

# Assault on the Reforms: Conservative Criticism of Political and Economic Liberalization in China, 1985–86

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“Toleration of bourgeois liberalization in our country means taking the capitalist road.”

— Hongqi, 1986

Following Hu Yaobang’s resignation as general secretary of the Chinese Communist Party on 16 January 1987, the political and economic reforms sponsored by Deng Xiaoping since 1978 came under intense criticism. Warning against “bourgeois liberalization” and renewed “spiritual pollution” from the west, Party conservatives reacted to student demonstrations in December 1986 by reversing the “Double Hundred” policy of literary and scientific freedom and by engineering the purge of the ardent westernizers Fang Lizhi, Liu Binyan and Wang Ruowang.<sup>1</sup> Deng Liqun’s “Leading Group to Oppose Bourgeois Liberalism,” Chen Yun’s Central Discipline Inspection Commission (CDIC), and the outspoken Peng Zhen emerged as the main ideological watchdogs favouring restrictions on individual expression. But even the pro-reformer Zhao Ziyang condemned western ideas as “pernicious,” just as his chief secretary Bao Tong, warned intellectuals against “writ[ing] only about (the merits) of developed capitalist countries.”<sup>2</sup> Contrary to previous exhortations that “to get rich is glorious,” the Central Committee’s

\* This article is based on research, including interviews, carried out in the People’s Republic of China at the Beijing City Library Newspaper Archive and the Beijing Party School, and in Hong Kong at the Universities Service Centre.

1. The Party Centre issued documents equating “bourgeois liberalization” with “spiritual pollution” soon after Hu’s resignation. *New York Times*, 8 March 1987. For Peng Zhen’s comment opposing “spiritual pollution,” see *Asia Week* (hereafter, *AW*), 18 January 1987, p. 19, and *Xinhua*, 12 January, 1987. Although “conservative” is often equated with “leftist” in China, these two opinion groups are clearly distinguished by the former’s opposition to mass political movements and a leader cult generally favoured by the latter. Party conservatives also support the institutional authority and political monopoly of the CCP, substantial economic planning emphasizing grain production and heavy industry, and less reliance on deficit spending and foreign loans, but without the radical economic egalitarianism favoured by leftists. Furthermore, conservatives oppose the social spontaneity promoted by both leftists and pro-western intellectuals. Major conservatives at the national level included: Chen Yun, Peng Zhen, Deng Liqun, Song Renqiong, Bo Yibo, Yu Qiuli, Hu Qiaomu, Wang Zhen, Li Xiannian, Xu Dixin, Wang Heshou, Yang Shangkun, Yang Dezhi, He Jingzhi, Xi Zhongxun, Peng Zhong, Chen Pixian, and, at times, Li Peng and Qiao Shi. These leaders often exhibited considerable differences on specific policy issues, however.

2. *New York Times*, 26 March 1987; similar conservative critiques with “leftist” overtones occurred in 1981, when the PLA cited Bai Hua’s writings to attack “bourgeois liberalization,” and in the 1983 “Anti-Spiritual Pollution Campaign.”

1987 No. 1 Directive preached the "superiority of socialism" over capitalism and de-emphasized individual material incentives to promote production.<sup>3</sup> "Selflessness," "self-reliance," the "virtues of frugality," and even "socialist labour-emulation drives" reminiscent of Maoism were resurrected to rekindle popular support for collective ideals, such as "helping the poor."<sup>4</sup> Despite the recent shift towards a consumer economy and diversified agriculture, conservative leaders reaffirmed orthodox economic goals, such as maximizing grain production, and temporarily halted major reforms in factory management.<sup>5</sup> Casting the same conservative pall over the political arena, the press criticized western-inspired ideas for major institutional reform, particularly Liao Gailong's 1980 proposal for a Montesquieuan "tripartite separation of power" in the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the more democratic notion of a "multi-party system."<sup>6</sup> Although significant political reform proposals were considered in the summer of 1986, Hu Yaobang's subsequent demotion apparently scuttled plans for dramatic Party reform at the 13th CCP Congress held in October 1987.<sup>7</sup> Student demonstrations begun to support

3. *AW*, 25 January 1987, p. 13. Peng Zhen's 28 October 1986 speech (published after Hu's dismissal) emphasized that "people [should] get rich together." See, *Renmin ribao* (*People's Daily*) (Overseas Edit.), 15 January 1987, transl. in *Foreign Broadcast Information Service-China* (hereafter, *FBIS-CHI*), 16 January 1987, p. K14.

4. *Far Eastern Economic Review* (hereafter *FEER*), 22 January 1987, pp. 12-13, and *AW*, 25 January 1987, p. 11, and 8 March 1987, p. 18. *Renmin ribao* (Overseas Edit.) (16 January 1987), also attacked the statement in *Shehui bao* (*Sociological News*) that "selfishness... is a motivating force for the development of human society."

5. For CCP policy shifts on grain production, see *FEER*, 29 January 1987, p. 11, 19 February 1987, p. 92, and 19 March 1987, pp. 78-80, plus *AW*, 8 March 1987, p. 18; for the retreat on factory reform, see *AW*, 15 March 1987, p. 25, and 22 March 1987, p. 25, and *FEER*, 19 March 1987, pp. 73-77, and 9 April 1987, p. 13. *Renmin ribao* (Overseas Edit.) (11 January 1987), also challenged the overall economic results of the reform, while *FEER* (19 March 1987), *AW* (15 March 1987), and *Ban yue tan* (*Bi-Monthly Talks*) (No. 17, 10 September 1985) described the recent economic problems (e.g. tripling of short-term foreign debt, decline in chemical fertilizer production, coal and electricity shortages, and local authorities' excessive spending on housing, worker bonuses and banquets), which substantiate such criticism.

6. *AW*, 25 January 1987, p. 13. Liao Gailong proposed "three central committees which will mutually supervise and impose constraints on one another," ideas Hu Yaobang initially supported but later criticized. See, Liao Gailong, "The '1980 Reform' programme of China," *Qishi niandai* (*The Seventies*) (Hong Kong), 1 March 1981, in *FBIS-CHI* 16 March 1981; and "Hu Yaobang July 1979 speech," *Zhongbao* (*Central News*), Nos. 2, 3, 4 and 5 (Hong Kong), March 1980. Peng Zhen also supported some institutional reform proposals favouring the conservatives' political power position, such as the separation of government and Party, which as NPC chief he apparently used to resist the authority of the Party Secretariat. *AW*, 15 March 1987, p. 28.

7. For an example of political reforms proposed in the summer of 1986 and aimed at reducing the "over-concentration of authority in the Party," see, Chen Yizi, "Zhengzhi tizhi gaige shi jingji tizhi gaige de baozheng" ("Reform of the political structure is the guarantee of economic reform"), speech presented to "Theoretical Seminar on Political Reform of the Central Party School," Summer 1986, n.d., no place of pub. At the 13th Party Congress Zhao Ziyang offered few proposals for substantial political reform in his political report. *Beijing Review*, 9-15 November 1987, pp. 23-49.

greater liberalization and “democracy” (*minzhu*) had, instead, produced dramatic policy reversals away from reform.<sup>8</sup>

This comprehensive critique of reform was not totally unexpected however, since throughout 1985–86 the press—particularly the provincial press—often linked reform to numerous ideological, social and economic problems. Attacks on reform following Hu Yaobang’s resignation were, in fact, the *culmination* of growing discontent expressed over the previous two years by central and especially provincial leaders. Most criticism came from ideological conservatives opposed to intellectual pluralism and from orthodox provincial officials in hinterland regions adversely affected by recent economic reforms.<sup>9</sup> But even moderate leaders, such as Wang Zhaoguo and Hu Qili, criticized the unanticipated consequences of reform on China’s social and political system. The erosion of CCP organization and authority, unprecedented social and cultural decay, and increasing economic polarization worried leaders across the political spectrum. More than a narrow, partisan defence of bureaucratic and economic interests, the conservative critique of reform appealed to a widespread and deep-seated ambivalence among CCP leaders and the general public on the long-term effects of the new policies.

### *Degeneration of the Party and Army*

“We live . . . and will die as Communist Party members.”

— CCP slogan, 1957

The major concern of conservatives was the destructive influence of recent policies on the CCP and the People’s Liberation Army (PLA). Increasing corruption and “decadence” among cadres and army officers were, they charged, intensifying the loss of institutional legitimacy by the CCP and PLA which had already begun during the Cultural Revolution. Quoting Mao Zedong’s earlier warning on “preventing erosion” in the Party, Bo Yibo thus urged graduating cadres at the Central Party School in 1986 to “fight resolutely against

8. Banners and casual comments by students indicated widespread support for reform, but demonstrations observed by this author and Hong Kong-based reporters revealed some anti-reform sentiment—especially against price and tax hikes—and opposition to both Deng Xiaoping and Hu Yaobang as expressed in such demonstrators’ chants as “Deng Xiaoping wan shui” (“10,000 taxes under Deng”) and “Hu dao bang” (“Hu, the destroyer of China”). *AW*, 4 January 1987, p. 25 and *Chengming* (*Contend*), No. 111, 1 January 1987, p. 10.

9. Provinces publishing substantial conservative criticisms included: Heilongjiang, Shanxi (where Peng Zhen has old ties), Ningxia, Gansu, Shaanxi, Guangxi, Guizhou, Tibet, Xinjiang, Qinghai, Liaoning, Hunan, and Beijing and Shanghai cities. As old centres of leftist support during the Cultural Revolution, many of these provinces’ leaders have also voiced periodic opposition to reform since 1978, especially on such problems as price reform and inflation. See, Dorothy J. Solinger, “The 1980 inflation and the politics of price control in the PRC,” in David M. Lampton (ed.), *Policy Implementation in Post-Mao China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), pp. 96 and 103.

decadent thoughts that erode our Party.”<sup>10</sup> Despite the January 1982 decision of the Politburo Standing Committee to “hit hard at serious economic crimes,” *Red Flag* similarly noted the destructive influence of market principles on CCP members who now believe “ideals are far away, politics are meaningless, but cash is real.”<sup>11</sup> Even the pro-reform economist Ma Hong admitted that the “corrupt practices” encouraged by the “commodity economy” were a “grim fact” and “evil trend” on the verge of getting out of control.<sup>12</sup> In 1983 the Central Committee had inaugurated a three-year rectification campaign to “readjust Party work style.” But by 1986 *People’s Daily* lamented that the “weakening of Party members’ spirit” (i.e. code words for corruption) had not really been reversed. Whereas pro-reform Party leaders attributed corruption and the “unsound mood in the Party” simply to “faulty administration,” conservatives believed these problems were a direct consequence of the reforms.<sup>13</sup>

*Provincial Criticism of Reform.* The most ideologically charged attacks on reform in 1985–86 were published in the provincial press. Perhaps the most vocal criticism came from the north-east, particularly Heilongjiang, where Party authorities, led by First Secretary Sun Weiben,<sup>14</sup> expressed deep concern over the domestic impact of China’s opening to the outside world. According to *Heilongjiang Daily*:

[T]he open-door policy [has made] some Party-member cadres and even senior Party cadres, unable to withstand corrosion by bourgeois ideas; [they] have forgotten moral principles at the sight of profit and acted as an umbrella for economic criminals [emphasis added].

The “struggle between [bourgeois] corrosion and anti-corrosion” fostered by international contact was, the paper insisted, “a concrete manifestation of class struggle on the ideological and economic

10. *Hongqi* (*Red Flag*), No. 16, 16 August 1986, in *Joint Publications Research Service* (hereafter *JPRS*), 9 October 1986. Bo also threatened possible purges by arguing “it was necessary to ‘remove from the Party those who only want to enjoy the advantages of being members of a ruling party.’” Contrary to CC member Li Rui, Bo also advocated using “political integrity” (i.e. ideological purity) over “ability” as the major criterion to recruit cadres.

11. *Hongqi*, No. 12, 16 June 1986 and *Dang de jiaoyu* (*Party Education*), No. 10, 1 October 1985, in *JPRS*, 28 January 1986, p. 76. Similar criticisms were voiced in 1981. See, “Party Life Column,” *Renmin ribao*, 5 January 1981.

12. *Jiefang ribao* (*Liberation Daily*), 15 January 1986.

13. *Renmin ribao*, 29 June 1986 and *Wan zhai bao* (*China Digest*), No. 318, 5 January 1986. Other articles also attempted to separate “unhealthy trends” in the Party from the reforms. See, *Xibei xinxi bao* (*Northwest News*) (Xi’an), 23 June 1986, in *FBIS-CHI*, 14 July 1986. The January 1986, 8,000 Cadres Conference established a leading group to attack corruption.

14. Sun Weiben was elevated to secretary of the Heilongjiang provincial committee in November 1985, after serving as a rural cadre primarily in Liaoning. He has advocated close co-operation between the military and civilian sectors in economic construction and reportedly favours increased trade with the Soviet Union and extensive contacts with North Korea. *Issues and Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 11 (November 1986), pp. 128–32.

spheres" which "will continue indefinitely" and may even require "elimina[ting] the degenerates in the Party." Precisely because of the "impurities" and "selfish desires" introduced by "bourgeois ideological corrosion," economic crimes in Heilongjiang were "markedly higher in 1985 than in 1984."<sup>15</sup> Similar criticisms were also voiced in nearby Liaoning, where the secretary of the provincial discipline inspection commission used terms reminiscent of the Cultural Revolution to warn Party members against "the vicious inflation of individualism" and "the sugar-coated bullet of the bourgeoisie."<sup>16</sup> In an area of heavy industrial production threatened by the economic reforms, some Liaoning authorities defended Marxist orthodoxy to protect vital economic interests closely tied to the 30-year planned economy.<sup>17</sup> Yet even where the reforms offered substantial economic incentives, such as in Shanghai and the potentially rich province of Hunan, local Party leaders criticized reform. Following the decision of the September 1986 Sixth CCP Plenum to reaffirm the orthodox goal of "building a socialist society," Shanghai's *Liberation Daily* declared that "reforms have enlivened our economy but have confused us ideologically..."<sup>18</sup> In an apparent allusion to western domination of Shanghai before 1949, the paper warned that "the foreign corrupt ideology of capitalism" was reinforcing "the servile thinking generated under the conditions of a semi-colonial society [which] still has a deep influence on us." Similar appeals to national and cultural pride were also voiced in Tianjin and Harbin where authorities condemned the spreading "doubt" about "basic Marxist

15. *Heilongjiang ribao*, 28 January 1986, in *JPRS*, 26 June 1986, pp. 38–39; and *Heilongjiang ribao*, 3 February 1986. Heilongjiang organs had also publicly opposed aspects of agricultural decollectivization in 1982. David Zweig, "Context and content in policy implementation: household contracts and decollectivization, 1977–1983," in Lampton, *Policy Implementation*, p. 268.

16. Liaoning Provincial Radio Service, 29 November 1985, in *JPRS*, 7 January 1986, p. 105. Compare this statement with Wan Li's assertion in August 1986: "We must not regard a lot of new theories... as 'sugar-coated bullets' or heretical stuff, on the pretext of preserving the purity of Marxism..." *Renmin ribao*, 15 August 1986; transl. in *Chinese Law and Government*, Spring 1987, p. 24. The discipline inspection commissions frequently challenged reform in cities like Shenyang where some significant economic experiments were attempted. See also fn. 25 below.

17. Substantial reductions in production at a Shenyang tractor factory illustrated the negative economic consequences of the reforms on heavy industry as the shift to smaller private plots in the countryside made further mechanization unnecessary. See, Tiziano Terzani, *The Forbidden Door* (Hong Kong: Asia 2000 Ltd., 1985), p. 79. Unlike other north-east provinces, however, Liaoning has experimented with major economic reforms, though not without considerable local opposition from well-entrenched heavy industrial interests, such as the Anshan Iron and Steel complex. See, Roy Grow, "Changing the rules: Debating price and contract regulations in the northeast," unpub. paper.

18. CC "Resolution," *Hongqi*, No. 19, 1 October 1986, in *JPRS*, 26 November 1986, pp. 1–13; and *Jiefang ribao*, 30 September 1986.

principles" among Party members "blinded by lust for gain [and] captive to money."<sup>19</sup>

Criticism of reform was also voiced in the poor, hinterland regions of the north and south-west where Party leaders feared increasing economic polarization along regional lines. Proposals emphasizing profit in the industrial sector particularly threatened backward provinces, such as Guizhou, where factories built during the inland construction campaign in the 1960s and early 1970s have been recently shut down and transferred to more efficient coastal provinces because of huge operating losses.<sup>20</sup> Regional resistance to reform was also apparently heightened by Hu Yaobang's 1983 statement to Xinjiang provincial authorities on the low priority of future central government investment in interior provinces.<sup>21</sup> Perhaps the greatest beneficiaries of reform in these regions are Central Asian minorities, particularly Uighurs, whose long experience in the bazaar has contributed to their success in the rapidly growing commercial economy.<sup>22</sup> But for provincial CCP leaders, commercial freedom is a mixed blessing, as the individualistic and market-oriented minorities are now less subject to state economic and political controls. Party officials in Tibet thus warned that the "rapid progress of reform" had transferred "unhealthy social practices . . . to our region and formed great influence in the Party," an allusion to the religious revival and demands for political independence that followed the reforms and apparently influenced ethnic Tibetan Party members.<sup>23</sup> And in China's poorest region, Ningxia, the press also condemned "rampaging political liberalism" in the Party (defined as "voicing dissatisfaction outside normal [CCP] channels" and "striving for democracy

19. *Tianjin ribao*, 28 September 1985, in *JPRS*, 7 January 1986, p. 100; and *Heilongjiang ribao*, 3 February 1986. Although considered a reformer, Tianjin's mayor, Li Ruihuan, apparently cracked down hard on student demonstrators. *AW*, 25 January 1987, p. 11 and *Xinhua*, 16 February, 1987. *Xinhua ribao* (9 January 1987) repeated China's past humiliation by westerners, while *Xinhua wenzhai* (*New China Digest*; No. 12, 1984) noted "there are people who [link] together the open door with colonialism."

20. The interior provinces of Shanxi, Ningxia, Gansu, Qinghai, and especially Guizhou all benefited from investment in the heavy industrial and military infrastructure of the "third front" (*san xian*) constructed from 1964 to 1972. Barry Naughton, "The Third Front," unpub. paper, pp. 5, 8 and 34. Inland provinces concerned with their own infant industries have also resisted reform policies permitting nationwide sale of light industrial products (e.g. bicycles) from superior coastal factories.

21. *AW*, 7 December 1986, p. 43. Xinjiang authorities reacted by appealing to Beijing in early November 1986 for more central investment and greater local autonomy.

22. Uighurs frequently travel the country to major cities, setting up street food stalls and selling consumer products like motorcycles, especially in the growing economy of the south-east. Interviews, Canton, spring 1984 and Beijing, autumn 1986.

23. *Xizang ribao*, 22 May 1986, in *JPRS* 17 October 1986. Public demands for independence in Tibet followed the 1979 liberalization and erupted again in October 1987, apparently supported by recently recruited Tibetans in the provincial Party's grass-roots organization. Terzani, *The Forbidden Door*, p. 144 and Interview, CCP official, winter, 1987. For Tibetan Party officials' resistance to economic reforms, see, "Xizang gongzuo zuotanhui jiyao (jielu)" (Summary of a forum on work in Tibet [excerpts]), *Shierda yilai: zhongyao wenxian xuanpian* (zhong) [*Important Selected Documents Since the Twelfth Congress* (Middle Volume)] (Beijing: People's Publishing House, 1986), pp. 443-44.

without centralism”), which it compared to the heretic crimes of Gao Gang and Rao Shushi in the 1950s.<sup>24</sup> Where economic reform produced comparative economic disadvantages and sowed internal discord among non-Han CCP members, the “invasion of conspicuous liberalism and individualism” and the “spiritual rubbish of capitalism” were particularly threatening. But even in centres of reformist experiments such as Shenzhen, CCP disciplinary authorities promised to prosecute economic criminals in the Party – the so-called “SEZ moths” – even though “they wrap themselves in the garb of leading cadres.”<sup>25</sup>

*Institutional and Ideological Erosion in the CCP.* These criticisms posed an obvious partisan challenge to the reformist leadership that ultimately contributed to Hu Yaobang’s resignation in 1987. In accusing “leading cadres” supporting reform of having “lost their belief in communism,” conservatives sought political gain by questioning the loyalty of the reformers.<sup>26</sup> Yet inner-Party power struggles aside, conservatives raised genuine concerns, apparently shared by many top Party leaders, that the reforms were seriously damaging the institutional integrity and organic solidarity of the CCP. The penetration of “liberalism” and “individualism” was eroding the institutional loyalties of Party members which propaganda organs have painstakingly rebuilt since 1978 to repair the devastating effects of the Cultural Revolution and Mao Zedong’s personality cult. Reform also weakened command and control in the CCP as Party members, many favourably inclined to democratic principles, increasingly “disregard organizational discipline and fail to enforce orders and prohibitions.”<sup>27</sup> Exposed to the anti-authoritarian western liberal tradition, some Party members were

24. *Ningxia ribao*, 23 April 1986; also, *Shaanxi ribao*, 2 March 1986, Qinghai Provincial Radio Service, 10 March 1986, in *JPRS*, 10 April 1986, and *Shanxi Provincial Radio Service*, 21 October 1985, in *JPRS*, 6 December 1985.

25. *Nanfang ribao* (*Southern Daily*), 20 March 1986, in *JPRS*, 27 August 1986, p. 62. Criticism of purported corruption in the Special Economic Zones was an example of the pressure brought to bear on this centrepiece of reform by Chen Yun’s CDIC. An army veteran visiting Shekou illustrated the PLA’s animosity to the special zones: “If I had known that this would be the result of the revolution . . . I would never have joined the Red Army.” Quoted in Liang Heng and Judith Shapiro, *After the Nightmare* (New York: Knopf, 1986), p. 86. The operation of a casino in Shenzhen since 1985 and the proposed construction of a racecourse there undoubtedly strengthened such negative views.

26. *Lilun yu shijian* (*Theory and Practice*) (Shenyang), No. 15, 1 August 1985, in *JPRS*, 19 December 1985. This article was published on Army Day in Shenyang where a PLA unit began a “Learn from Lei Feng” campaign in 1985. *AW*, 15 March 1987, p. 25.

27. *Gongchan dang yuan* (*Communist Party Member*), No. 3 (10 March 1986), p. 6, and *Gansu ribao*, 12 June 1986, p. 1. In 1985 Hu Yaobang attacked Party members advocating “western democracy.”

losing the Leninist "iron discipline" and organizational cohesion necessary for national policy formation and political control.<sup>28</sup> The hierarchical chain of command was also threatened by proposed *institutional* reforms antithetical to Leninist principles, such as permitting cadres to inspect their Party files (*dang'an*).<sup>29</sup> Similar suggestions to "elect or hire [cadres] through public advertisements" and limit the "number of cadres appointed directly by the upper authorities" not only challenged centralized organizational controls but, when implemented, led to the removal of grass-roots personnel probably sympathetic to political and economic orthodoxy.<sup>30</sup> Combined with Hu Yaobang's and Deng Xiaoping's alleged heavy-handed use of Party "rectification" to shore up their personal political network, these proposals not only undermined the conservatives' political base in the 42-million member CCP, but also violated Leninist norms shared by the entire leadership.<sup>31</sup>

Ideological erosion in the CCP was further demonstrated by the "heretical" statements of Party members published in non-Party and even foreign journals sympathetic to reform. Expressing the political nihilism rampant during the Cultural Revolution and apparently strengthened by western thought, the liberal Beijing magazine *Popular Tribune* declared that the "scientific spirit does not recognize any authority." *Literary Gazette* also challenged Marxist orthodoxy by describing "one of the mandatory laws of material and spiritual production . . . as developing *the self* under the condition of liberalization and contention."<sup>32</sup> Liberal critics of the regime, such as Liu Binyan, Fang Lizhi and Wang Ruoshui, not only emphasized the inherent contradictions between modern science and "dogmatic" Marxism-Leninism, but also cynically questioned the CCP's bureaucratic competence and political authority. Liu Binyan was especially irreverent in promoting a "second kind of loyalty" and asserting that "once you become a cadre, you cannot run an enterprise," while Fang Lizhi undoubtedly irritated conservative nationalist sentiments by

28. The degeneration of CCP political controls poses a threat to Deng's reforms, just as the 1898 reform movement was apparently defeated by the imperial court's concern over "losing its control over the formulation of national policy." See, Paul A. Cohen, "The post-Mao reforms in historical perspective," *Journal of Asian Studies* (forthcoming), p. 8.

29. *Xin guancha* (*New Observations*) (Beijing), No. 16, 25 August 1986, which also proposed that "cadres should sign their own files."

30. *Kaifang* (*Enlightenment*) (Canton), No. 8, 8 August 1986 (*JPRS*, 7 November 1986). John Burns notes the removal of local officials opposed to reform in local elections. "Local cadre accommodation to the 'responsibility system' in rural China," *Pacific Affairs*, winter 1985-86, p. 621.

31. *AW* (1 March 1987, p. 14) noted Peng Zhen's and Chen Yun's protests about Deng's "dictatorial nature." Other leaders complained, however, that the rectification of "unhealthy trends" was being used to "hamper the initiative of the reformers." *Hongqi*, No. 16, 16 August 1986.

32. Emphasis added. *Qun yan*, No. 9, 1986 and *Wen huibao*, 25 May 1986.



claiming that “[the world outside] is more civilized than China.”<sup>33</sup> Wang Ruoshui even suggested that in 1957 Mao Zedong had tolerated the “bourgeois stuff” produced by reform—an interpretation of the chairman’s views that probably rankled such conservative defenders of Maoist orthodoxy as Hu Qiaomu, but also the main executor of the Anti-Rightist campaign, Deng Xiaoping.<sup>34</sup> Finally, the liberal intellectual Shao Ding claimed in a Hong Kong magazine interview that “ideology... is a purely theoretical issue which may be left to others,” and also publicized the politically damaging fact that “20 million people had died” in China following the Great Leap Forward.<sup>35</sup>

Although ideological deviance was probably expected from political eccentrics like Liu Binyan, unorthodox statements by other Party leaders verified the conservatives’ belief that reform had gone too far. Former propaganda chief Zhu Houze was especially provocative when he openly challenged the authority of the CCP’s major theoretical journal: “The views of *Red Flag* only represent its own views,” Zhu stated to Youth League members in July 1986. “[They] can be refuted, because what has been carried in *Red Flag* does not necessarily represent the views of central leaders.”<sup>36</sup> Such controversial opinions by the top propaganda official only strengthened the cynicism of Party rank-and-file, conservatives apparently argued, on the utter “uselessness in studying theory.”<sup>37</sup> Further testifying to lax propaganda controls under the reformist leadership was the publication in the Party press of such blatantly heretical statements as “Marx’s political economy cannot solve all problems in the socialist economy” and “‘Marxism’ has remained a closed ideological system for a long time.”<sup>38</sup> Finally, when Yan Jiaqi cited James Madison and

33. *Renmin ribao*, 16 November 1985, in *JPRS*, 15 January 1985, p. 97, and Fang Lizhi, “The duties of young intellectuals in our time,” reprinted in *Inside China Mainland*, December 1986, pp. 8–16. Heilongjiang authorities apparently increased political pressure on Liu Binyan for his attack on Lei Feng’s “sheer blind obedience.” *Pai hsing* (Hong Kong), No. 105, 1 October 1985, in *JPRS*, 3 February 1986; and *Chengming*, No. 96, October 1985. Fang Lizhi used such scientific discoveries as the cosmic black hole to challenge Marxist orthodoxy. *Interview*, Anhui University faculty, winter 1987.

34. *Xin guancha*, No. 11, 10 June 1986. Mao did, in fact, declare that: “In the course of one hundred flowers blossoming, bourgeois ideology will emerge more frequently.” See, Mao Zedong, “The talk at the informal meeting with heads of propaganda and culture and education departments from nine provinces,” 6 March 1957, in Roderick MacFarquhar (ed.), *Mao at High Tide* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, forthcoming).

35. *Chengming* (Hong Kong), No. 106, August 1986. Shao’s statement on deaths in the Leap exemplified the negative information which conservatives oppose publicizing in the foreign press, an action for which Hu Yaobang was later criticized. Chinese authorities explicitly criticized *Chengming* in early 1987. *AW*, 10 May 1987, p. 25.

36. *Wen huibao*, 28 July 1986. Zhu’s statement is attributed (but not directly quoted) from his speech and may have been related to the controversy over Hu Yaobang’s April 1986 “contradictions” speech (examined below).

37. *Hongqi*, No. 19, 1 October 1986, in *JPRS*, 26 November 1986, p. 66.

38. *Guangming ribao*, 6 May 1985; *Renmin ribao*, 11 July 1986; and *Nanfang ribao*, 14 September 1986, in *JPRS*, 12 December 1986, p. 18. Earlier criticism of Marx’s *Das Kapital* appeared in *Shehui kexue* (*Social Science*) (Shanghai), No. 7, 1984.

Confucius instead of Marx in discussing legal reform in July 1986, and suggested that CCP policies of the early 1950s – the halcyon era in the conservatives' view – “took [the CCP] to the ‘great cultural revolution,’” orthodox leaders apparently pushed for an ideological retrenchment.<sup>39</sup>

The greatest threat to the conservatives' ideological orthodoxy may have come, however, from Hu Yaobang. Like Yan Jiaqi, Hu appeared excessively attracted to western democratic theorists, particularly Montesquieu, and too willing to praise “bourgeois freedoms” to foreigners.<sup>40</sup> More importantly, Hu's April 1986 speech on “contradictions” (*maodun*) may have gone too far in criticizing Mao Zedong's theoretical contributions simply to bolster Hu's personal stature in the Party.<sup>41</sup> Just as a partial text of Hu's speech was belatedly published in July 1986, the conservative journals *Red Flag* and *Theoretical Monthly* apparently contested his authority to make seminal theoretical pronouncements on such a central concept in Maoist doctrine.<sup>42</sup> Concerned with the public demeaning of Mao's image in recent years while Hu promoted his own mini-cult, Party conservatives, such as Wang Zhen, also denied that “the banner of Mao Zedong can be relegated” to history in the name of reform.<sup>43</sup> Thus, once Hu raised historical issues, such as the Gao Gang affair, potentially embarrassing to Mao and older leaders still alive, orthodox leaders apparently intensified their political pressure on the general secretary.<sup>44</sup>

Finally, conservatives expressed great concern over the destructive effects of “commodity exchange” relations on the CCP. Exhibiting a

39. *Zhongguo qingnian bao* (*China Youth Daily*), 4 July 1986, in *JPRS*, 23 September 1986; and *Xin guancha*, No. 17 (10 September 1986), pp. 15–16. The CCP banned Yan's book on the Cultural Revolution in January 1987 for allegedly “reviving old quarrels.” *AW*, 25 January 1987, p. 13. North-east Party leaders also idealize the 1950s when the stress on heavy industry and trade with the Soviet Union benefited the region, especially Shenyang with its many Soviet-built plants. Terzani, *The Forbidden Door*, p. 89.

40. *Xin guancha* (No. 16, 25 August 1986) reported that, when visiting Great Britain, Hu Yaobang quoted Montesquieu on freedom and obedience to the law.

41. Hu criticized Mao for “badly confusing the two types of contradictions” and for “condemning good opinions he opposed as ‘rightist’ and ‘anti-Party.’” Hu also called on Party members not to fear “contradictions [i.e. internal policy debates] within the Party,” which apparently challenged the conservatives' vision of an organically unified CCP. *Renmin ribao*, 1 July 1986 and Hu Yaobang, “Guanyu zhengque chuli dangnei liangzhong butong de maodun de wenti” (“On the correct handling of two kinds of intra-party contradictions”), *Shierda yilai*, pp. 970–74.

42. *Hongqi* (No. 14, 15 July 1986), and *Lilun yuekan* (No. 6, 25 June 1986) appeared to criticize Hu elliptically by generally ignoring his speech – while praising Liu Shaoqi's contributions to the theory of contradictions – and by criticizing leaders who “assign people to this or that faction,” as Hu had apparently done.

43. *Hongqi*, No. 17, 1 September 1986, in *JPRS*, 15 October 1986. Wang emphasized that “Comrade Mao Zedong on several occasions saved the Party . . . from crisis” and “opened up a way of socialist transformation of the *private ownership of production* . . .” [emphasis added]. The anniversaries of Mao's death and birth were given little publicity in Beijing in 1986, in great contrast to 1982–83. Hu Yaobang personalized his authority by frequently inscribing monuments with his calligraphy, a practice for which Hua Guofeng was criticized and Deng Xiaoping generally avoids.

44. *Wan zhai bao*, 14 December 1986.

strong anti-commercialism central to orthodox Marxism-Leninism, Beijing's first secretary, Li Ximing, warned that "the principle of exchange of equal values" had "seeped into the political life of the Party" so that many members now operate on a basis of "'no money, no work' [and] 'work according to the amount of money.'"<sup>45</sup> The instrumental values and commoditized relations fostered by the reforms had seriously undermined Party traditions of "unpaid labour" and "arduous struggle" and exacerbated bureaucratic practices, such as recruiting and promoting cadres "as a condition in exchange for accomplishing a certain task..."<sup>46</sup> Young cadres especially ignored "communist ideals" and considered "'revolutionization' [to be] something 'empty' and 'soft,'" but veteran cadres too "knowingly committed errors, all for the sake of money."<sup>47</sup> Despite withstanding "every force in earlier revolutionary times," many older Party members, *Red Flag* claimed, "are now morally degenerate in the face of 'money' and 'power.'"<sup>48</sup> No one was immune to the financial lures of the market, particularly in poorer rural areas where the loss of cadres to new economic opportunities caused "basic-level Party units" to deteriorate and even melt away.<sup>49</sup> Citing recent internal surveys of CCP personnel, CDIC member Zhang Yun complained in May 1986 that "50 per cent of rural Party members" could not completely fulfil their leadership role, while 20 per cent were "weak and incompetent."<sup>50</sup> More worrisome was the impact of the reforms on the staffing of rural Party organs. Because of the basic "incompatibility between the Party's primary organizational structure and the [new] economic organizations," many Party members have lost

45. *Hongqi*, No. 11, 1 June 1986, *Beijing ribao*, 5 December 1985; also *Tianjin ribao*, 28 September 1985. A major critic of some reforms, Li Ximing also insisted that "opening up to the world does not mean to copy foreign things indiscriminately. . . ." Li received a highly technical training and has had considerable contact with North Korea—common characteristics of national conservative leaders, such as Li Peng and Qiao Shi, and of provincial Party secretaries in Gansu, Guangxi, Liaoning, Qinghai, Xinjiang, and Shanghai. At the recent 13th Congress, Li reportedly received the highest number of votes for election to the Central Committee.

46. *Hongqi*, No. 11, 1 June 1986 and *Heilongjiang ribao*, 28 January 1986. *Guangming ribao* (31 May 1986) describes the debate over whether the reforms have strengthened "connections" (*guanxi*) in the CCP, an issue Thomas Gold discusses for all of Chinese society. See, "After comradeship: personal relations in China since the Cultural Revolution," *The China Quarterly* (hereafter *CQ*), No. 104 (December 1985), pp. 659–64.

47. *Fendou (Struggle)* (Harbin), No. 7, 1 July 1986, in *JPRS*, 9 October 1986, p. 28, and *Renmin ribao*, 10 September 1985, which further criticized Hebei Party organs for failing to carry out "criticism and self-criticism" in the past five years despite widespread corruption.

48. Editorial, *Hongqi*, No. 20, 16 October 1986, in *JPRS*, 9 December 1986. This statement was a possible subtle attack on Hu Yaobang or even Deng Xiaoping.

49. *Sichuan ribao*, 29 November 1985, in *JPRS*, 16 April 1986, and *Renmin ribao*, 5 July 1986, which noted further that the declining "proportion of Communist Youth League members among rural youth" in Hunan left "more Party members than youth league members, an abnormal phenomenon." Also, see complaints that "stressing production had replaced Party rectification," *Gansu ribao*, 2 April 1986.

50. *Hongqi*, No. 10, 16 May 1986. Zhang also noted that only one-fifth of Party members had a "university, technical secondary school, or senior secondary school" education while many were still illiterate.

contact with their Party branches after moving off the farm to work in urban industries.<sup>51</sup> “In quite a few villages,” one provincial authority warned, “‘centralized operation’ has disappeared so that no one takes care of such work as mechanized farming and irrigation. . . .”<sup>52</sup> Although total Party membership had increased since 1978 by several million, the CCP suffered from ideological feet of clay and in some areas actually ceased to exist.

*Reform and the People's Liberation Army.* Economic corruption fostered by reform was also the major concern of the generally orthodox PLA leadership. Although some military leaders evidently mimicked Lin Biao's 1960s strategy of using the army as an alternative political model to challenge Party supremacy (examined below), the press also warned PLA members against the “corrosion of bourgeois, decadent ideas.” *Red Flag* especially vilified some PLA personnel for succumbing to “bourgeois thought” and relying on the reforms to “encourage prosperity with the eye of a narrow-minded individualist.”<sup>53</sup> Even though army leaders probably constituted Hu Yaobang's toughest opponents (particularly at the critical December 1986 Central Military Commission meeting where Hu's ideological laxity was criticized), the officer corps was also guilty of corruption, such as accepting gifts and bribes from subordinates – practices rampant in the Cultural Revolution that had apparently grown since 1978.<sup>54</sup> If such “unhealthy tendencies” were the cost of Deng Xiaoping's policies, then some people “believed that there should never have been reforms.”<sup>55</sup>

### *Social Ills and Cultural Decay*

“The encouragement to get rich does not amount to an ideal.”

— Chinese university student, 1986

The destructive impact of reform was magnified in Chinese society and culture. Plagued with corruption and increasingly destructive individualism, China's normally “stable” (*wending*) social order suffered from crime and popular disturbances that, some reform critics believed, even exceeded the “chaos” (*luan*) of the Cultural Revolution. Particularly disturbing were excessive sexual freedom

51. Quoted from the generally pro-reform newspaper *Nongmin ribao* (*Peasant Daily*), 17 May 1986. John Burns documents the recent loss of rural cadres, “Local cadre accommodation,” p. 615. Similar loss of Party members in Poland during the Solidarity movement helped prompt the regime's harsh crack down.

52. *Hebei ribao*, 13 April 1986; also *Renmin ribao*, 29 June 1986.

53. *Hongqi*, No. 15, 1 August 1986, which also called on the militia – an old leftist bailiwick – to “safeguard our army's iron discipline.” Relatively few articles, however, criticized the PLA, indicating a continued reluctance to reveal corruption among the officer corps.

54. *Xinhua* 27 September 1986 and *AW*, 15 March 1987, p. 25.

55. *Renmin ribao*, 14 January 1986, in *JPRS*, 24 April 1986, p. 15. *Ban yue tan* (No. 17, 10 September 1985) warned that “if we fail to crack down on economic crimes . . . , it will be impossible to fulfil the open-door policy. . . .”

and sex crimes which, conservative and even "liberal" media claimed, reflected the ill effects of western influence and the "changing mode of production and business operation" on social mores.<sup>56</sup> Just as the dramatic increase in "the number of couples living together without marriage" was blamed on the "opening to the outside world," so too was western influence the cause of a reputed "free sex cult" in Chinese universities where a "decadent life-style" centred on "night life" allowed "human desires to run rampant."<sup>57</sup> The spread of "pornographic videotapes and unwholesome tabloids" (many imported from the west and Hong Kong) had, Shanghai authorities warned, encouraged "sex offences" such as "abuse of young girls" and "daytime and outdoor rape," even in rural areas where these "crimes [were] unknown in the past."<sup>58</sup> With "the demise of the self-contained and isolated idyllic society due to mounting economic and cultural exchanges" and with "peasants no longer dependent on the administrative organs [of the commune] and much less subservient to the village cadres," the press emphasized that sexual offences "once confined to cities are ravaging the villages..."<sup>59</sup> "Uncivilized and unhealthy tendencies" among the young had reached such crisis proportions that "veteran revolutionaries" and army men counselled youths, while provincial authorities, supported by an increasingly irate Deng Xiaoping, "resolutely banned prostitution and porno tapes."<sup>60</sup>

Orthodox leaders were also disturbed by the apparent exponential growth in economic and especially violent crime. Although public security authorities claimed that a crack down begun in 1983 had substantially reduced crime, conservatives still emphasized the close

56. *Faxue jikan* (Jurisprudence Quarterly), 2 April 1986.

57. See, *China Daily*, 12 July 1986, which also blamed "loose living" on the effects of the Cultural Revolution; *Renmin ribao*, 8 July 1986, which traced the "sex cult" to "foreign exchange students or instructors, particularly English teachers"; *Wenhua yu shenghuo* (Culture and Life), No. 1, 1986, which revealed the sexual perils of "bourgeois life" abroad; *Shehui* (Sociology), No. 4, August 1985, in *JPRS*, 25 April 1986; and the concern over dramatic increases in adultery, purportedly encouraged by reform (cited in *New York Times*, 4 February 1986, p. 4). Concern with "decadent life-style," one pro-reform source noted, led some leaders to "panic over the first sight of some negative thing by closing our doors and windows again." *Xuexi daobao* (Study Report), No. 27, 9 March 1986. It was not surprising, therefore, that Party officials came down hard in early 1987 on writers whose work stressed sexual themes, such as Zhang Xianliang. *FEER*, 12 March 1987, pp. 74-75.

58. Shanghai City Radio Service, 26 November 1985, in *JPRS*, 7 January 1986 and *Faxue jikan*, 2 April 1986. Notwithstanding similar phenomena among Red Guards during the Cultural Revolution, conservatives emphasized the unprecedented nature of such problems.

59. *Faxue jikan*, 2 April 1986. The threat to village social order is probably one of the strongest arguments for tightening rural bureaucratic controls.

60. Guizhou Provincial Radio Service, 5 December 1985, in *JPRS*, 24 January 1986; *Renmin ribao*, 27 September 1985; and Zhongguo Xinwen She (China News Agency), 25 December 1985 in *JPRS*, 28 January 1986. Deng Xiaoping was especially critical of Guangdong where, he claimed, "prostitution has run wild." Exhibiting considerable frustration over the inability to control such ills as "selling children" and "promoting superstition," Deng advocated more use of the death penalty. Deng Xiaoping, "Zai zhongyang zhengzhiju changwei huishang de jianghua" ("Speech to the central Politburo Standing Committee"), 17 January 1986, *Shierda yilai*, p. 891.

link between social disorder and reform. Contesting the Public Security Bureau's positive assessment of criminal activity, *Yunnan Daily* stressed the recent "*sharp rise* in thefts and economic crimes" and warned of the "reemergence of gambling, hooliganism" and crimes reminiscent of pre-Liberation such as "murder, arson, and setting off explosives."<sup>61</sup> Even the "unauthorized production of police weapons" was now common among criminals engaged in violence on a scale *unprecedented* in the history of the People's Republic.<sup>62</sup> "Pernicious cases which have seldom occurred since the founding of the nation," including "armed gang fights and tainting food with poison," had clearly grown, a Shanghai publication asserted, because of the "huge increases in material possessions."<sup>63</sup> Examining crime in Shenzhen and Zhuhai, the generally pro-reform journal *Sociology* also admitted that "before becoming special zones, violent crime was rare," but now unsavoury elements there were mimicking "underworld social organizations in Hong Kong and Macao."<sup>64</sup> "Abominable phenomena... eliminated since the founding of New China are beginning to surface," the former public security chief, Ruan Chongwu, argued, as a "floating population" now easily moves into the cities to engage in drug traffic, smuggling, and "child abduction."<sup>65</sup> Combined with disturbances such as labour disputes and student demonstrations, the social "stability" valued by conservative leaders—and most Chinese—suddenly seemed threatened.<sup>66</sup>

The revival under the reforms of long dormant petty capitalist values was also a target of conservative criticism. Especially disturbing was the growing dog-eat-dog mentality, particularly among rural youth, encouraged by the commercial economy and reflected in the widespread belief that "if a person is not underhanded he will not grow rich." Concern was also voiced over the increasing social influence of unsavoury and sleazy people: speculators, middlemen,

61. Emphasis added. *Yunnan ribao*, 4 April 1986. Also, Xinhua 19 December 1985, in *JPRS*, 20 January 1986. An early experimenter in enterprise reform, Yunnan published conservative positions rather infrequently.

62. Xinhua, 10 October 1986, in *JPRS*, 7 November 1986.

63. *Faxue (Jurisprudence)* (Shanghai), No. 11, November 1985, in *JPRS*, 11 April 1986, p. 27.

64. *Shehui*, No. 4, 20 August 1985, in *JPRS*, 25 April 1986. The problem was intensified by the "considerable number of enterprises [which] have either eliminated the ideological-political and public security structures, or have cut down on the staff..."

65. *Liaowang* (Overseas Edit.), No. 18, 5 May 1986, and *Gansu ribao*, 1 April 1986. Such concerns were reinforced by blatant drug use and sale by foreign residents and Central Asians in major cities, and the tremendous increase in geographical mobility encouraged by the reforms. In January 1986 Deng Xiaoping vented his frustration over the inability to punish such offenders—"[W]hy can't we legally increase the penalties?"—which apparently led to the September 1986 "Regulations on Offences Against Public Order" with stiff penalties for prostitution and drug related activities. *Shierda yilai*, p. 891 and Xinhua, 5 September 1986.

66. Anti-Japanese student demonstrations in Beijing and protests against nuclear weapons testing and occupation by the PLA in Urumqi, Xinjiang, broke out in December 1985. Agence France Presse (hereafter AFP), 2 January 1986.

black marketeers, and “merchants [who] are always cunning” and “rich people [who] are always cruel.”<sup>67</sup> Acting on such “ugly notions as harming others to benefit themselves and engaging in foul trickery and false accusations,” these “dregs” of Chinese society had so exploited the new opportunities that the common man now openly questioned the compatibility of “competition with morality.”<sup>68</sup> Whereas the average Chinese citizen obediently “follows the rules,” the reforms had allowed the “wrong” type of people, including ethnic minorities, to “make huge profits in a dubious manner.” The new wealth was systematically weakening personal integrity and the “national character,” conservatives warned, reducing individual behaviour to a competitive financial calculus and creating a “dictatorship of money.” Beneficiaries of the rural specialized household system now wanted to “live on interest,” while “tax evasion” and “arbitrary price hikes” by new entrepreneurs spawned popular complaints against excessive “private power.”<sup>69</sup> Workers too were more disputatious in making wage demands and fighting for bonuses, while even employees in institutions designed to “serve the people” (e.g. public health facilities) were seeking “personal profit” by overcharging patients and “rejecting peasants” for medical care.<sup>70</sup> Using organic metaphors popularized in the Cultural Revolution to warn against the infection of Chinese society by the “flies and germs” of capitalism and western individualism, conservatives claimed that reform had contributed to the breakdown of the work ethic and public service ideal.<sup>71</sup> Finally, China’s growing international dependency fostered by the open-door policy was singled out for criticism, especially by anti-Japanese student demonstrators in 1985. Reacting to the flood of imports, particularly from Japan, the press warned that

67. *Faxue* (Shanghai), No. 11, November 1985, *Renmin ribao*, 3 May 1986, and *China Daily Business Week Supplement*, 30 July 1986, which further noted the large urban black market in grain ration coupons for non-resident construction workers. Also, *Shaanxi ribao*, 21 June 1986, in *FBIS-CHI*, 11 July 1986.

68. Shaanxi Provincial Radio Service, 27 March 1986, in *JPRS*, 28 April 1986; and *Renmin ribao*, 10 December 1985, in *JPRS*, 28 April 1986.

69. *Nongmin ribao*, 4 June 1986, in *FBIS-CHI*, 30 June 1986; and *Xinjiang ribao*, 14 March 1986. CCP concern with the “dark satanic mills” which have sprouted up in rural areas and the power of the “big boss” in privately-run establishments is reported in *AW*, 23 November 1986, pp. 56–57. Fujian’s former pro-reform Party secretary, Chen Guangyi, admitted to “the people’s fear of change” and their “lack of a commodity concept.” *Ming pao* (Hong Kong), 13 October 1986, p. 8. Other sources, however, denied reforms were responsible for price rises. Henan Provincial Radio Services, 14 November 1985, in *JPRS*, 17 December 1985. I detected considerable animosity (and perhaps jealousy) by Han residents in Beijing towards Uighur street vendors, who were even accused of selling “human flesh” as shish kebab.

70. *Harbin ribao*, 29 May 1986, in *JPRS*, 17 October 1986; and *Xinhua*, 18 October 1986; “litigation mania” and the “philosophy of all for the individual” were also criticized. *Guizhou ribao*, 2 June 1986, p. 3. Also, Gold, “After comradeship,” p. 664.

71. Such concerns also resonate with China’s Confucian tradition of “impartial public service” by the bureaucratic elite. See John W. Dardess, *Confucianism and Autocracy: Professional Elites in the Founding of the Ming Dynasty* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), p. 108.

the country was "selling its soul" to foreign influence so much so that, students asserted, the "price of the reforms is too high."<sup>72</sup>

*The Revival of "Feudalism."* Conservatives also believed the reforms were reinvigorating China's "feudal culture" in the countryside. The evaporation of the CCP and state administrative apparatus in some areas had led to renewed "superstition," "clan associations," "ancestral sacrifice," and even "secret societies" that "attacked socialism" and "tried to 'change the regime' . . . by planning armed rebellion."<sup>73</sup> Such evidence, if true, clearly demonstrated that the CCP had reduced rural bureaucratic controls too much, especially on the "vulgar popular literature" and "knight-errant novels" which encouraged such "politically reactionary" actions.<sup>74</sup> But even where the restoration of "feudalism" did not directly threaten Party authority, the press emphasized the destructive social and economic effects of reform, such as in Hunan where wealthy peasants purportedly "raised funds for restoring demolished temples rather than undertaking collective welfare activities."<sup>75</sup> The social and economic accomplishments of the communist revolution in the countryside were rapidly evaporating as evidenced by the "new illiteracy" and the revival of "extraordinary consumption such as weddings, funerals, employing geomancers, and having gambling sessions. . . ."<sup>76</sup> If increased income simply refeudalized China, then, conservatives suggested, reform should be curtailed.

### *Grain Shortages and Over-consumption*

"Socialist humanism opposes the worship of money."

— Wang Ruoshui

Despite apparent economic success, orthodox leaders criticized the impact of reform on grain production and urban consumption patterns. Without advocating a full revival of Maoist rural policy, Party officials in conservative strongholds, such as the Beijing Party Committee, reacted to the shortfall in the 1986 planned output in grain by criticizing "the neglect of grain production and collective

72. *Nongmin ribao*, 27 May 1986, in *FBIS-CHI*, 6 June 1986; and *Die Zeit*, 1 August 1986, in *JPRS* 18 December 1986, p. 38.

73. *Shaanxi ribao*, 9 August 1986, in *JPRS*, 21 October 1986; Henan Provincial Radio Service, 12 January 1987; and *Nongmin ribao* 27 June 1986, in *FBIS-CHI* 16 July 1986. *Hongqi*, No. 19, 1 October 1986, p. 46, also warned rural cadres against belief in "demons and gods" instead of "scientific Marxism." Culture Minister Wang Meng argued, however, that the reforms would eliminate, not strengthen, China's "feudal" traditions. *Zhongguo Xinwen She*, 20 July 1986.

74. *Xuexi yu yanjiu (Study and Research)*, No. 3, 5 March 1986; and *Renmin ribao*, 14 November 1985.

75. Hunan Provincial Radio Service, 30 March 1986, in *JPRS*, 25 April 1986.

76. *Hongqi*, No. 14, 15 July 1986; and No. 21, 1 November 1986, in *JPRS*, 16 January 1987, p. 15, which also claimed that in Hebei "more than 50 per cent of the people belonging to rich and specialized households have been involved in gambling."



accumulation.” Responding to grave concerns that “grain shortages will lead to social disorder,” Heilongjiang officials announced a new provincial policy for “stabilizing” grain production in 1986.<sup>77</sup> National leaders also insisted, Li Xiannian emphasized, on “protecting grain production,” a view reinforced by the administrator of the national grain coupon system since 1955, Yue Yongji, who publicly questioned the adequacy of current grain output plans and the validity of recent grain production figures.<sup>78</sup> Finally, Chen Yun’s views were expressed through republication of his 1950s’ warning that the development of “cash crop production at the expense of grain” could cause shortages in grain supply and create a “tense” situation in the market.<sup>79</sup> Although supporters of agricultural reform took issue with Chen by reiterating the benefits of recent structural changes in the rural economy, especially increased side-line production, *Red Flag* quickly defended a more cautious policy.<sup>80</sup> “[Since] agricultural production cannot be restored in three to five years if it suffers a serious setback,” the journal emphasized, “we should [not] ignore its fundamental role just because of the diminishing of the proportion of agricultural output value.”<sup>81</sup>

This alarm over “scarcity” in grain supply reinforced the conservatives’ general disdain for the excessive consumerism encouraged by the western – particularly American – economic model. Exhibiting the conservative preference for investment over consumption, the press republished Chen Yun’s earlier warning that a “hopeless” financial situation is created when “production barely offsets consumption.” *Red Flag* also castigated “some comrades” for “thinking a high consumption level could stimulate the rapid development of pro-

77. *Beijing ribao*, 5 September 1986, in *FBIS-CHI*, 18 September 1986, p. R1; Heilongjiang Provincial Radio Service, 16 June 1986; also, *Ningxia ribao*, 21 May 1986 and *Liaoning ribao*, 28 January 1986, in *JPRS*, 11 March 1986. Warnings that urban commercial opportunities were encouraging “younger and skilled workers to flow away from the countryside . . .” were also expressed. *Nongmin jingji wenti* (*Agroeconomic Problems*), No. 12 (1985), transl. in *Inside China Mainland*, April 1986, p. 21. A high-level Party intellectual testified to the political conservatism of the Beijing City Committee. *Interview*, autumn 1986.

78. Hubei Provincial Radio Service, 4 November 1985, in *JPRS*, 17 December 1985; and *China Daily Business Weekly Supplement*, 30 July 1986.

79. *Xinhua*, 14 June 1986, in *FBIS-CHI*, 23 June 1986.

80. *Xinhua*, 13 August 1986; and *Hongqi*, No. 17, 1 September 1986, in *JPRS*, 15 October 1986.

81. “Leading cadres” – perhaps an allusion to Hu Yaobang – were also criticized for “assigning agriculture to a secondary position . . . during the changes in the rural production structure.” Qinghai Provincial Radio Service, 9 June 1986, in *FBIS-CHI*, 11 June 1986, p. T3. *Liaowang*, No. 6 (1986) similarly warned that the recent “drop in agricultural investment” reflected the neglect of “long-term farm projects.” China’s apparent inability to import substantial grain supplies because of foreign exchange shortages contributed to concern over domestic grain production, reiterated by Zhao Ziyang at the October 1987 13th Party Congress.

duction.”<sup>82</sup> This strategy was especially destructive after 1984, when the failure to counteract “the expansion of [industrial] accumulation” with a contraction of consumption produced a “marked imbalance between market demand and supply.” China, unlike America, could not borrow indefinitely to live beyond its means, especially since many Chinese did not yet have “enough to eat and wear.”<sup>83</sup> Although many reformists sought to emulate the high consumption, high-technology economies of the west and East Asia, conservatives emphasized the basic needs of China’s poor. Contrary to the glorification of the “10,000 *yuan*” households, *Red Flag* claimed that “[most] peasants are far from rich . . . and tens of millions of people still lack [basic necessities].”<sup>84</sup> Socialist China could not sacrifice the interests of the poor to consumer mania, nor could the state condone policies leading to excessive economic “polarization.”<sup>85</sup>

Scattered press commentary also claimed that the reforms had intensified, not solved, old bureaucratic problems and economic irrationalities, especially in the industrial sector. Perhaps most disturbing was the tendency of China’s deeply entrenched bureaucrats to protect long-standing privileges by claiming to “preserve reform.” *Ningxia Daily* complained that authorities actually hesitated to crack down on corruption and economic crime because “those accused wave a banner of ‘reform’ and ‘invigoration’” obviously hoping for

82. Xinhua, 26 January and 14 June 1986, in *FBIS-CHI*, 23 June 1986; also, *Hongqi*, No. 1, 1 January 1986, in *JPRS*, 13 February 1986. According to Li Ximing: “If we blindly stimulate consumption regardless of the present economic conditions, we will probably artificially destroy the balance between the social demand and social supply. . . .” *Hongqi*, No. 11, 1 June 1986, in *JPRS*, 6 August 1986, p. 31. Recent anti-consumerism mirrored Mao Zedong’s Great Leap Forward critique of “individual material interest . . . one house . . . one automobile . . . [and] one television. . . .” Quoted in Lowell Dittmer, *China’s Continuous Revolution: The Post-Liberation Epoch* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), p. 41.

83. *Hongqi*, No. 17, 1 September 1986 and No. 1, 1 January 1986, which also warned that China “must work hard for another 30 to 50 years before it can approach the advanced nations’ standard.” Zhu Houze argued, in contrast, that China’s debt problem was overstated. *China Daily*, 11 August 1986.

84. *Hongqi*, No. 17, 1 September 1986, and *Xizang ribao*, 22 May 1986, in *JPRS*, 17 October 1986, p. 64, which in claiming “we gave too much publicity to ‘10,000-*yuan* households’” (a criticism Chen Yun also voiced in September 1985), called, instead, for “those who are already rich to help those who have yet become rich.” For Chen’s September speech, see *Inside China Mainland*, November 1985, p. 19.

85. The State Council addressed the issue of extreme poverty by allocating special loans in November 1986 for “basically solving the people’s food and clothing problems in 5 years time,” a theme Zhao Ziyang also stressed at the 13th Party Congress. *Renmin ribao*, 20 June 1986, in *FBIS-CHI*, 26 June 1986; and Zhao, “Report,” p. 23. Although *Renmin ribao* (2 June 1986, in *FBIS-CHI*, 13 June 1986, p. K4) noted the growing “income gap” in the countryside, *Hongqi* (No. 1, 1 January 1986) took a surprisingly pro-reform line by arguing that the gap between the rich and poor is “between those who have become well off and . . . those who have extricated themselves earlier or later from poverty, rather than polarization.”

protection.<sup>86</sup> Despite the highly publicized “retirements” of government administrators in 1982, several sources noted that the state bureaucracy had actually grown. “The phenomena of setting up more organizations, recruiting more staff, and indiscriminately promoting cadres have re-emerged over the past two years,” Wang Zhaoguo emphasized. “Compared with the situation before reform, the number of our organizations has increased.”<sup>87</sup> Rather than a leaner administration and a more productive economy, reform had expanded the opportunities for official aggrandizement through the continued growth of bureaucratic sinecures for urban elites and children of high-level cadres that especially antagonized the common man.<sup>88</sup> Finally, since industrial reforms had not produced the anticipated increase in worker productivity, some enterprises even “put aside the ‘contract system’ and [went] back to . . . ‘eating from a common big pot.’”<sup>89</sup>

### *The Conservative Solution*

“The west is not going to change China.”

— Li Peng

These problems led conservative Party leaders in 1985–86 to advocate principles of self-sacrifice and collectivism to counter the economic goals and underlying social-political values of reform. Invoking the “spirit of Yan’an,” Peng Zhen, Deng Liqun, and other conservative leaders challenged the utilitarian philosophies of “individual gain” with personal testaments to the virtues of “self-reliance”

86. *Ningxia ribao*, 27 May 1986, in *FBIS-CHI*, 23 June 1986. Pro-reform journals argued, however, that it was the successfully reformed industrial enterprises which were being heavily investigated “with apparent desire to find fault.” Conservative cadres were also accused of infringing on the “legal rights of specialized households” in the countryside. *Jingji ribao* (*Economic Daily*), 3 June 1986, in *FBIS-CHI*, 16 June 1986; and *Anhui ribao*, 6 October 1984.

87. *Hongqi*, No. 17, 1 September 1986. Li Peng and Peng Zhen also criticized the exponential growth of superfluous companies under reform policies, which pro-reformers, like Shanghai’s *World Economic Herald* editor, Qin Benli, and even Deng Xiaoping, have also criticized, especially when high-level cadres promote relatives into company positions. *Chengming*, No. 107, September 1986; *Ching pao*, No. 9, September 1986; *Ming pao*, 30 April 1986; and *Gansu ribao*, 16 March 1986, in *JPRS*, 7 July 1986, p. 104. One-third of all provincial Party secretaries and two-thirds of the top 1,400 provincial government officials were replaced in 1982–83. But Chen Yizi claims there were still 20,700,000 cadres in China in 1986, a cadre-to-population ratio of 2.7%, which is actually well below Hungary’s 6%. “Zhengzhi tizhi.”

88. See *Zhongguo fazhi bao* (*China Legal News*), 25 August 1985, in *JPRS*, 26 November 1986, p. 37, which also condemned “the seemingly ubiquitous self-aggrandizing power of some organizations and individuals.”

89. *Dazhong ribao* (*Masses’ Daily*), 17 June 1986, in *FBIS-CHI*, 2 July 1986; and *Zhongguo qingnian bao*, 11 January 1986. Andrew G. Walder documents the stagnation of industrial labour productivity under the reforms and the recent high rate of bankruptcies by private companies. “Wage Reform and the web of factory interests,” *CQ*, No. 109 (March 1987), p. 26; also, *AW*, 23 November 1986, p. 57.

and "hard work."<sup>90</sup> "I will act in the interest of the country, even if it means death. And I will never act for personal benefit," Deng Liquan promised in an appeal to the selfless political virtue popularized in the Cultural Revolution, but also embodied in the traditional ideal of "all for the public interest, nothing for oneself" (*dagong wusi*).<sup>91</sup> Since young cadres especially needed to learn this lesson, Li Xiannian insisted they "accept the assistance of veteran comrades in achieving the communist ideal." Exploiting the 50th anniversary of the Long March, Yang Shangkun also cited the "moral strength" and "selfless [devotion] to the public interest" of the Red Army as a model for Party members and intellectuals now excessively concerned with personal "life style."<sup>92</sup> Army leaders were even instructed by a Central Military Commission document to "lead the way in rectifying the Party style," just like Lin Biao's 1960s campaign to "Learn from the PLA" had done.<sup>93</sup> And in the most blatantly Maoist tone, provincial leaders in Qinghai and Ningxia consistently cited the "spirit of the Foolish Old Man who moved the mountain" to overcome cadre "selfishness."<sup>94</sup> Party members must be "the first persons to suffer and the last persons to enjoy," Heilongjiang's Sun Weiben insisted.<sup>95</sup> Confronted with enormous problems of infrastructural backwardness, poverty and illiteracy, China still needed ascetic "iron men" motivated by visions of collective progress, not individual profit, to accomplish socialist development.<sup>96</sup>

In this spirit of renewed "communist ideals," Party members and students were exhorted to make personal commitments and sacrifices. While Hu Qili advised Party committees to "dispatch some talented

90. *Hongqi*, No. 18, 15 September 1986 and *Xinhua*, 13 June 1986. Also, *Hongqi*, No. 17, 1 September 1986, where Wang Zhaoguo invoked the Daqing model for developing industry.

91. *Anhui ribao*, 22 June 1986, in *FBIS-CHI*, 10 July 1986. Popular appeal of Party leaders devoted to collective interests in rural China is documented by Richard Madsen, *Morality and Power in a Chinese Village* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), pp. 36 and 229. Social commitment and obligation (*yiwu*) were also stressed in previous campaigns, such as tree planting in 1981. Lester Ross, "Obligatory tree planting: the role of campaigns in policy implementation in post-Mao China," in Lampton, *Policy Implementation*, pp. 232-39.

92. Hubei Provincial Radio Service, 17 November 1985 and *Xinhua*, 22 October 1986, in *FBIS-CHI*, 24 October 1986. Yang's speech illustrated the great contrast between the "heroic" past and the "degenerate" present undoubtedly felt by some conservatives. Also, see *Wen zhai bao*, No. 297, 23 March 1986, in *JPRS*, 18 August 1986, which noted that "intellectuals' appeals for improving their living conditions have become more vocal...."

93. Emphasis added. *Zhejiang ribao*, 23 January 1986, in *JPRS*, 21 April 1986. Part of the campaign to promote the PLA as the "National Model of New Morality," this article also stressed the leading role of the Party committee, however.

94. *Fendou* (Harbin), No. 7, 1 July 1986; *Ningxia ribao*, 19 February 1986, in *JPRS*, 24 April 1986, p. 41; and Qinghai Provincial Radio Service, 7 November 1986, in *FBIS-CHI*, 12 November 1986. *Sichuan ribao*, 17 July 1986, in contrast, attacked the view that since "[e]veryone is individualistic, it's impossible to serve the people."

95. *Heilongjiang ribao*, 26 November 1985, in *JPRS* 11 March 1986.

96. Examining Shanxi's land development and forestry problems, *Hongqi*, No. 21, 1 November 1986, invoked the Dazhai model of economic self-reliance and popular mobilization to promote tree-planting and anti-erosion work, which, the journal insisted, would allow the state to "spend as little money as possible" on such projects.

people to mountain areas," Wang Zhaoguo urged graduates of the Central Party School to go to backward areas where "the question of food and clothing has not been solved."<sup>97</sup> Students "volunteering" for labour and teaching service in poor regions was also publicized, though a time limit on such work was emphasized.<sup>98</sup> But just to ensure that university students got the message, Li Peng announced stricter ideological requirements stressing "patriotism" and "communist education" for studying abroad, while Beida and Jiaotong University (Shanghai) instituted tough political controls in the classroom.<sup>99</sup> Purported mass complaints that students "do not want to contribute more to the country" and that the "stinking 9th category" (i.e. the radical leftist term for intellectuals) is "pushing the workers and peasants out of the way," necessitated that these comparatively privileged groups recently courted by the CCP renew their commitment to socialist goals.<sup>100</sup> To avoid further alienation from the masses, intellectuals must, conservatives demanded, subordinate individualism to national interests.

*Reviving Ideological Orthodoxy.* Party conservatives also intensified "ideological and political work" to rebuild the "revolutionary spirit" of CCP members and combat "bourgeois liberalism." Emboldened by Deng Xiaoping's 1985 order that all cadres study Marxism, conservatives reaffirmed ideological orthodoxy in countering those who "misinterpret the policy of [a hundred schools] as liberalization."<sup>101</sup> "Senior cadres" were also encouraged by veteran theoreticians like

97. *Hongqi*, No. 17, 1 September 1986 and Hubei Provincial Radio Service, 14 September 1986, in *FBIS-CHI*, 19 September 1986, p. K30. The minister of civil affairs estimated in January 1985 that about 70 million rural people lived in desperate poverty and required state aid. Cited in Carl Riskin, *China's Political Economy: The Quest for Development Since 1949* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 308.

98. *Xinhua*, 30 June and 19 July 1986. Provincial leaders in the north-east and south-west complained about the dearth of technically trained personnel in remote mountain areas and the recent absence of volunteers to reclaim land and cut timber—work formerly performed by sent-down youth and inmates of labour reform camps. Terzani, *The Forbidden Poor*, pp. 92–93 and *Nongye jingji yu jishu* (*Agricultural Economics and Technology*), 25 February 1987; reprinted in *Gongchan dang* (*Communist Party*) (Beijing), People's University, March 1987.

99. *Zhongguo gaodeng jiaoyu* (*China's Higher Education*), No. 7, 13 July 1986, in *JPRS*, 12 December 1986, pp. 1–2, *Wen huibao*, 9 October 1985, in *JPRS*, 25 April 1986, pp. 59–60, and *Renmin ribao*, 27 September 1985. Professors at Beida were made "responsible for their classes' ideological and political work." *Zhongguo jiaoyu bao* (*China Education News*), 8 April 1986, in *JPRS*, 27 August 1986, p. 73. Such political control measures did not, however, prevent student protests at Jiaotong in December 1986, which apparently led Li Peng to demand compulsory service in the countryside or factories by students who, Li claimed, are "divorced from practical experience." *New York Times*, 29 March 1987.

100. *Guangming ribao*, 19 June 1986; *Lilun yu shijian*, Nos. 21 and 22, 15 November 1985, in *JPRS*, 16 June 1986; and *Jiefang ribao*, 21 May 1986. In contrast, *Hongqi*, No. 12, 16 June 1986, criticized the continuing influence of "'leftist' biases held over from the Cultural Revolution against intellectuals."

101. *Jiefang ribao*, 29 January 1986, in *JPRS*, 2 May 1986, and *Liaowang*, 13 January 1986, in *JPRS*, 24 April 1986; also *Xuexi yu yanjiu*, No. 3, 5 March 1986, which complained that many "university graduates are disdainful of political work...."

Yang Xianzhen to concentrate on "theoretical studies," aided by ideological cadres now lauded in the press as "engineers of the human soul" modelled on Ai Siqi.<sup>102</sup> On the national level, Deng Liqun, Li Peng and Yu Qiuli strongly advocated ideological re-education, while Party committees in Shaanxi, Gansu, Tibet, Beijing and Shanghai promoted institutional measures to strengthen theoretical rectitude, perhaps as a model for the Party Centre.<sup>103</sup> Although some leaders defensively suggested that ideological and political work should advance reform, others cited Marxist orthodoxy to critique reform policies. Heilongjiang's Sun Weiben thus congratulated a Harbin engineer for making an "analysis of the capitalist world from a Marxist viewpoint" that avoided being "misled by [its] developed economy and advanced technologies..."<sup>104</sup> And in an even more explicit challenge to reform, a Jiangxi publication praised Joseph Stalin for destroying "village capitalism" with "collectivization" and resisting "international capitalist influences" during Soviet industrialization.<sup>105</sup> Although noting the Russian leader's support for vigorous foreign trade, the journal emphasized his reliance on such "internal factors" as the "socialist enthusiasm of the country's workers and peasants," in terms diametrically opposed to China's current development strategy.

Ideological retrenchment also entailed tighter controls on literature and the press, and criticism of the intellectual pluralism favoured by China's "all-out westernizers." While the pro-reform *China Youth Daily* advocated a "relaxed" atmosphere in ideological work and condemned continued leftist influence among Party propagandists,

102. *Liaowang*, No. 44, 4 November 1985, in *JPRS*, 20 January 1986, and *Xuexi yu yanjiu*, No. 3, 5 March 1986, in *JPRS*, 7 July 1986. Similar to the 1983 "anti-spiritual pollution campaign," these criticisms were perhaps directed at Hu Yaobang for his purported distortion of Maoist theory discussed above.

103. See *Xinhua*, 10 September 1986 for Yu's and Deng's hard-hitting speeches on ideological guidance of literature. *Shaanxi ribao*, 15 February 1986, in *JPRS*, 6 June 1986, p. 82, proposed that "one leading cadre... take charge of ideological and political work," and *Gansu ribao*, 26 April 1986, in *JPRS*, 19 August 1986, p. 75, suggested that "the provincial standing committee deliberate on ideological-political work at least once every six months..." As the weakest link in ideological and political work, rural Party organs were a major target of the ongoing rectification, especially after January 1986. *Hebei ribao*, 13 April 1986, in *JPRS*, 27 May 1986, p. 56; and *Shaanxi ribao*, 6 March 1986. Despite the complaints against inadequate theoretical training, Beijing Party School officials claim their curriculum now includes considerably less material on conventional "ideological and political work" in favour of economics and other subjects more appropriate to reform. Interview, Beijing Party School, December 1986.

104. *Heilongjiang ribao*, 28 June 1986, in *JPRS*, 18 August 1986, pp. 49-57. In an apparent appeal to cadres and workers in the industrial north-east who have complained about the "poor quality of imported machines" and the excessive automation which "reduced job opportunities," Sun also praised the leaders of the "self-reliant" Daqing oil fields. Terzani, *The Forbidden Door*, p. 83. Similar warnings against succumbing to the lures of western technology (and culture) were voiced by the PLA. "Central Military Committee decision on army political work," in *JPRS*, 15 May 1987, pp. 79-80.

105. *Shehui kexue* (Jiangxi), No. 6, 15 December 1985, in *JPRS*, 17 March 1986, pp. 42-50. The appearance of such a conservative article in a publication from generally pro-reform Jiangxi, indicates the lack of homogeneous political views in the provinces.

*Red Flag* defended the conservative model of a monolithic culture.<sup>106</sup> Arguing "there is only one truth," the CCP's theoretical organ also insisted that "freedom of speech, literary creation, and publication" must adhere to "the four basic principles." In an appeal to anti-intellectualism that even supporters of Hundred Flowers admit has a popular base in China, conservative leaders attacked unorthodox writers and intellectuals, particularly Liu Zaifu and Ma Ding.<sup>107</sup> Yu Qiuli demanded that writers follow "Marxism and Mao Zedong Thought" instead of "humanism," while Hu Qiaomu reportedly attacked Ma Ding for the distorted "trend of social thought" underlying his criticism of contemporary Chinese economic research.<sup>108</sup> Just as "commodity exchange" relations had "invaded" the CCP and the PLA, so too, conservatives claimed, was soulless commercialism infecting the literary and journalistic worlds. "Popular literature" was "vulgar culture" written solely for the "purpose of making money" with no regard for "the heroic struggle in our real lives," which is why Shaanxi officials demanded that "writers and artists take up part-time jobs" to learn from the masses.<sup>109</sup> Writers had "negated the Yan'an Talks" and shown insufficient "social responsibility," a view Wang Ruoshui partially embraced when criticizing literary workers for "abus[ing] the freedom of creation" and "pandering to the bad taste of readers" just to make money.<sup>110</sup> Although Hu Qili defended writers' literary freedom in April 1986 under the rubric of a "Hundred Schools," other sources rejected

106. *Zhongguo qingnian bao*, 29 April 1986, in *JPRS*, 10 July 1986, p. 43 and 30 May 1986, and, *Hongqi* No. 17, 1 September 1986; also *Gongren ribao* (*Worker's Daily*), 5 September 1986, and *Wen huibao*, 25 May 1986, which further lamented the long-standing influence of the leftist slogan "take class struggle as the key link" on ideological work. For an analysis of the conservatives' "holistic, totalistic view of culture that regards intellectual ferment as a serious threat to the political system," see Carol Lee Hamrin's concluding chapter in Merle Goldman (ed.), *China's Intellectuals and the State: In Search of a New Relationship* (Cambridge, Mass.: The Council on East Asian Studies/Harvard University, 1987), pp. 278–301.

107. Yu Guangyuan noted that "the role of public opinion may influence the policy-makers and make them waiver in their determination to carry out the 'double hundred policy,'" which, in fact, occurred in 1956 when, Yu claims, the populace supposedly feared writings "antagonistic to the popular or even ruling thought in society." *Xinhua*, 4 August 1986, in *FBIS-CHI*, 6 August 1986.

108. AFP, Hong Kong, 11 September 1986 and *Pai hsing*, No. 19, 1 May 1986, in *JPRS*, 7 July 1986. Positive foreign reaction to Ma Ding's 2 November 1985 *Gongren ribao* article apparently put liberal supporters on the defensive. *Shijie jingji daobao* (*World Economic Herald*), 28 April 1986. Hunan authorities tried to refurbish Mao Zedong's "thinking on literature and art" by publishing his "theoretical essays" critical of "bourgeois liberalization." *Hongqi*, No. 19, 1 October 1986.

109. *Xuexi yu yanjiu*, No. 3, 5 March 1986 and *Shaanxi ribao*, 26 October 1986, in *FBIS-CHI*, 13 November 1986. Recent public opinion surveys in Shenyang indicate popular belief that Chinese society is becoming "too money oriented." *New York Times*, 29 November 1987.

110. *Hongqi*, No. 11, 1 June 1986, in *JPRS*, 6 August 1986; *Xuexi yu yanjiu*, in *JPRS*, 6 August 1986; *Wen huibao*, 12 June 1986, in *JPRS*, 4 December 1986, pp. 78 and 83; and *Faxue*, No. 8, August 1986. Zhu Houze, in contrast, opposed coming down hard on unorthodox opinion (*China Daily*, 11 August 1986), and even Deng Liqun took a surprisingly liberal position by advocating the translation of "all the world's noted works [into] Chinese."

intellectual liberalism by repeating Mao Zedong's dictum that "the so-called 'hundred schools' is basically only two: Marxism and non-Marxism..."<sup>111</sup> Fearful that the relaxation on publications was creating an autonomous public opinion antagonistic to the CCP, Party and state officials in early 1986 banned plays, literary works, and "unregistered publishers" and "reorganized" many journals.<sup>112</sup> Finally, *Red Flag* used the "double hundred principle" to accuse more liberal journals of "refusing to publish articles of different views on the grounds of being 'orthodox,' 'conservative,' and 'having nothing new to say.'"<sup>113</sup>

### *Conclusion: Reform and the Debate Over Culture*

"We cannot use the 'natural rights of man'... We can only use western technology."

— Mao Zedong

Throughout 1985–86 China's orthodox leaders waged a propaganda campaign against the reform programme that anticipated the subsequent attack on "bourgeois liberalization" which followed Hu Yaobang's January 1987 resignation. On a purely partisan level, conservatives defended vital political and economic interests tied to their bureaucratic bailiwicks of "ideological and political work" and the economic planning apparatus. But conservatives also appealed to a deep-seated fear, apparently shared by several moderate leaders and the general public, that reform has eroded the moral integrity of Chinese society and culture. Whereas many intellectuals in the May Fourth tradition favour "boldly importing advanced cultural achievements in the world," conservatives aim to preserve the puritanical, yet disciplined, "socialist mass culture" created since 1949.<sup>114</sup> Critical of iconoclastic intellectuals for "having eaten but not digested foreign things," orthodox leaders yearn for a society with advanced technology and rational organization, but dominated by such virtues as loyalty and selfless devotion to the nation, and a fundamental

111. *Qun yan*, No. 4, 7 April 1986, in *JPRS*, 19 August 1986. *Wen huibao*, 16 May 1986, quickly retorted: "When we say 'a hundred schools contend,' we mean a hundred schools, not 'two schools.'"

112. See *Zhongguo baokan*, 19 March 1986, for the CCP Secretariat's announcement "tightening up the screening and approving processes" for the press and Xinhua's 18 January 1986 statement on the banning of unregistered publishers by the Culture and Finance Ministries. *Chengming*, No. 92, 1 June 1985, suggested that the 1985 ban on local "tabloids" (*xiaobao*), which numbered in the hundreds, was probably enacted to "oppose reform," indicating that Hu Yaobang's policies were already under heavy pressure.

113. *Hongqi*, No. 11, 1 June 1986.

114. See, *Jiefang ribao*, 29 January 1986, in *JPRS*, 2 May 1986, and *Guangming ribao*, 7 June 1986, which in drawing explicit parallels to the May Fourth Movement, argued against the "psychology of fear" that "indiscriminately negates and rejects western culture." For more on the debate over Chinese culture which has accompanied the reforms, see *Renmin ribao*, 11 July 1986, in *JPRS*, 18 August 1986, pp. 15–17, and *Nanfang ribao*, 14 September 1986.



cultural conservatism antithetical to liberalism or individual liberty. The utilitarian model of “economic man” embedded in market principles violates the conservative (and traditional) ideal of a community uncorrupted by money exchange relations and commercialism, and free of the obsessive individualism and ill-discipline which, conservatives believe, has virtually destroyed the organic solidarity of western society.<sup>115</sup> Trained in highly technical fields (often in the Soviet Union) and apparently attracted to alternative socialist developmental models in East Germany and North Korea, Party conservatives want to separate modern technique from western culture—a vision of the country’s development that has informed Chinese thinking from the formulation of the “*tiyong* rationalization” in the mid 19th century to Mao Zedong’s “Sinification” of Marxism–Leninism in the 1940s.<sup>116</sup> Considering the historical resonance of this cultural nationalism, the impact of the conservatives’ 1985–86 assault on the reforms will probably be more than episodic as policy-makers remain divided over the scope and pace of China’s economic and political transformation.<sup>117</sup>

115. Hu Qiaomu’s alleged criticism of Zhao Ziyang for “acting ‘like a *shikuai* [i.e. money-minded and greedy] merchant’” is an example of this view. *AW*, 10 May 1987, p. 26. The recent fear of AIDS (*aizi bing*) spreading to China from the west strengthens the conservatives’ organic imagery to condemn “open-door” policies.

116. Similar visions informed early 20th-century German “reactionary modernists,” who also wanted to reconcile technical modernity and rational organization with anti-western sentiments. See, Jeffrey Herf, *Reactionary Modernism: Technology, Culture, and Politics in Weimar and the Third Reich* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp. 1–48. Li Peng, Qiao Shi and Wang Zhaoguo, and the provincial Party secretaries of Guangxi, Liaoning, Xinjiang, Qinghai, Shanghai, and Beijing, were all trained in such technical fields as the power industry and steel production and have had extensive contacts with East Germany and North Korea.

117. The strong representation of conservative leaders, especially Li Peng, Qiao Shi, Sun Weiben and Li Ximing, on top policy-making bodies elected by the 13th Party Congress held in October 1987, and the attention Zhao Ziyang gave in his report to many conservative positions, such as the importance of grain production, fears of over-consumption, and opposition to liberal political reforms, signal continued influence of the conservative agenda on China’s future policies, despite the retirement of both Deng Liqun and He Jingzhi.