CHAPTER VI
CONCLUSIONS

Ideologies are not autonomous discourses separated from the relations of production and forms of political power. Instead they are closely linked to the specific social formations originated from given economic structures. Ideology is the terrain in which social classes become aware of their position and historical role. It plays a crucial role in the maintenance and reproduction of structures of power and the relations of material production. A social class or an organization becomes hegemonic when it transgresses its narrow communal aspirations and successfully articulates the interest of other classes located in the corresponding social division of power.

In that sense, the new democratic revolution in China signifies three important achievements. Firstly, the CPC successfully articulated the emancipatory aspirations of the subaltern social classes in China. The Chinese Marxism i.e., Mao Zedong's interpretations of the ideas of Marx and Lenin, proposed concrete resolutions to the economic, political and cultural problems confronting the vast majority of the people in the pre-liberation China. Secondly, the revolutionary movement brought different social classes to a conjunction and made the rural poor peasantry, the industrial workers in the urban centres, the petty bourgeoisie, the students and the progressive intelligentsia as active participants of a new historical project. These classes conjoined together to form a grand social alliance against the political economy of feudalism, bureaucratic capitalism and the semi-colonial subjugation. The ideology of the CPC played a decisive role in maintaining the social alliance and as an agency in revolution.
However, from the immediate post-liberation years onwards the Party ideology has been the main characteristic for its marked incongruity in the representation of Chinese social realities. At one level it obscured the relationship between the political power and social classes. The reason for this discrepancy was the Party's ideological need to define this linkage in terms of conventional Marxist-Leninist formula. The CPC's claim that the post-revolutionary Chinese state has been led by the proletariat does not correspond to the realities of power in China. In this connection two factors need to be considered seriously. Firstly, the CPC came to power primarily by relying on the political militancy of the peasantry. Secondly, owing to the agrarian revolutionary strategies of the CPC and the disastrous Canton uprising in 1927 the urban working class played relatively marginal role in the Chinese revolution.

The cohesion of classes created during the revolutionary movement was gradually shattered by the successive political mobilization campaigns convulsed the Chinese society from the mid 1950s. The CPC lost its ties with the intellectuals in the aftermath of the Hundred Flowers Campaign. This 1956 event represents a radical departure from the standard political practices of the ruling Communist parties at that period. Until then the CPC's policies were aimed at the creation of a strictly uniform political order which imposed from above a rigid homogeneity in thought and culture. This invariably gave birth to a repressive state under which social life was increasingly atomized. The Hundred Flowers campaign brought to light the popular resentment against the CPC. The criticism of the Party, which had diverse social origins, generally focussed on one prominent aspect of the Chinese political life, i.e., the lack of adequate democratic space in the society. However, instead of reexamining the existing structural organization of the state power in the light of these criticisms the CPC unleashed the anti-rightist
campaign in 1957 which effectively silenced all dissenting voices against the Party. The popular demand for freedom of expression, association and the right to protest was summarily rejected with the further strengthening of the CPC's monopoly of state power. The intellectuals, being the most outspoken critics of the Party, became the political target of the anti-rightist campaign. This largely contributed the alienation of intellectuals from the CPC and its socialist project.

The disastrous Great Leap Forward campaign considerably weakened the social basis of the CPC among the peasants. The rural peasantry was the single largest social class and the more enthusiastic agency in the revolutionary movement. It provided a more powerful social basis for the new state. But the GLF programme greatly undermined the socio-economic empowerment of the rural poor peasants. Although, this campaign was a novel experiment in terms of a distinctive developmental model and socio-political organization it could not sustain even for a whole year.

The ideology of the Cultural Revolution, for its advocacy of radical democracy, popular justice and the right to rebel, offers incisive critique of the bureaucratization of socialism. The movement raised mainly the problem of capitalist restoration in a post-revolutionary society. However the Cultural Revolution instead of consolidating the revolutionary power, seriously undermined the social basis of the Party-state. The main reason for this failure was the universal terror unleashed during the movement. The Cultural Revolution generated a serious crisis of faith in the official ideology of the CPC. At the end of the Maoist era, the social alliance created during the revolutionary movement has been broken down. And state Maoism has lost its position of the dominant ideology in the society.
Following the death of Mao Zedong in 1976, a collective leadership was emerged under Hua Guofeng which reformulated the priorities for national development. The focus of the official ideology then moved towards the theme of modernization. This shift in developmental strategy represents a change in the economic policies and it also signals the CPC's attempts to end the frequent mass campaigns which convulsed China during the Maoist era. As the new policy was unravelled gradually, it became clear that there was a consensus within the Party to abandon the concept of mass line propounded by Mao Zedong.

The faction led by Hua Guofeng projected itself as the true inheritors of the Maoist legacy and advocated the continuance of Mao Zedong's thought as the official ideology of the CPC. But the articulation of the same became politically sensitive as it could easily be identified with the views of the 'Gang of Four'. Against this background, many of the theoretical writings of this period are symptomatic for their overwhelming hostility towards the ideological positions of the radical left. The 'Gang of Four' has been subjected to relentless political revilement by the official media. The establishment intellectuals associated with Hua Guofeng and other leaders engaged themselves in a polemic against the radical left. The twin objectives of these writings were: firstly, they aimed at the eradication of the ideological influence of the Cultural Revolution; Secondly, they lend theoretical legitimacy of the policies of the Hua Guofeng regime.

The 1977-78 epistemological debate on the criterion of truth played a far greater role in breaking down the orthodoxy of the State Maoism. Hu Fuming's essay "Practice is the sole criterion of Truth" argues that the criterion of truth can only be social practice. It rejects the sphere of theory and the sphere of subjective as the site of
testing truth and the debate primarily approves practice as the sole criterion of truth. It also maintains that the practice has two levels of cognitive process, i.e., as the source of all knowledge and the site for its testing. The main flaw of this postulate is that the knowledge collapses directly back to the realm of social practice which is devoid of any ideology. Many participants of the truth-criterion controversy have made repeated references to the relevant Mao texts on the subject. But Mao's well known position that the class struggle is the criterion of truth had been deleted from the discussion and thus removed political as the site of knowledge production. This was accompanied by the return of Stalin's theory of productive forces which emphasises economic as the determinate site of knowledge production.

The economic reforms policies of the CPC since 1978 have unequivocally deviated China from the original vision of transition to socialism. The theoretical justifications of these policies became extremely problematical. The discrepancy between the policies of encouraging private commodity production and the professed commitment to socialism is strikingly evident. The CPC made laborious efforts to explain this incompatibility in terms of an invented theory of socialism which made indiscreet modification in that concept. The important element in this connection is the indiscriminate notion of Chinese characteristics of socialism. Although this formulation was not strictly a theoretical discovery of the ideologues of the reform era, the elevation of the same as the central conceptual category was a post-1978 phenomenon.

The CPC redefined its own programme of "building socialism" by accommodating many aspects of capitalist economic practices as concrete state policies. The economic theory of socialism put forward by the CPC defined socialism as planned commodity economy. The operation of the commodity economy is controlled and regulated by a
market mechanism. The pursuance of these policies has been explained most prominently with the help of the theory of productive forces. This theory, initially advanced by the Soviet ideologues under Stalin, argued for the development of productive forces as the central concern of socialism.

The Third Plenary session of the Eleventh Central Committee, held in December 1978, represents a crucial turn off in the history of post-liberation China. The official communique of this Plenum suggested a radical departure from the Mao's ideological positions. The importance of the Third Plenum can be located at two levels. Firstly it discarded the Maoist theory of continuing the revolution under socialism. Secondly, the plenum rehabilitated the line of the Eighth Congress of 1956. With the rejection of mass line, both from politics and developmental strategy, the emphasis on political in the Chinese socialist theory began to diminish. The reform faction, led by Deng Xiaoping perceived mass political mobilization as detrimental to the modernization programme. The official pronouncements stressed increasingly on political stability, national unity and economic development.

The Sixth Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee held in 1981 redefined the concept of socialist transition as an orderly process to be carried out within the system. According to this formulation the transition to socialism is a question of expanding the productive forces which would automatically lead to the overall development of the society and the elimination of social inequalities. The modernization of science and technology and promotion of production are seen as the privileged mechanism through which socialism can be achieved.

One of the striking features of the Chinese Marxism of the late 1970 was the newly found faith in the objective laws of historical and economic development. The
Maoist era was characterised for mass political movements expressing the voluntaristic faith in the ability of human agency in shaping the social realities. In stark contrast to this the Chinese Marxist theoreticians in the late 1970s viewed history as a natural process governed by immutable laws which operate independently of human will. These objective laws can be discovered with scientific accuracy as precise as research in natural science. With this gross positivistic reductionism the official theoretical writings rejected the Maoist notion regarding the decisive role of the "superstructure" in historical progress.

Within two years after his death, Mao Zedong thought as a grand theory of Chinese socialism collapsed at the level of official ideology and popular consciousness. The state Maoism ceased to remain the dominant intellectual force in China by 1980s. For the post-Mao Chinese state the Maoist intellectual apparatus served too little assistance in the articulation of its historical vision. The marginalization of Maoist themes in the official ideology was not wholly a direct reflection of the ascendancy of reform faction in the CPC. Rather, it explains striking incongruity between the Chinese social realities of 1970s and the utopian Mao canons. It can be argued that, the CPC's post-1976-ideological departure from Mao Zedong thought was facilitated not by the political victory of the Deng Xiaoping's faction alone, but by the conjuncture of a host of economic and social crises which engulfed the People's Republic in the aftermath of the Cultural Revolution.

As a result of the reasons explained above the doctrinal homogeneity hitherto maintained by the state in relation to the society rendered unsustainable. Consequently, the CPC's intellectual domination in the society, particularly in the centres of knowledge production, confronted challenges from within. The official ideology and cultural
orthodoxy was contested by certain intellectual groups and social organizations. In addition, the patronage of the regime over many social agencies and intellectual associations was weakened. The state gradually lost control over the discourse that is constituting the public space.

The post-1978 economic reforms have been accompanied by the public expression of quite unorthodox views and social practices. The ideological codes and linguistic phrases established by the party-state were broke down at the level of popular discourse. In the context of the protest movements, the popular sensibility moved increasingly towards the idea of democracy and economic justice. These factors contributed considerably to the erosion of power of the Chinese state within the society.

The Party-State in post-Mao China has effected significant reorganization of various repressive apparatus. In the absence of a legitimate popular national authority and a dominant ideology acceptable to the masses, the CPC's increasing reliance on these organs for maintaining the existing structures of power was clearly evident. The state earmarked a staggering amount of resources for domestic surveillance. The extensive deployment of the internal security agencies and the unbridled use of violence against the dissident community indicate that the state depends more on its coercive agencies to continue its domination over the society than on popular institutions and ideology. In this sense the Chinese has become a non-hegemonic state.

At another level the economic policies of the Deng Xiaoping regime have widened social inequalities in wages, power and prestige. The new developments in the Chinese Law, instead of addressing these contradictions, conferred permanence to the uneven property relations, particularly those of capitalist ownership on means of production. The new criminal codes outlawed key forms of political dissent developed during the
Cultural Revolution. They also weakened the power of workers in government and factories.

The official ideology of the reform era was partially successful in appropriating the language and vision of the popular dissent primarily through the rhetoric about the project of modernization. However, it rendered the Chinese working class more vulnerable in terms of wages, social security and political power. The official rhetoric during the new period was symptomatic for its abandonment of working class aspirations as the central idea from its historical vision. What has been replaced was the ideology of a new class of managers, technical elites, white collar professionals and the *nouveau riche* entrepreneurs.

The popular resentment against the Party-state frequently broke out as protest movements. A cross-section of the Chinese society has participated in these movements. The workers emerged as the more radical critics of the regime. They not only raised the question of economic justice and also demanded a more equitable distribution of wealth. An alternative political vision articulated by the workers had more universal appeal. It transgressed the narrow corporate interests of economics and argued for the empowerment of the popular masses as a whole.

The students proved to be the principal social agency to oppose the regime. Their disenchantment with the state has begun much before the inauguration of the economic liberalization. It was not only the political imagination and sensibility of the young generation, which come into conflict with the dictatorial state, but what contributed more to the frequent outbreak of the students protests was the endurance of their relative social and political disadvantages from the Hundred Flowers campaign. A close examination of the rhetorical site of the 1989 democracy movement reveals that the alternative social
vision presented by the students was confined essentially to their elitist aspirations in the sense that, the university students looked upon themselves as the principal agency in national salvation. And this project was not seen as a collective enterprise of various social classes, but as a self-righteous intervention of the enlightened intellectuals. This ideology of exclusivism greatly obstructed the possible formation of a various sections of the society against the Party-state.

Despite all its limitations and the exclusivism of the students, one of the significant achievements of the protest movements the post-Mao China was social solidarity. The 1989 democracy movement in particular brought different social classes to a conjunction. It created a social space which made the political communication between various sections of the society more intimate and helped them to discover new levels of solidarity. What brought the urban workers, agricultural labours, students, intellectuals, the new commercial class and the disenchanted general populace together was their commonly shared antipathy towards the authoritarian state.

In the post-Mao era the successive dissent movements have proclaimed democracy as a basic requirement for the Chinese political life. However, it is to be noted that the notion of democracy has been undergone some conceptual changes over the last decade. During the 1978-79 protest movement the concept of democracy was discussed within the broad ideological framework of Marxism. Although it offered serious criticism of the Chinese state and official ideology, this perspective did not make any theoretical rupture with the Marxist problematic. But the language and categories of Marxism were strikingly missing from the 1989 Chinese debate on democracy. Instead, the western idea of human rights was repeatedly invoked and democracy was defined primarily in terms of these rights. Nevertheless, it is more important to note that the Chinese concept
minzhu encompasses a wide spectrum of different conceptions. They reflect the influence of diverse elements from Chinese history, marxism, populism and the liberal democratic tradition which emphasises individual liberty over collective interests. All these traditions make minzhu an amalgam of meanings incorporating various strands of thoughts, blend together, and hardly amenable to a single interpretations.

In the context of the dissent movements, the ideological topography of the post-Mao China uncover an ongoing war of positions, not strictly between social classes, but of contesting historical visions. The future of China, particularly for its political configuration depends decisively on the outcome of this conflict.