;

The term 'catharsis' can be employed to indicate the passage from the purely economic (or egoistic passional) to the ethico-political moment, that is the superior elaboration of the structure into superstructure in the minds of men. This also means the passage from 'objective' to 'subjective' and from 'necessity' to 'freedom'.69

67 ibid, p.171. See the note.
68 Quoted in Bobbio, n.58, p.33.
69 Antonio Gramsci, n.59, p.366.
The superstructure is the moment of catharsis in which necessity is resolved into liberty. This transformation takes place as a response to the ethico-political moment. Necessity - understood as the sum total of the material conditions which define a particular historical situation - is absorbed into a historical past. The objective conditions are constituted by both the existing social relations and the historical past, and is recognised by the active historical subject which Gramsci identifies in the collective will. An active historical subject becomes free and able to transform reality only when it recognises the objective conditions.

In Marx, ideologies come after institutions as a secondary moment and is considered as the posthumous justification of class domination. But, in Gramsci, the relation between institutions and ideologies is inverted and is functionally reciprocal. The ideologies become the primary moment of history, and the institutions the secondary one. Bobbio has interpreted the consequence of this inversion in a lengthy, but lucid sentence; 'once the moment of civil society is considered as the moment in which the transition from necessity to freedom takes place, the ideologies, which have their historical roots in civil society, are no longer seen just as a posthumous justification of a power which has been formed historically by material conditions, but are seen as forces capable of creating a new history and of collaborating in the formation of a new power, rather than to justify a power which has already been established.'

READING DISSENT MOVEMENTS: IDEOLOGY AND SOCIAL BASIS

The ideology of the Democracy Wall Movement of late 1978 to early 1979 sought to contest the orthodox views of the ruling CPC and the political system which it gave

70 Bobbio, n.58, p.36.
birth to in China. Since the access to official media required the sanction from the Party-state, the activists of the democracy movement made their views public through wall posters, mimeographed pamphlets, and demonstrations in front of a long wall in the center of Beijing. These activities attracted huge crowds to read the posters, exchange their opinions and buy the pamphlets distributed at the wall.

The participants of this movement attacked Mao's policies and made pointed criticism against those followers of Mao in positions of leadership, especially, Hua Guofeng and Wang Dong Xing. Against the backdrop of growing public demand for more democracy and openness Deng Xioping skillfully used the crisis for political ends. He was able to remove Hua Guofeng from the post of CPC Chairman, Wang Dongxing from Vice Chairman and formally abrogated the April 1976 decision to dismiss him from office.

It has generally been viewed that the democracy movement was a popular reaction to the Cultural Revolution era which hardly provided any space for both debate and self-expression. For the activists - be they writers of wall-posters, producers of underground journals, or poets who read their works in public - this movement represented the long suppressed urge to protest, to the right to have options, to discuss opinions and self expressions.

From the very beginning, the movement had two major aspects, or rather emphasis - political and cultural. The publishers of the journals like 'Exploration', 'The April 5th Forum', 'Spring of Beijing' and the 'Human Rights Alliance' concentrated more on the problems of political democracy, whereas cultural democracy was the major concern for many individuals and groups. They tried to free art and literature from
official restrictions in style and contend.\textsuperscript{71} The most popular among them was the group surrounding the publication of ‘Today’. They apart from publishing that literary magazine, organized poetry readings and art exhibitions.

‘Exploration’ was probably the most radical of all the unofficial journals published in Beijing during the winter of 1978-79.\textsuperscript{72} Its most famous publication was originally a wall poster entitled "The Fifth Modernization-Democracy", whose central argument became the theme of the movement, namely that China’s drive for modernization could not be achieved without fostering democracy. The subsequent issues critically highlighted the state security system and attacked Deng Xiaoping. The title of the journal ‘Exploration’ represented the editors desire to explore socialist alternatives in China. The paper temporarily ceased publication after 29th March when Wei Jingsheng, its leading figure, was arrested along with other activists.

"China’s Human Rights" was the publication of the Human Rights Alliance. In the first week of March 1979 the Human Rights Alliance splits into two, apparently, because of the clashes over both personalities and policies. According to David S. Goodman, some activists of the alliance wanted to focus on organizing peasants and petitions at the mass level. Others, preferred to concentrate on publicity through wall-posters and gaining group status and recognition in the NPC.\textsuperscript{73} Some members were in favour of China’s war with Vietnam, others opposed it. Until the end of March, the

\begin{itemize}
  \item\textsuperscript{72} See the publication statement of Exploration in James Tong, ed., \textit{Underground Journals in China, Part I, Chinese Law and Government}, vol.13, nos.3-4 (Fall-Winter, 1980), p.39.
  \item\textsuperscript{73} Goodman, n.64, p.96.
\end{itemize}
two splintered factions continued to produce their own version of "China's Human Rights".

In terms of content, production and organization, *Today* was possibly the most professional of all unofficial journals. It was a popular literary magazine started by Meng Ke and Bei Dao (pseudonyms) as a contribution to greater democracy in literature following years of Cultural Revolution. As a result, *Today* published poems written both in experimental and traditional forms.

The most striking aspect of the democracy movement of 1978-79 was the relatively homogenous social background of its activists. The majority of them came from the middle and upper-middle strata of the Chinese society. They were the children of cadres and intellectuals who prior to the Cultural Revolution had promising educational prospects. But as a result of the distinct educational policies of the Cultural Revolution, they were 'sent down to the frontline of production' i.e., to rural areas. Most of them had the right academic background, but they belonged to those classes which were politically denounced, and therefore stripped out of university education. The political and cultural writings of this generation are the symptomatic expression of their agonizing sense of losses - youth, education and job opportunities.

The idea of democracy which the movement celebrated had different shades of meaning. The word was loaded with divergent political opinions, social visions and cultural traditions. According to a commentary which appeared in *The Spring of Beijing*, democracy implied the immediate 'withering away' of Party control in basic-level organization.74 For some others it meant a political system modelled in liberal

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74 ibid, p.7.
democracy. The different conceptions of democracy evolved out of the dissent movements has been discussed elsewhere in this chapter.

Wei Jingsheng, the best known dissident both within the PRC and abroad was an electrician at Beijing Zoo. He was the editor of an unofficial journal "Exploration" and author of a famous article titled "Democracy - The Fifth Modernization". The political views of Wei Jingsheng hardly represent the democracy movement. He was a fierce critique of the CPC to such an extend that he rejected Marxism itself. According to him the main source of the dictatorial political state and of China's backwardness is the philosophy of Marx, a view shared by very few dissidents in China.\(^75\) Wei Jingsheng and his associates believed that despotism was inherent in Marxism-Leninism and in rule by the Communist Party. Their journal *Exploration* has observed that Confucianism had more relevance for China than did Marxist and Leninist ideas. Mu Yi, a follower of Wei wrote that:

The Party does recognize the people's freedom and rights, provided these rights are channelled to unite the minds of hundreds of millions of people by a single ideology, a single political party, a single life style... Isn't it a religious cult when people are compelled or willing to follow a well-prescribed pattern to think, to work, to live, to struggle and to die.... What justifications are there to say that the country would be thrown into chaos unless all opposing views are eliminated, and unless all explorations for system different than the socialist system suppressed?\(^76\)

The total rejection of the ideology of the Marxism-Leninism and the corresponding political system made Wei Jingsheng and his associates distinct from other democratic activists and intellectual strands. Given the nature of the Chinese political system and the official intolerance towards different views, the ideological positions of


\(^76\) Mu Yi, "Don't We Chinese People Have Our Own Thought?", *Joint Publications Research Service*, 29 June 1979, pp.40-41.
Wei Jingsheng and his associates were extremely radical. As the democracy movement strengthened, in mid-March 1979, the Chinese declaration of Human Rights, which is also known as the "19 Articles on Human Rights" was adopted by the Chinese Human Rights Alliance in January 1979. This Declaration was posted on Democracy Wall in Beijing's Tiananmen Square. It attracted wide attention from the general public and provoked serious discussion of its contents. The Declaration was primarily an expression of an overriding desire for freedom of expression, democratic rights, right to information and legal protection against the arbitrary use of power. Article 2 of the Declaration reads as follows:

The citizens demand that the constitution guarantee the right to criticise and evaluate Party and state leaders. In order to spare this generation and succeeding ones further misery, to uphold truth and justice and to promote productivity, the citizens demand the complete abolition of feudal and despotic standards now in force which equate opposition to certain individuals with counter-revolution; the citizens further demand that Chinese society be genuinely built on the foundation of democracy.²⁷⁷

The violent repression of the Democracy Movement of 1978-79 proved ineffectual in terms of preventing social groups from organising themselves outside the CPC's institutions of domination and to claim autonomy so as to contest the state from without. Dissent movements began to reappear in various cities and even in remote hinterlands. They were not confined to particular localities or a distinct social group. However, the urban intelligentsia, especially the students of higher education have been the most articulated critics of the regime. The target of their attack was "the bureaucratic privileged class" i.e., the Chinese nomenklatura, composed of the members of the higher organs of the CPC, PLA, the state councils and the Public Security Bureau. This

²⁷⁷ "A 1979 Chinese Declaration of Human Rights" in Yuamli Wu et al, n.19, p.317. For the full text see Appendix III.
nomenklatura was seen as a huge edifice, an apparatus which exploits the labour of the working masses propelled by its own corporate interests and with the active involvement of the repressive organs of the state. The issue of exploitation and the arbitrary use of violence against the people form the basis of most criticism and the generation of dissent. A preliminary survey of the source documents of the democracy movement will reveal the extent of people's disenchantment with the regime. In February 1981, an editorial piece of an independent opposition magazine, Theoretical Banner of Qingdao observed:

The contemporary bureaucratic privileged class surpasses all previous exploiting classes in its deceptiveness - in the guise of serving the people and struggling in the interests of the people, it engages in unscrupulous, monstrous deeds... it has become common practice for the bureaucracy to build private villas! At the same time that there is not enough food for farmers and not enough housing for the people, not only are mansions built for party secretaries and generals, mansions are also built for the sons in easy conscience!... when this whole lot of "red dignitaries" while boasting of the superiority of socialism are unrestrained in corruption, wasteful spending and privilege-seeking, can their wolf nature under the sheep skin remain unrevealed?}

During the movement for democracy that unravelled in April 1989 in Beijing and then in other major cities throughout China, a large number of Wall posters and Samizdat (self published) publications provided the opportunity to express the political views of different social strata and conduct debates and discussions. The source materials are available in translation in the form of anthologies. A close examination of these documents is enormously useful in understanding the intellectual contours of the Chinese dissident movements.

The indefinite hunger strike of the Beijing University students which started on May 13, and the formation of the Beijing Worker's Autonomous Federation (BWAF)

were the two most significant developments in the 1989 tide of the democracy movements. BWAF represents the first successful attempt to organise a independent trade union outside the official All China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU). BWAF set up a tent-office on Tiananmen Square and publicly recruited members, gave interviews to the press, distributed union leaflets and organized workers support action for the striking students.

The Beijing University students released a statement on the commencement of their hunger strike. It explained the context against which the democracy movement unfolded in China:

... the condition in our country is one of rampant inflation, economic speculation by the officials, extreme authoritarian rule, serious bureaucratic corruption, a drain of products and people to other countries, social confusion, and an increase in the number of criminal acts. It is a crucial moment for the country and its people. All compatriots with a conscience, please heed our call.79

While embarking on hunger strike, a last resort in agitation forced upon them by the state, the students made it explicitly clear that what they are fighting for is democracy and freedom. "Democracy is a desire intrinsic to the human condition. Freedom is an inherent human right. We now must sacrifice our lives for them. Is this something that the Chinese race should be proud of."80

In a society where workers are acclaimed as the leading class, not only in social structure but in the management of the state as well, they began to disassociate from the vanguard role the official ideology assigned on it. The democracy movement was thus to create a social space where different sectors of the society could make political

79 "Hunger Strike Statement of the Beijing University Students", in ibid, p.164. For the full text see Appendix V.
80 ibid.
communication as classes and find new levels of solidarity. With their consistent opposition and resistance to the Party-state the students emerged as the principal social agency against the regime. A new social alliance of students, workers, agricultural labourers, intellectuals and the disenchanred general populous was developed in which the students played the leading role. What impelled these social groups to enter into a contract is their commonly shared antipathy towards the authoritarian state. This sense of fraternity is primarily ideological and emotional.

The consensus that the students are the leading component of the dissent movement was too explicit from the approach of the other sections of the society who participated in the protest activities. The preamble of the memorandum prepared by Beijing workers Autonomous Federation acknowledged that "the entire People's Patriotic Democracy Movement" was led by the students.\(^81\) The BWAF, in its public notice stated the objective of the Federation as follows; to fight for democracy, bring down dictatorship, support and protect the student hunger strikers, promote democratization in alliance with the students and citizens from all walks of life.\(^82\)

By using Marxist methods, the Beijing Independent workers Union, analyses the mode of labour exploitation in China. Their letter to compatriots thus offers a Marxist critique of the Chinese nomenklatura:

We subtracted from the value of production: the worker's wages, premiums and benefits; socially necessary accumulation: the social facilities; and the expenses for the expanded reproduction of capital; and we have discovered to our amazement that the people's public (state owned) enterprises are expropriating the whole of the surplus-value

\(^{81}\) "Beijing Workers Autonomous Federation Provisions Memorandum:", in ibid, p.165. For the full text see Appendix VI.

\(^{82}\) "Public Notice from the Beijing Worker's Autonomous Union Preparatory Committee", in ibid, p.167.
extracted from the sweat and blood of the people! The rise in exploitation is unheard of! Atrocious!\textsuperscript{83}

This passage clearly explains the plight of the workers in the People's Republic. The twin burdens of economic exploitation and political subjugation have stripped the Chinese working class of their social prestige and political power. By the late 1980s, their loss of faith in the regime and the contempt towards it was clearly discernable. After having ruled by an authoritarian regime where the labour rights are no longer in force, social security facilities withdrawn, wages repeatedly withheld, sometimes not even paid, and protests movements quelled, the Chinese working class reinvoked the slogans of democracy: "the people can no longer believe the poisonous words of the authorities who deceive the people. Therefore we write on our banner; science, democracy, liberty, human rights, a legal system."\textsuperscript{84} And these ideas form the very guiding principles of the BWAF. It rejected, first and foremost, the vanguard role of the CPC vis-a-vis the Chinese proletariat, and its organizational concepts. The strong resolution to preserve the union's autonomous character was emphasized and was seen as an appropriate means to safeguard the labour rights.\textsuperscript{85}

The liberalization of marketing under the post-1978 economic reforms has released a new social group - urban entrepreneurs. Encouraged by the profits to be made in commercial activity, hundreds of thousands of peasants and town dwellers rushed to join the burgeoning ranks of the independent entrepreneurs. Their transactions revitalized the non-government economic activities that was viewed to have contributed

\textsuperscript{83} "Letter to Compatriots", in ibid, p.168.

\textsuperscript{84} ibid.

\textsuperscript{85} "Beijing Workers Autonomous Federation Provision Memorandum", in ibid, p.166.
immensely to the emergence of civil society by many thinkers including Karl Marx and Antonio Gramsci. The growth of this commercial class is central to the advent of democratic politics. Barrington Moore has argued that the defence of property and profits encourages ordinary citizens to fight for the freedoms associated with liberal democracy.86

The Chinese entrepreneurs or getihu provided substantial support for the students in the 1989 democracy movement in terms of logistics, funds and participation. The independent commercial class could engage in political action relatively freely in contrast to most other Chinese. Their monetary contribution played crucial role in sustaining the students movement. The Stone Corporation, one of the largest of the new private enterprises, is estimated to have donated tens of thousands of dollars worth of sophisticated equipment-including fascimile machines to the protesters.87 When the PLA intervention appeared imminent, the Flying Tiger Brigade of getihu on motorbikes delivered news of troops movement to the students. After the crackdown they put their pedicabs into service to ferry the wounded and the deceased from the Tiananmen Square.

Another key social class who has made enormous contribution to the 1989 protest movement was the urban working class. The international media while reporting those eventful days in that summer did not acknowledge the significant role of the workers in that movement. The history of the Chinese popular movement over the last century reveals the exceptional strength of the workers-students alliance. The May Fourth Movement of 1919, which began with a protest demonstration by 3,000 students, became a historical watershed only after it had been joined by tens of thousands of Shanghai

86 Barrington Moore, Jr., Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy (Boston, 1966).

workers in a general strike a month later. It was owing to this workers participation the government disavow the terms of the Versailles treaty under which China was asked to concede Shandong province to Japan. The establishment of the CPC in 1921 by the radical intelligentsia was precipitated by the labour activism.

In the Spring 1989 the Chinese working class proved its commitment to larger social causes. On April 20, labourers from a number of Beijing factories made speeches at the Square, expressing their solidarity with the striking students. They proclaimed that "workers and students should work together for the introduction of a more democratic and less corrupt system." The state immediately took serious note of the growing workers participation in the democratic movement. The subsequent actions of the authorities suggest that the state feared an oppositional coalition of workers and students. As the May Fourth anniversary drew near, the Beijing city government issued an order forbidding any worker to take leave of absence between April 25 and May 5. The official ACFTU was alarmed by the independent political actions of the workers. As a response the ACFTU began to assume a more active role in responding to working-class concerns. On May 1 (International Worker's Day), the President of the ACFTU conceded that the official labour organisations "should fully support workers in their fight against corruption". Following this unintentioned encouragement, workers became more involved in the demonstrations. It was reported that on May 17, the fifth day of students hunger strike,

\[\text{Millions of workers, peasants, and clerks from government organs, personnel from cultural and publishing circles and from the press took the}\]

89 Foreign Broadcast Information Service, 26 April 1989, p.17.
streets to show they supported and cared for the students... particularly noticeable were the massive marching columns of workers. They came from scores of enterprises such as the capital steel corporation, the main factory of the Beijing Internal combustion Engines, Beijing Lifting Machinery Factory and the state run Number 798 Factory. The demonstrating workers were holding banners and placards carrying slogans stating: 'students and workers are found by a common cause' and 'workers are grieved seeing students on hunger strike.'

On the following day the ACFTU took an unprecedented step of donating 100,000 yuan (about $27,000) for medical aid to students. Explained a spokesman of the federation, "We workers are deeply concerned about the health and lives of the students." On the same day the Shanghai Federation of Trade Unions raised its voice in support of the democratic movement: "Workers in the city have expressed universal concern and sympathy for the patriotism of students who are demanding democracy, rule of law, an end to corruption, checking inflation, and promoting reform. The municipal council of trade unions fully affirms this." However, the official unions could not go beyond certain limits. This was evident from the response of the ACFTU to the workers demand for a national strike. On May 20, a large number of workers gathered in front of the federation office to press for a nationwide general strike. But, three days later, after the declaration of martial law, Beijing television announced: "In the last few days, there have been rumours in some localities saying that the All-China Federation of Trade Unions has called for a nationwide general strike. A spokesman of the Federation said that this was merely a rumour with ulterior motives. The spokesman emphatically pointed out that the ACFTU has recently stressed that the vast number of staff members and workers should firmly at their posts and properly carry out production

91 *Foreign Broadcast Information Service*, 18 May 1989, p.49.
92 ibid, p.76.
93 *Foreign Broadcast Information Service*, 22 May 1989, p.91.
work. In order to prevent workers from independent political actions, the government appointed Ruan Chongumu, a former minister of public security, as the new labour minister. In a statement Ruan defined his task as "to ensure that workers remain loyal to the party and government and that they not take part in activities that challenge the regime."

There are reasons to argue that the 1989 democracy movement had provided a much broader space for political dissent in comparison with its 1978-79 predecessor. The political space created by the 1989 protests movement brought different sectors of the Chinese society together as agencies of dissent. Notwithstanding the exclusivistic nature of the student activism, various societal groups, especially the workers lend their support to the striking students but at the same time articulated an independent political view. What held the workers, the students, the new commercial class, the intellectuals and the general populace together was their opposition to the CPC's authoritarian rule and their shared longing for a vague notion of democracy. Irrespective of their conflicting sectoral interests a broad sense of solidarity was established. The movement had so much potentiality for fostering a grand social alliance against the party-state but failed to achieve some degree of ideological coherency for intellectually cementing the different social agencies into a single oppositional bloc.

The solidarity of the workers and students in their movement against the Chinese political oligarchy was far from without internal strains. For reasons of class and educational differences students carried with themselves a pronounced intellectual and cultural disdain towards the workers. This mentality was later accommodated into

94 *Foreign Broadcast Information Service*, 23 May 1989, p.58.
95 *Foreign Broadcast Information Service*, 30 May 1989, p.9.
ideology of the movement during the course of which the students dismissed the working class aspirations as crass-economism unqualified to form the backbone of the protest movement. From the outset of the movement, the students made deliberate efforts to maintain their 'purity'. Ideologically it was expressed by limiting their politics to moral questioning of the authorities, sought to speak as the conscience of the nation and looked upon themselves as the legitimate protagonists of the movement. This quest for purity was well displayed in their early practice of marching with hands linked to prevent others from joining in. As two activists have informed Walder and Xiaoxia a final manifestation of this students attitude was their refusal to allow the BAWF to locate within Tiananmen Square proper.

The leaders of the workers, harassed by the management office of Tiananmen, and feeling vulnerable to police surveillance and arrests in their isolated location across Chang'an Avenue from the main part of the Square, were rebuffed on at least two occasions in their effort to relocate. It was only on 30 and 31 May, with students numbers dwindling and military action seemingly imminent, that the students felt threatened enough to allow gongzilan into the Square to help protect them.

The event which kindled the sparks of popular resentments into a nationwide protest movement was the natural death of Hu Yaobang on 15 April 1989. In the same evening the campuses of Beijing's University district convulsed into political activity. So was the atmosphere around the monument of people's heroes in the centre of Tiananmen Square, where ordinary citizens began to gather, mourn, and talk politics with a new found seriousness and involvement. Next day before the dawn, a group of about


97 ibid, p.24.
twenty workers from the Ministry of Textiles marched into the Square and placed a
commemorative wreath at the base of the monument. These workers were followed by
students, three hundred of them from the Beijing University, who entered the Square
before dusk and laid eight wreaths. What followed in the subsequent days was an
unprecedented popular movement against the Party-State in China.

The important social elements participated in this movement were the university
students, the urban workers, the independent entrepreneurs, and the intelligentsia. Each
of these forces has contributed, in varying ways, to the sustenance of the movement.
However, the Chinese scholarship in general and the international media in particular has
failed to acknowledge the role played by the various social groups in the anti-state
struggle. In many instances, the whole episode has been made out to be the result of
student radicalism.; Such an assessment has two serious flows. Firstly, it will grossly
underestimate the significance of the other social agencies without whose support and
participation the movement would have been a low profile affair. Secondly, it will fail
to recognise the emerging social alliance, a solidarity against the Chinese party-state
whose consolidation and expansion can seriously challenge and even reconfigure the
Chinese political system. In this context, what follows below is a discussion of the
ideology of BWAF which will involve the deconstruction of the rhetorical site of the
1989 democracy movement.

The BWAF played an increasingly pivotal role in the mobilisation of street
protests after the declaration of Martial law on 19 May. And unlike the student activism,
workers' movement had picked up momentum after the declaration of the martial law and
gain strength at a later stage of the movement. Andrew G. Walder and Gong Xiaoxia

98 Ming Bao News, June Four: A Chronicle of the Chinese Democratic Movement,
notes that apart from its size, organization or activities, the more lasting significance of
the BWAF is to be found in the mentality and political orientation of its membership.99
The union represents the emergence of a new species of political protest in China,
strikingly distinct from the traditional model of intellectual remonstrance that dissident
Chinese citizens and students have shared with the elite intellectuals.100 The members
of the union were quite ordinary working people with limited education and writing
abilities but had sharp political mind. They displayed a kind of anti-elitism and populism
in contrast to the elitist and self-absorbed student movement.

Throughout the period of the Martial Law the union maintained a tone of political
militancy in its leaflets: a rhetoric that fused together the idea of working class struggle
with the language of democratic opposition to the CPC's dictatorial rule. In a statement
issued on 26 May to all compatriots overseas, the BWAF stated, "The foundations and
columns of the People's Republic are strained with our blood and sweat. Our nation was
created from the struggle and labour of we workers and all other mental and manual
labourers. We are the rightful masters of this nation. We should be, indeed must be,
heard in national affairs. We absolutely must not allow this small handful of degenerate
scum to usurp our name and suppress the students, murder democracy, and trample
human rights."101 Another handbill released on the same day compared the movement
to the Great French Revolution and urged the workers to 'storm the Bastille of the

99 Andrew G. Walder and Gong Xiaoxia, "Workers in the Tiananmen Protests: The
Politics of the Beijing Workers' Autonomous Federation", The Australian Journal
of Chinese Affairs, no.29, January 1993, p.3.

100 Many scholars have argued that students did not depart decisively from this
tradition of protest in 1989. See for example, Andrew Nathan, "Chinese
Democracy in 1989: Continuity and Change", Problems of Communism, vol.38,
no.5, September-October 1989, pp.16-29.

101 Cited in Walder and Xiaoxia, n.92, p.12.
1980s'. Declaring that 'the final struggle has arrived', the statement went on, 'we have already seen that the fascist governments and Stalinist dictatorships spurned by hundreds of millions of people have not, will not, voluntarily withdraw from the historical stage. Li Peng along with his backstage supporters and his followers are engaged in their final performance; they may still stake all on a last political gamble.' The document called upon all the people to prepare to make great sacrifices in this final battle to overthrow Stalinist dictatorship and to live like human beings under freedom and democracy. "Storm this 20th century Bastille, this last stronghold of Stalinism." 102

THE NOTION OF DEMOCRACY: TOWARDS DOMINANT IDEOLOGY

Any attempt to understand the communicative dimension of politics in the context of China's decade long democracy movement from 1978-79 to 1989 entails an inquiry into the concept of democracy. For the tens of thousands participants of those movements democracy was the rallying cause. The word minzhu - the closest Chinese translation of democracy - was invoked repeatedly by the activists. According to Lei Guang the world minzhu and its closest western counterpart democracy, are not coterminus in meaning and reference. In other words minzhu is referred as democracy in the West but is never identical with it; they are not completely inter-changeable with the other. 103 Minzhu is composed of two characters: min and Zhu. In traditional China Min denoted "the governed", "the public", or "the common people" in contrast to

102 ibid.

However in the political language of the CPC Min has acquired a class meaning. And became equivalent to rennin, i.e., the people which according to the official definition included, the proletariat, the poor peasants and other social groups supported the revolution. Ever since the rise of human rights debate in the late 1970s, min has increasingly come to understood as "individuals". Thus accordingly minzhu can be defined as "individual rights". Thus Min has three different meanings or senses.

Similarly, the character zhu also has multiple meanings, ranging from particular senses to general sense. For example, Yijia Zhi Zhu stands for family head whereas Zhuren means master. Lei Guang has observed that Zhu takes on two meanings when combined with min to form minzhu that are significantly different from each other. In one sense, it can be used in combinations such as Zhuren antonymous to puren means servant. Again, it can also suggest what is Zhuyao (primary) in contrast to ciyao (secondary). Hence, the different interpretations of the word Zhu presuppose a qualitative difference in the interpreters attitude toward the people.

The Chinese concept minzhu has a complex semantic history. And it encompasses a wide spectrum of different conceptions. Lei Guang has listed six of them which reflect the influence of diverse elements from Chinese history, marxism, populism, and the liberal democratic tradition prevailing individual liberty over collective interests. The various notions of minzhu, in that sense, has little conformity with the Western idea of democracy.

104 ibid, p.419.
105 ibid, p.420.
106 ibid.
107 ibid, see Table 1, p.422.
The etymological root of the word democracy is the Greek *demos-kratia* which underwent substantial conceptual transformations in the writings of John Locke, Rousseau and Montesquieu. Its modern metamorphosis begun initially in the form of representative government as envisioned by James Mill and Madison, then to the radicalization of democracy along class lines by Marx and Engels and the emergence of human rights discourse in recent years. Democracy acquired its meaning and underwent transformations along the historical trajectory of Western political thought and culture.108

The Chinese minzhu springs from a different tradition. Among other things, the ancient teachings of Confucius and Mencius attached great value to the general welfare of the people. They regarded it as important to the vitality of the Kingdom. Quite a few members of the thousands of years old imperial bureaucracy had shown, at times, a certain amount of sensitivity to people's problems which made them to remonstrate before the emperor in defence of common masses. The Western democratic ideas infiltrated, albeit unevenly, into China at the turn of this century. The class based radical democracy of the Communist Party attracted students intellectuals and peasants and became popular especially during the Yenan years. This notion of radical or popular democracy was made subject to serious critical examination after the cultural revolution as it revealed the vulnerability of individuals due to the arbitrary exercise of power. In the late 1970s, with the inputs from the West, human rights became a prominent theme in the Chinese political debate. All these traditions listed above, make *minzhu* an

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108 See also, Raymond Williams, *Key Words: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (New York, 1976), pp.82-87.
amalgam of meanings incorporating various strands of thoughts, blend together, and hardly amenable to a single interpretation.

The idea of democracy was proclaimed by both the Democracy Wall movement of 1978-79 and the 1989 protest movement. However, despite this semantic identity, the whole notion of democracy underwent important conceptual changes over a decade. This discontinuity points towards larger differences in the nature and ideological orientation of the two movements.

In 1978-79, most of the posters and journal articles on the notion of democracy were written within the broad framework of the dominant political discourse - the Chinese Marxism of the late 1970s: that, although this perspective contested the official ideology of the CPC and offered incisive criticism of the Chinese Party state, it did not make any theoretical rupture with the Marxist problematic. Wang Xizhe, a prominent name associated with this perspective, having concerned more with the alienation of the CPC from the society and the growth of bureaucratism within the government, called for political reforms in accordance with the principles of socialist democracy.109 Chen Erjin argued for a proletarian-democratic system.110 Paris Commune finds frequent appearances in the writings of these dissident intellectuals. Excluding activists like Wei Jingsheng, the former publisher of Exploration and Ren Wanding of the Human Rights League, most of the writings during this period were couched in Marxist terminology and analysis.


A decade later, as the Chinese state opened the national economy to the international capital, contemporary non-Marxist Western ideas began to tickle into the popular consciousness of China more pronouncingly than ever. It not only added new dimension into the Chinese debate on democracy but was catalyst in redefining the problematic of democracy.

The 1989 protest movement, except for groups like BWAF, was symptomatic for the absence of the language and categories of Marxian social analysis. Images of Paris commune was not conjured up at all in any important publications. Instead, the Western idea of human rights was repeatedly invoked and democracy was redefined primarily in terms of these rights. The activists of the 1989 movement were more concerned with establishing a set of rules and procedures for politicians. The late 1970s dissidents' goal of people's empowerment, both political and economic was conveniently abandoned. Another important aspect was the fragmentation of the "people's interest". Identity of people's interest was one of the enduring legacy of the Chinese revolution. The 1989 protest movement acknowledged the plurality of interests. So representative was the statement of Ren Wanding, a prominent name of the democracy movement and activist in 1989, as he said that the old system must be supplanted by a pluralist socio-political structure, a pluralistic democracy, a pluralistic culture, and a pluralistic nation.\(^{111}\) Lei Guang has argued that the democracy activists embraced pluralism, because it is considered by most Western theorists as indispensable to democracy and it provides some space for raising issues of individual rights.\(^{112}\)


\(^{112}\) Lei Guang, n.96, p.437.
It will be argued that the present day Chinese popular consciousness is influenced by the following factors. *Primus inter pares*, is the decline of the C.P.C. into an administrative organization. It indicates, firstly, the Party's continuance in power is largely derived from its possession of the state apparatuses. The official ideology has ceased to remain the dominant intellectual force in society. Secondly the C.P.C.'s economic reforms have released a new commercial class whose activities are propelled by the ideology of property rights and profits. At the same time, the reforms have facilitated the political and economic deprivation of the workers and landless agricultural labourers and whose political interventions as social classes will be that of agitations for economic justice. The general popular disenchantment with the way in which the C.P.C. conduct itself as a ruling class have frequently found concrete expressions in dissent movements. At this juncture, it appears that the notion of democracy is increasingly becoming a dominant ideology in the Chinese society.