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## MAO IN PERSPECTIVE

By Jack Gray

### Introduction

The following is the full version of Jack Gray's valedictory article on Mao Zedong, written as a summary of the biography he was unable to finish and in which he also made clear his belief that breadth of study and participation in a wide variety of activities, particularly in the community, are an essential part of what makes a truly effective 'academic'.

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It was my intention, in retirement, to write a political biography of Mao Zedong. I reckoned without old age. Time's winged chariot is

now clipping at my heels. Prudence suggests that I should summarise my hypotheses on Mao, so that if they prove interesting enough some younger colleague might take them up.

During the world-wide student rebellion of the late 1960s I went on a lecture tour of the United States, with a paper on Mao's economic ideas, suggesting that they were interesting and by no means idiosyncratic. Everywhere I went I was enthusiastically mobbed by radical students. My paper was subsequently translated into over 40 languages.

This was a startling experience for a sober member of the British Liberal Party. My own political standpoint was even further from that of the radical students, who seemed to think Mao's ideology was some sort of new divine revelation, than it was from that of the Cold Warriors.

This experience thrust me into introspective mode. The first thing that was clear to me was that my paper differed from others because, in the first place, I had chosen to emphasise facts to which others had paid little attention. In the second place I had refused to follow the line which by then had become all too common;

hypothesis, Mao is an ideologue; research, read his ideological statements; conclusion, Mao is an ideologue. It was by then perfectly obviously that Mao's economic alternative had been first elaborated first in documents which used little or no ideological language and which could therefore stand or fall in the plain language in which they were written. I refer to his Economic and Financial Problems of the Border Regions, The High Tide of Socialism in the Chinese Countryside, The Ten Great Relationships, How to Handle Contradictions Among the People, and the documents in which he condemned Stalinism.

More important, in the course of this introspection I had come to realise that each of us has his own personal political culture, based partly on personal experience with its inevitable limitations and bias. And we should all be conscious of this. I propose, therefore, to relate my interpretation of Mao to my experience, both academic and non-academic. As I have been ten years longer in the study of modern China than any other British scholar, perhaps an account of this experience will be of interest to colleagues. Lester Frank Ward, one of the founders of sociology, at the end of his life wrote his "mental autobiography". It took him six volumes, but I hope I can do it in somewhat less.

In my introspection, I began by reminding myself of what my responsibilities were as an academic. We exist, as a profession, to pursue knowledge “without fear, favour, prejudice or malice”. Confucius put it another way: “no preconceived assumptions, no foregone conclusions, no egotism and no obstinacy”.

Certain methodological principles follow from this:

- First, one must recognise and acknowledge all potential factors in the situation under study; and one must learn to understand them, even if this involves going back to school.
- Second, as democratic scholars we must always assume that those whom we are studying are rational and of good intent, unless and until they are proved otherwise.
- Third, as Alec Nove and I agreed, when studying communist regimes one must never accept an ideological explanation of what they do, even when they themselves give such an explanation, unless and until we have exhausted all possibilities of explanation in terms of practical responses to concrete problems.
- Fourth, empathy is necessary for objectivity; the cold stare does not lead to understanding.

- Fifth, do not make the mistake of comparing an ideal version of our own system with the messy reality of theirs.
- Sixth, our responsibility is to study China as a contribution to a humanistic education. We are not concerned with China as a potential market or a potential enemy; these things are someone else's business.

To learn to recognise all factors in the situation requires breadth of study. The issue of breadth versus specialisation represents a major, unresolved conflict in British academic life. Before modern times, all university education began from a general compulsory course covering logic, inductive science, mathematics and moral philosophy. However, when Oxford and Cambridge began, in the nineteenth century, to pull themselves out of “port and prejudice” they broke with this tradition and established a uniquely specialist curriculum. The Oxbridge elite then forced this specialised form of education on the new English universities, and they forced the ancient Scottish universities to conform by starving them of resources for half a century until they toed the line. This pressure for specialisation continues.

There is no room here for a full exposition of this issue. I will make

only two points.

- First, specialisation cramps lateral thinking; you cannot think outside the box if all you know is what is inside the box.
- Second, specialisation tends to become vocational training, and vocational training invites trivialisation; there are now English universities in which you can take degree courses in golf course management, surfing science, and car salesmanship! This vocational-training view of higher education is encouraged by commercial interests and forcefully promoted by the politicians. Vested interests in the new specialised education have become so powerful that our university system may already have passed the point of no return.

Abelard and his students retired to the Forest of Champagne and made a new start. Perhaps it is time we did the same. I fought this specialisation throughout my career and eventually retired early in disgust to pursue my research in independence.

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When I was 12 years old I read my first book on the Renaissance, and fell in love with polymathy. I was going to be Leonardo da

Vinci or nothing. Then my formal school education was disrupted by wartime evacuation, but the advantages of this were that I could read what I liked, and that I had to learn to come to my own conclusions. I read the Greek and Latin classics in the Loeb bilingual edition, the authors of the Enlightenment, and the literature of Britain and Europe. I studied the history of science, art and music (and began a lifetime of serious painting and music making). I subscribed to The Times, The Economist and The New Statesman.

When I began in 1951 to study Mao's China, this broad, broken self-education created my first point of empathy with Mao, whose early education was much the same. Indeed, Mao and I had read many of the same books, and we both read them with radical action in mind - he because of the chaos of China, me because of the 1930s depression during which my father (along with many of our relatives and friends) was forced into unemployment.

I chose to go to the University of Glasgow where some remnants of the old broader curriculum lingered on. I was able to study some political economy, English literature and psychology, as well as history. I chose history because it is not just one subject; it is a

dimension of all subjects - the ideal training for an aspiring polymath!

After graduation, my decision to study China also expressed my interest in breadth; it gave me the opportunity to study another civilisation. From the beginning I chose to study modern China as broadly as possible. As a teacher at the University of Hong Kong, I studied Chinese culture and language; at the School of Oriental and African Studies, modern Chinese political and diplomatic history; at the University of Glasgow, comparative Communism; at the Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex, the economic problems of poor peasant countries. Since retirement I have studied the problems of democratisation as an honorary research fellow at the University of Warwick. Throughout this I had to fight my superiors all the way for the space to study broadly. I participated in teaching in all these subjects, and published on most of them; but only after 40 years of these interdisciplinary studies did I publish a general history of modern China. (Rebellions and Revolutions: China from the 1800s to 2000, OUP, 2nd ed., 2002)

From these broad studies I came to the view that every event in China has three dimensions: the history of Chinese culture,

socialism, and the attempts by less developed peasant countries to combat poverty.

- The crux of the first dimension was the problem of how to replace traditional (and Communist) hierarchical relationships by a civil society (albeit perhaps a market in which the actors are collectives) and by more democratic decision-making processes.
- The crux of the second was how to escape from Stalinist etatism to the more communitarian ideas of socialism implicit in the May Fourth consensus.
- The crux of the third was China's factor proportions, with the worst man-land ratio among the major countries, a massive surplus of rural labour, and little capital.

These are clearly the basic questions which Mao attempted to answer. I do not believe that either the Great Leap Forward or the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution can be properly understood unless all three of these dimensions are taken into consideration. The GLF was concerned to break down centralised, hierarchical administration; to create a more community-based form of socialism; to turn surplus rural labour from a liability to an asset; and to create a sort of participatory democracy. The GPCR had the same aims, though pursued in somewhat changed circumstances.

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The second aspect of my own mental development was the formulation of a particular view of democracy and of the process of democratisation. I concluded from my history studies that the principles of democracy expressed, historically, a secularisation of Reformation theology:

- Liberty - everyone is directly responsible to God for his conduct, and thus no one has the right to force another's conscience;
- Equality - everyone is equal in the sight of God;
- Fraternity - we are all brothers and sisters in Christ, and must live in mutual respect, trust and help.

However, such a view of democracy cannot adopt a merely procedural definition.

Democracy is about these aspirations - while each is valuable in itself, they are all instrumental in attaining the others. They are protected by democratic procedures but in their turn they also protect these procedures. Thus the distinction between rights which can simply be awarded by the courts and rights which are aspirations attainable only by the commitment of resources which

have opportunity costs, although important, cannot be made absolute.

Similarly, in the process of democratisation, many of the pre-conditions of democracy involve partial fulfilment of democratic aspirations. The establishment of democratic institutions may depend partly on decreasing inequality and increasing fraternity. Consequently, to divide the countries of the world into democratic sheep and dictatorial goats is too simple. Authoritarian governments may sometimes prepare the way for democratic institutions by changes which are not in themselves democratic. Not all dictatorships represent unmitigated evil. To assume so is to impoverish history. Therefore, it is legitimate to ask the question, did Mao's rule promote or prevent the creation of the pre-conditions of democracy? Perhaps he builded better than he knew.

Let us review here the pre-conditions of sustainable democracy.

These include:

- national unity;
- the destruction of inherited parasitic or counter-productive property structures;

- the reconciliation or assimilation of minorities, so that the nation becomes one moral community;
- the replacement of hierarchy by more egalitarian forms of association, probably including markets;
- the emergence of a civil society replacing or supplementing ascriptive ties;
- a government whose writ runs everywhere;
- opportunities for participation in social affairs;
- education, at least to the level of widespread literacy;
- economic developments which serve the majority of citizens;
- a standard of living which allows real choices and promotes self-esteem;
- the creation of a general consensus on basic issues to the extent that hostility to the consensus is marginal;
- a society able to operate on the assumption of limited government;
- traditions which include values and habits which encourage moderation and self-restraint in the solution of problems;
- exposure to democratic ideas.

Traditions of secular government may also play a part.

Some historical examples can put flesh on the bones of these

considerations. Perhaps the most striking is Adam Ferguson's argument that "civil society" emerged when feudal hierarchy was dissolved by the spread of markets, most notably the rise of the wool trade. Another, of course, is the fact already alluded to that the secularisation of theology created the principles of democracy. Related to this was the creation in Scotland of a national church consisting of independent congregations led by elected elders. This was repeated, in a sense, throughout Britain in the early 19th century by a new rise of non-conformism which fed into trade unions and friendly societies. Another example is the destruction of England's over-mighty subjects by Tudor despotism; and soon after that, Henry VIII's association of parliament with his break with Rome. A more modern example is Taiwan's extraordinary success in creating growth with equity largely because the geographical necessity of locating industry along the narrow western coastal plain brought industrial employment within reach of most peasant families. It is of course obvious that democracy was created in England and France by violence (and in the United States also) and in Germany and Japan by the victors in the Second World War.

Thus, instead of condemning each and every authoritarian regime, we should look for positive signs of the creation of any of the

pre-conditions of democracy and praise and encourage them. As far as Mao and democratisation is concerned, it is enough at the moment to refer to his criticisms of Stalin, almost all of which imply the need for increasing involvement of the population in both the provision and the benefits of economic growth, in an alternative system which would create some of the pre-conditions of democracy.

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In 1888 Mrs Humphrey Ward's novel Robert Elsmere caused a furore by arguing that religion was not about belief but about service to others. Brought up in a fervently non-conformist Christian family, but rebelling against religious belief in adolescence, I agreed with this, and I began to construct a philosophy on this basis. I observed that all the world's great religions, stripped of their differing dogmas (largely created by power-hungry priests) and of the other barbarous accretions of the centuries, were preaching the same morality. Our morality is therefore universal. I then moved on to believe that this common morality was not subjective: it reflects the objective demands of human interdependence. At the same time it was obvious that history and society had often worked to

limit the moral communities within which the rules were applied: to clan, sect, class, nation. Yet I came to believe that this is unnatural, and I recalled that Mencius had said: “When a child falls down a well, you do not ask whose child it is before you pull it out.”

What is needed to break down the barriers of these limited moral communities? I found the answer in T. H. Green’s idea of the “conscious man”. The man conscious of the gulf between ideal possibility and ugly reality is compelled to act. Consciousness motivates. And in this I found another reason to empathise with Mao. His teacher, Yang Changji, had studied in Edinburgh where Green’s ideas were then popular. He passed them to Mao, and thereafter the idea of consciousness became central to Mao’s thought and actions. Influenced further by Li Dazhao, he came to believe that the main task of political leadership was to spread consciousness to the mass of the people. He did not, however, believe that this could be achieved merely by moral exhortation: new consciousness is created by new experience.

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To continue a little further with this “mental autobiography”, let me

say a little more about what I learned from experience in society as opposed to academic experience.

During World War II, I was for a time a “Bevin Boy”, directed to work in the coal mines instead of the armed forces. There I found myself involved in a system of collective incentives. In the course of modernisation, the coal mines had moved from the old “pillar and stall” method of working, in which individual miners were paid for the coal they individually produced, to the “long wall” system in which a wide face was opened out so that the coal could be undercut by machinery. The miners were spread out along this face, all filling coal into the same endless belt. They shared the proceeds. They were as committed and as self-disciplined as soldiers. Faults in the roof ran diagonally to our coal-face. Thus every miner knew when the mortal danger would be over his head the following day, but no miner ever shirked. As a result of that experience, I do not start from the assumption that collective incentives cannot work. I look at cases.

Mao was accused of exaggerating the value of collective incentives. In fact, however, his opinions on incentives are unambiguous and much the same as those of western experts; that is, that satisfactory

personal incomes, mutual support among members of working groups (i.e. collective incentives), pride in one's skill, the challenge of facing problems, and a sense of involvement in something important, all play a part in stimulating and sustaining effort.

Mao also detested piecework, as most good western managers do, and I agree with him. Piecework is useless for anything more complicated than picking strawberries. I once asked a worker in a Wuhan factory what the difference was between "material incentives" (bad) and "reasonable rewards" (good). He replied: "material incentives means piecework".

Eventually I left the coal mines and joined the army. Towards the end of my service I was drafted to train and teach illiterate national service recruits, and thus for the first time faced a section of Britain's underclass. Their most obvious characteristic was their hopelessly low self-esteem. All I could think to do was to take them at every opportunity to run long distances in the Pentland Hills and to climb the cliffs of Arthur's Seat, and thus to persuade them that they were the hardest soldiers in Dreghorn Barracks. It worked. They found a new pride and in this they bonded. They marched on parade with the 1st Battalion Royal Scots with their heads held high.

I began to think about low self-esteem and its consequences: clinical depression, demotivation, resort to drink or drugs, self-injury, suicide, crime. Behind their illiteracy, of course, lay deprivation, and I began to think that democracies which put up with such alienation of so many of their citizens are failing in the first of their duties.

I also began to ask myself if compulsory participation, as in Communist countries, was perhaps better than no participation at all; after all, my illiterates were conscripts, not volunteers. What is the effect on self-esteem of membership of the Communist Youth League? Or of membership of a collective village enterprise? When in China doing field work on commune and brigade enterprise, I decided that one good way of quickly judging self-esteem was by how articulate the peasants with whom I was living were. I found them highly articulate, eager to ask questions, confident in their answers, and prepared to discuss intelligently questions about matters well outside their own interests. I have had worse conversations in British pubs. Here is an example. I said I was a Liberal, and added “of course that’s a bit of a bad word in China”. A peasant replied: “But liberal has another meaning; it means open-minded, radical, generous.” Not bad for a peasant in the

backwoods of Shandong!

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In the 1970s, while living in Perthshire, when Mao had recovered his authority over economic policy after the Cultural Revolution, I began experiments in my garden on intensive cultivation. Besides growing top fruit on dwarfing stock in the form of hedges and practising catch-cropping and inter-cropping, I laid out a measured plot of potatoes. I grew them with nothing but a digging fork and green manure. Local farmers, using industrial techniques, were getting 12 tons to the acre. I got 22 tons. My farmer friends were not at all surprised. They knew that their heavy machines panned the subsoil. They thus limited the drainage and at the same time reduced the root run, leaving the crop vulnerable to both too much rain and too little. The high cost of farm labour, however, forced them to accept the lower productivity which resulted.

Where there is surplus farm labour with little opportunity cost, industrial farming makes no economic sense, and this remains so unless and until industrialisation raises the cost of farm labour to the point where the use of machinery is profitable. This is what Mao

thought and I believe he was right.

My potato plot, double-dug with a 16" tar grape, gave 32" of good drainage and of root run. This enabled me to keep the water content of the soil at full field capacity. It also allowed deep fertilisation. So, again, I agree with Mao's view that deep cultivation works in principle, though it may not be possible everywhere.

The green fertiliser I used was comfrey, chosen for its relevance to China. It is as rich as farmyard manure but with more potash. Potash is low in most Chinese soils and comfrey grows like a weed all over China. One tenth of an acre given over to comfrey will fully fertilise the rest of the acre for 25 years.

I also agree with Mao that to use chemical fertilisers alone is asking for disaster, and recent news from China confirms this. Many Chinese peasants have gone over to growing fruit as China's diet changes. They have made massive use of chemical fertilisers without the addition of organic manures. They are already in trouble because the organic content of their soil has dropped to useless levels.

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I have always as a matter of principle participated in local community life, and from that too I have learned. Throughout my adult life I have participated in constituency party politics, village administration and environmental issues, adult education (including the University of the Third Age), voluntary arts provision, and as a school governor.

My attention was drawn to the possibility of economic development based on small firms with access to research and marketing advice by my participation in an environmental issue on the Firth of Clyde. On the basis that the sheltered waters of the lower Firth could accommodate the largest ships afloat, it was proposed to build a gigantic ore port on an artificial island. We were to have a 12 million ton steel works, a petro-chemical complex, and several other gigantic bits and bobs - all cheek-by-jowl with an existing atomic power station put there in the first place to be as far from other industries as possible. We formed a committee to examine this scheme, and concluded that it was economic nonsense. We were right, and it never happened. All that was built was the ore-port which closed down within a year.

Meanwhile the senior chemical engineer at the nearby ICI factory had resigned to become head of a new Department of Industrial Co-operation in the University of Strathclyde (Professor John Busby). While the vast industrial scheme was fading out, he got 140 new products and processes off the ground in the area, simply by giving advice on technology and marketing to young people with good ideas. This turned my attention to questions of the choice of techniques and to the economies (or more precisely the diseconomies) of scale. I began to take seriously China's commune and brigade enterprises (revived from 1970). I soon realised from my reading that Mao's interest in turning rural surplus labour from a burden into an asset was not confined to Mao himself, but was increasingly being discussed by western economists.

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I will end my “mental autobiography” with two more incidents which catalysed my thinking, both of them derived from participation in community affairs.

In the 1970s, it was decided that Scotland would have a new village level of local government. The shires were left to design their own

schemes. Perthshire's scheme turned out to give these new "community councils" merely derisory powers. We formed an association to protest. On the day of debate we marched on County Hall. We filled it, and the streets outside. The County Council gave in, dropped its own scheme and invited us to produce an alternative, which I had the pleasure of writing. They accepted it. This was no doubt a storm in a teacup; but it renewed my interest in civil society, and I added this new dimension to my study of China.

At the same time, I began to study the increasing bureaucratisation of our NHS, and of our schools and universities which is so damaging to our civil society, and I formed some idea of the principles and practices involved. This - once again - fed into my study of Chinese institutions.

The second incident took place in Lewes, East Sussex, and concerned voluntary arts provision. A local artist had left his studio to Lewes Town Council to be used to promote the visual arts. The Council did little with it. They were losing £9,000 a year on it and decided to close it down. As a member of the only class then running in the studio, I advised my fellow members to refuse to hand the keys back to the Council. This we did, and then held a

public meeting at which we raised £40. This was our capital. We put proposals to the Council and they handed the studio over to us. We improvised, ploughed back our profits, extended the market to Brighton and inland, took financial risks. We had our own Liu Shaoqi on board, an accountant constantly complaining about the informality of our finances. But we succeeded. Paddock Studios is now equipped like a miniature art school and runs 20 classes a week for 50 weeks in the year.

This is the nearest I ever got to running a commune enterprise; and when I went to China to study village enterprise, I had some idea what questions to ask.

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When choosing a research topic, the best way is to start broad and then to find the topic which, while limited enough to handle, will throw the widest light on the whole subject. Studying the fruit fly is the classic example. In my case, my interests pointed to China's commune and brigade industries, unsuccessful in the Great Leap, but from their resurrection in 1970 the driving force of an economic miracle. What made them more interesting to me was that their

very existence was neglected by economists studying China. Whole books on China's economy were written without a mention of them, or with only a disparaging mention. Even the World Bank did not catch up with them until 1990. They were almost as unpopular in China as they were abroad. The Stalinists loathed them because they were not controlled from the centre. Chinese intellectuals objected to them, continuing to think of economic development in terms of the biggest and the most advanced. A Soviet economist who had been involved in creating China's first five-year plan told me that he and his fellow advisers had urged China to exploit her plentiful labour in low-tech, low capital, labour-intensive industries, but the Chinese refused; and this attitude is still influential in China.

Commune and brigade industry was interesting first and foremost from the obvious economic point of view; but it also raised other questions. What were the political and social consequences of the distribution of economic decision-making to half a million villages? When I at last got to China to live in the villages and do field work on the subject, I kept these wider questions of social psychology in mind.

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I will now summarise my hypotheses on Mao under four succinct headings:

- The four main accusations made against him;
- His two great "failures", the Great Leap Forward and the Great Proleterian Cultural Revolution;
- His consistency over the years and his elaboration of a new strategy;
- His heritage to China.

Mao has been accused of four faults: he was an ideologue, he was a "voluntarist", he was not interested in economic growth, and he was more Stalinist than Stalin.

Was Mao an ideologue? One author found 32 different definitions of the word in 32 different dictionaries. Such a word is better avoided. The nearest I can get to a useful definition is that ideology is a system of ideas which serves to support a system of power; but the trouble is that this definition has become pejorative: we have a philosophy, they have an ideology; our beliefs are honest, theirs are hypocrisy. This will not do. There are plenty of cases in history in which the relevant "ideological" beliefs are well grounded in fact.

There are others in which they are not. There are systems in which honest beliefs have become hypocritical when the system has come to support a new ruling class who in reality no longer believe in the original theory. There are systems which are purely value systems, and action towards the achievement of these values can be based on reality. And there are so many shades of difference among all these types that to apply the word “ideology” to them is nothing but a cop-out. We have to look at cases.

As already suggested, Mao’s alternative strategy of development was elaborated in a series of documents which are written almost entirely in non-ideological language. Only later were they cast in an ideological form; but once put into plain language it would not have mattered if Mao had rewritten them in double-Dutch. The question must be, were Mao’s strategies and policies merely the blind implementation of theoretical principles, or were his theoretical principles merely a rhetorical re-phrasing of strategies and policies decided upon for pragmatic reasons? I have no doubt of the answer. The strategies were pragmatic. The bottom line of his economic programme was the nature of China’s factor proportions: too little land, too little capital, and a vast surplus of rural labour. That surplus labour could be either a burden or a resource.

Was Mao a voluntarist? The word is much used by Marxists. It indicates someone who pushes change beyond objective possibilities. It might be argued that in this sense Mao was sometimes a voluntarist. However, in the West this charge came to mean that he believed that the human spirit could overcome all obstacles; but the Old Man Who Moved Mountains did not use magic, just perseverance. Mao was talking about the power of new consciousness derived from new experience; and there are plenty of examples in history of occasions when a rapid change in the climate of opinion has produced massive material results. Indeed this is what history does much of the time.

Mao's task was to persuade Chinese peasants to relinquish their age-old worst-case planning and become entrepreneurs, albeit collective entrepreneurs. While Mao was making this point, in the west Myrdal was arguing that to get Asian peasants to lift themselves out of poverty must involve psychological as well as economic changes. They had to learn foresight, risk-taking, determination. And this is what Mao was asking for. Hence his idea of a spiral of growth in the villages beginning from simple, labour-intensive, nil-gestation investment and leading on to the

modernisation of rural China. It has now happened. It has happened only since his later years, but he started it.

Was Mao more interested in ideological purity than in economic growth? Not at all. He believed that growth with equity would be faster, and so do I. The savings of a prosperous population can help to provide the capital. Their demand provides the incentive. This (as I believe my own studies of the subject can show) is how Britain's industrial revolution began. It was not based on the impoverishment of the masses. It happened when it happened because Britain had the highest level of mass purchasing power in the world, and only machines could cope with the demand. Mao's policies on the economy are expressed in economic language, not in terms of ideological purity. And it should be pointed out that his plans to decentralise the economy and to encourage light industry were supported by Chen Yun, who is usually portrayed as Mao's principal opponent on economic matters.

Was Mao a Stalinist? I can never understand this accusation. Here is the man who wrote the most comprehensive and trenchant critique of Stalinism to appear in the socialist world, and set about creating an alternative. It is Mao's alternative which confirms how serious

his charges against Stalin were meant to be. For example, when Mao accuses Stalin of having prevented popular participation, this could perhaps mean much or little; but when the accusation was made by a man who had just encouraged the creation of millions of collective village enterprises, one has to take it seriously.

Mao's charges against Stalin were as follows:

(1) His procurement system impoverished the peasants: "he drained the pond to catch the fish". Mao prided himself that China's procurement prices had allowed peasant incomes to increase year by year. The attempt to increase total grain procurement in 1956 was a disaster nevertheless, and Mao began to realise that without substantial rises in agricultural production and incomes little more capital for industrialisation could be got from agriculture. He began to believe that by encouraging the villages to develop themselves, total national savings and investment could be far higher than was possible by procurement out of existing production.

(2) "In 30 years the Soviets have failed to create a truly collective system. All they have done is to perpetuate the counter-productive exploitation of the landlords." In China during the First Five Year

Plan the costs of maintaining the local cadre force were about 30% of farm income, just about the same as the rents formerly taken by the landlords. This imitation of the Soviet system Mao rejected: the first duty of the local cadre was now to secure a steady increase in production and incomes at village level.

(3) Mao accepted Kang Sheng's advice that the Soviet Machine Tractor Stations merely "held the peasants to ransom", and he reasserted his belief that the agricultural collectives should buy and own the tractors. This was one of the issues which touched off the Cultural Revolution.

(4) Stalin's system made popular participation in development impossible. This charge against Stalin reflects Mao's interest in consciousness, his May 4th faith in the freeing of individual energies, and his mass-line concept of development. It is perhaps at this point that his critique of Stalinism is at its most radical.

(5) Stalin denied that there could be conflict in a socialist society, and thus, Mao asserted, "politics came to an end in the Soviet Union". Of course what Stalin really meant by this was that conflict in socialist society is forbidden and will be punished. Mao, on the

contrary, has always insisted that conflict alone creates progress. This is an idea which should be perfectly acceptable to democrats. After all, the democratic process consists of the resolution of conflicts and the further (and endless) resolution of new conflicts, thus creating a "continuous resolution" leading to progress. Continuous resolution is the natural state of democracy. Mao's How to Handle Contradictions Among the People spells out his attitude. Within the revolutionary consensus there will always be conflicts of interest and opinion. Such conflicts are perfectly permissible and should be resolved by democratic means.

(6) Stalin "did not understand relationships". Here the issue was, to take the most important example, between Stalin's subtraction-sum relationships between economic sectors, and Mao's conception of multiplication-sum relationships of mutual stimulation, which he adumbrated in The Ten Great Relationships.

(7) Stalin pursued the interests of the state to the neglect of the interests of individuals and collectives. Stalin's monolithic military-industrial complex was created by suppressing the interests of the population.

(8) Stalin “did not know how to make short-term interests serve long-term interests”. Mao was attempting a process of development which began from nil-gestation investment, mostly of labour, leading to the plough-back of profits to raise technology to modern levels. This process proceeded through new consciousness created gradually by new experience.

These are Mao’s explicit criticisms of Stalin and Stalinism; but the list could be further extended from Mao’s many implicit criticisms.

It is obvious enough, taking these explicit criticisms as a whole, that they all suggest more “democratic” ways of handling development. All of them, I am sure, can be accepted by those committed to democracy. All of them point to methods of operation which, within the revolutionary consensus, would bring people out of subjection and towards citizenship, and so help to create some of the pre-conditions of democracy.

It is too commonly assumed that Mao’s hostility to revisionism represented support for Stalinism. I never had much faith in Liberman’s proposed tinkering with the Stalinist system. And it did not in fact work too well in practice. I am inclined to agree with

Mao's view that to add profit to power in the hands of a Stalinist technocracy was regressive rather than progressive.

Libermanist revisionism was one of Mao's "two roads". I once asked a friend in America to sound out the possibility of my getting a research grant from an American foundation. He told me that when he mentioned my name to a representative of the foundation he replied, "Jack Gray? Oh that's the guy who believes in the two roads." I did not get a grant. But the "two roads" was more than a slogan. It went back to the contradiction within socialist theory between Saint-Simonian etatism and the communitarian socialism of Owen and Fourier. It represents, in its various forms, a real choice, with almost 200 years of history.

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Nothing fails like failure and Mao is associated with two great failures. They were the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution. Why did they fail? Too often it is assumed that they failed because they had to fail, because they were wrong in conception. I do not accept this. If I had been young and Chinese in 1958 I would have thrown myself into the Great Leap; and in 1966 I

would have been out with the Red Guards, protesting against privilege and the abuse of power. I might, in either case, have ended up disillusioned; but I hope that if so, I would still have been able to distinguish between the conception and the implementation.

We still do not have an adequate explanation for the failure of the Great Leap. Some of the criticisms made of it are ludicrous. The author of Hungry Ghosts, for example, sneers at the Chinese for trying to make compost in revolving barrels, although many British gardeners do just that, and it is very effective. He laughs at the Chinese for using river silt as a soil improver; perhaps he is unaware that civilisation began in the silt of the Euphrates. The Great-Leap backyard blast furnaces were scorned; yet two miles from where I am now sitting are the carefully preserved remains of a backyard blast furnace reputedly owned by Derby of Coalbrookdale. China in 1958, like pre-modern Britain, was still full of small, scattered, easily worked deposits of ore. There was nothing to prevent their being quickly exploited. The fault lay in the euphoria which led to the naiive assumption that it could be done everywhere, an assumption Mao was quick to condemn. And it should be remembered that when the Rural Responsibility System was instituted after Mao's death, backyard blast furnaces sprang up across China in the hands

of individual peasants, and were profitable.

The small-scale, labour-intensive irrigation works have also been condemned. Some were undoubtedly done hastily and badly; but I have seen some impressive examples in China, and western expert opinion has long favoured such small irrigation schemes as opposed to gigantic dams because they are cheap, effective, easy to mend, locally controlled, far easier on the environment, and do not involve the forced movement of people.

The fundamental idea of the Great Leap was to use surplus rural labour for local industrialisation and the improvement of the agricultural superstructure. It was believed that this could be done fairly quickly and at an accelerating rate through the plough-back of profits. Hence the unfortunate “Great Leap Forward” name which was quite misleading. It is interesting (although it has been wholly neglected) that on the eve of the Leap China’s newspapers predicted and warned against all the faults to which the movement later proved liable; but in the event they could not be prevented. This is what has to be explained.

Some of the factors which led to failure are obvious enough. The

Leap took place after Mao's criticism of members of the Party leadership who wanted to cut back the pace of development to relieve the strains which the First Five Year Plan had caused. Caution therefore became a political fault. There was a general failure to realise that successes on experimental plots, and similar industrial experiments, could not necessarily be quickly reproduced everywhere; even Deng Xiaoping was naiive about this. There was also too little recognition that what succeeded in one place would not necessarily succeed elsewhere. Successes of this kind, as well as the remarkable general success of the first year of the movement, led to euphoric hopes and these were fed by the press. Targets escalated. Some provincial governments played a part in this escalation in an attempt to maximise funds from the centre. The focus of the strategy was meant to be the rapid growth of light industries which Mao believed could accumulate capital quickly; but all but the most labour-intensive projects need simple machine tools, which in turn needed steel, and so the Leap ended up putting an even greater emphasis on steel-making than the Plan had done. This was not in itself irrational. There were widespread sources of metal ores but not of coal, so the transport system became jammed with coal so that it became difficult to move grain, and this contributed to the famine. The record harvest of 1958 was so great

that much of the grain could not be stored; much had to be exported; hence stocks were not high enough when the next year saw bad weather and a very bad harvest. Euphoria led to a huge increase in consumption and this disposed of much of the record harvest; a Russian expert in China told me that he was appalled by this and feared that the procurement system would break down, which it did. Meanwhile, so much labour had been diverted to industry, especially to steel making, that when the bad weather arrived the extra labour necessary to meet the natural disasters was not quickly available. Above all the basic idea was to start from nil-gestation investment which would pay off by the next harvest, but in the euphoria of the time this principle disappeared.

More fundamental, however, was that the hierarchical, authoritarian party system was totally inappropriate for the leadership of a campaign which could only flourish on popular support. Chinese local cadres, under pressure from above, resorted to compulsion. The tragic irony of this was that they simply thrust Stalinism down into the grassroots and the very plots of the cottages, to create half a million miniature Stalinist economies. Before the Leap, all China's institutions had put on public record a resolve to lead the movement democratically, but the whole nature

of the political system left China's cadres unaccountable to the people and forced them to obey their superiors. The movement was meant to empower the people, but more often simply empowered the county cadres.

When grain became scarce, China's more prosperous peasants were made the scapegoats and accused of having caused the dearth by hoarding grain; so in a final irony Mao's anti-Stalinist movement led to persecution of China's kulaks.

Mao saw most of this and was quick to protest, but the whole movement had got out of hand. He justified and supported the peasants' resistance, but could not prevent the compulsion this resistance opposed. He has generally been regarded as ideologically fixated in his refusal to end the Leap; but as we have seen, ideology had little to do with it. Convinced that his strategy was economically correct, which in principle it was, he hoped to correct the faults and keep the movement going.

Of course our perspective on the Leap should have changed when Mao's second attempt to apply his strategy from 1970 onwards proved dramatically successful, but few people saw this, and Deng

Xiaoping's party line concealed it. The line was that the Gang of Four had actually destroyed commune and brigade enterprise, and Deng Xiaoping had started it afresh after 1979. However, my field work in 1982 proved that this was wrong; most of the factories I visited had been started or re-started in 1970 or 1971; some had even begun in 1958 and survived Liu Shaoqi's attack on them.

The text of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution was given in a speech Mao made in 1966 in Shanxi: "The officials of China are a class, and one whose interests are antagonistic to those of the workers and peasants." Mao predicted that if the privileges and abuse of power of this new Red bourgeoisie were not reined in, China might become Fascist.

What the Cultural Revolution was meant to be was well indicated in two statements. The first is Jiang Chunqiao's description of the central figure in a new revolutionary play then being written:

"There is not a landlord or a bourgeois in his ancestry. He fought with us in the Long March and in the War of Liberation. He is a man of infinite conscientiousness and absolute integrity."

Why then is he a tyrant? Because the system gives him no choice. In sincerely pursuing his duties day by day he is helping to create something that he would hate if he recognised its true characteristics. He must be made aware of this.

The second statement I have in mind was given by Zhou Enlai to the staff of a science institute which had got rid of its leaders:

“We could have done all this by administrative means, but from that you would have learned nothing.”

The Cultural Revolution was not meant to be a widespread purge. Zhou Enlai, with Mao’s agreement, stated that not more than 5% of the cadre force were likely to deserve dismissal. It is of course obvious that Mao no longer thought Liu Shaoqi an appropriate successor, because he could not apparently distinguish between problems which could be handled by legal or administrative means and problems which required a patient political solution. This is the mistake Mao believed that Liu Shaoqi had made in the Socialist Education Movement. Yet Mao continued to insist that while Liu Shaoqi’s ideas should be attacked, the man should not.

Why then did the Cultural Revolution escalate into near civil war?

We still do not have a comprehensive study, although we have several good regional studies. These suggest:

- first, that the grievances of the young and of the casual workers were far more strongly felt than even Mao had suspected;
- second, that the PLA's attitude was ambivalent;
- third, that the children of threatened senior party leaders formed sham Red Guard groups which obtained arms and fought their rivals;
- fourth, that the Cultural Revolution gave widespread opportunities for the settling of old scores, and for the activities of patron-client networks which in China always provide a hidden agenda;
- and finally, that Mao himself backed off when the existence of the Party itself was threatened by the creation of “Paris commune” governments in some of China’s cities.

Yet the Cultural Revolution, like the Great Leap Forward, had some positive consequences in the long run. Mao’s assertion that “to rebel is justified” came to be combined with experience in the Cultural Revolution which made it obvious that to secure the accountability of the Party bureaucracy would require democratic

institutions.

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Let us now look more closely at Mao's strategy, his "alternative socialism". When in the early '20s the Soviet Union considered the problem of "primitive accumulation", Preobrazhensky pointed out that according to Marx most of the capital for Britain's original industrialisation had come from the expropriation of the British peasants in the enclosure movement. The Soviet Union, he argued, had no resource but to find the capital for industrialisation by exploiting the peasants in an analogous way. He called this "objective feudalism".

In fact modern research has shown that there was no expropriation of the English peasants in the enclosure movement. Suffice it here to point out that the English land-tax records show more small owner operators in England after the enclosure movement than there had been before. The integration of arable and pasture resulting from enclosure permitted four-course rotation which made more small farms viable. Stalin's screw-the-peasants strategy was thus based on a historical myth.

On the other side in the Soviet Union in the 1920s were two pioneer socialist planners, Shanin and Bazarov. Shanin argued that small amounts of capital invested in agriculture could have an immense effect on agricultural production and on peasant incomes. Increased peasant demand would then stimulate industrialisation. Bazarov argued that most economic development is, by nature, local; that electricity had removed the need for the expensive urbanisation of industry; that what Russia's peasants most needed to raise them above subsistence level was "dirt roads and spur lines"; and that the most economic form of development was that in which "the labourers are also the beneficiaries". Shanin and Bazarov in the end convinced even Preobrazhensky to change his mind. Bukharin supported them. But Stalin still chose "objective feudalism".

In the early 1950s when the undeveloped countries began their efforts at planned development, the Stalin paradigm was widely accepted (though applied less ruthlessly) in the sense that agriculture was made to provide the capital for industrialisation by high taxes on land and low farm-gate prices fixed by the state. Then Nurkse created a new development paradigm. He argued that the

surplus of rural labour typical of many poor peasant countries could be turned from a burden into a resource, used to increase production, diversify crops, improve agricultural infrastructure, and create labour-intensive, low-tech village industries. He examined the possibilities and problems in detail. Vastly increased peasant purchasing power would then create the demand that would drive forward industrialisation.

This was also the basis of Mao's Great Leap strategy. The parallel between Nurkse and Mao in this respect is so close, even in detail, that one must wonder if Mao or someone close to him knew Nurkse's work.

At the same time, Mao insisted that it was not balance but imbalance which drives economies forward. Roderick MacFarquhar has scorned this idea, but it is economic common sense, and Hirschman, at much the same time as Mao, was saying the same thing. Mao's point was that bureaucrats planning at their desks and allocating materials on the basis of a static balance miss out on the possibility of human initiatives which can freely respond to changes in demand and supply. What Mao is asking for here is a market dimension.

Mao's ideas also chimed in with those of Myrdal, who argued that peasant consciousness would have to be changed if the world's peasants were to fight their way out of poverty.

In fact there is nothing idiosyncratic about Mao's strategy. It did not "spring full-armed from the brow of Jove". It was in tune with modern thinking. It was Mao's opponents who were still stuck in the Stalinist past.

In pursuing these ideas Mao showed considerable consistency. He did not in 1958 have some sort of brain storm changing him from a man hitherto considered to be very pragmatic as Communists go, to the most ideological of them all.

Mao's real inconsistency was his acceptance of Stalinism in 1953 to counter American hostility. And this inconsistency did not last long. The 1953 First Five Year Plan was not fully implemented until 1955, and by the end of that year Mao's revolt against Stalinism had begun.

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Let us briefly review Mao's whole career, starting with his education, which is too often undervalued and which produced ideas which remained vital in his interpretation of Marxism. Mao came to Marxism as Marx had come to it - from a passion for individual self-fulfilment to the belief that class structures are the main source of inhibition of such self-fulfilment. The May Fourth movement was based on the authors of the European Enlightenment, and Marx was one of them. His contribution gave to democratic thought the assertion that uncontrolled capitalism can be as big a threat to democracy as uncontrolled government. For the rest, I do not much value Marx. His history was poor, his economics contradictory (how can capitalism grow while it is reducing the vast majority of its customers to subsistence level?) and his philosophy is a third-hand version of the mysticism of Meister Eckhardt and Jacob Boehme (when I read my first words of Hegel, it was Boehme who immediately sprang to my mind).

We have seen that, philosophically, Mao settled for Green's concept of consciousness. Mao's mass line is a means of creating new consciousness in both leaders and led, in a process which elsewhere has come to be called "participatory research". His theory of

knowledge explicitly identifies the mass line with Marx's theory of knowledge. But he does this in a way which is as much Dewey as Marx, with its emphasis on a continuing process of trial and error. We know that Mao greeted Dewey's pragmatic philosophy with great enthusiasm:

"In the practical work of our Party, all correct leadership is necessarily 'from the masses, to the masses.' This means: take the ideas of the masses (scattered and unsystematic ideas) and concentrate them (through study, turn them into concentrated and systematic ideas), then go to the masses and propagate and explain these ideas until the masses embrace them as their own, hold fast to them, and translate them into action. Then once again concentrate ideas from the masses and once again go to the masses so that the ideas are persevered in and carried through. And so on, over and over again in an endless spiral, with the ideas becoming more correct, more vital, and richer each time. Such is the Marxist theory of knowledge."

The close relation in Mao's mind between mass-line politics and his theory of knowledge is shown not only by the specific reference to the Marxist theory of knowledge in this passage on the mass line,

but by the occurrence of an exactly parallel passage that ends his philosophical essay "On Practice":

"Discover the truth through practice, and again through practice verify the truth. Start from perceptual knowledge and actively develop it into rational knowledge; then start from rational knowledge and actively guide revolutionary practice to change both the subjective and the objective world. Practice, knowledge, again practice, and again knowledge. This form repeats itself in endless cycles, and with each cycle the content of practice and knowledge rises to a higher level. Such is the whole of the dialectical-materialist theory of knowledge, and such is the dialectical-materialist theory of the unity of knowing and doing."

The May Fourth movement mediated the acceptance of Enlightenment thought through Chinese thought. The elements of this mediation were mainly the writings of Wang Yangming with his theory that "principles" came from individual experience put to the test of individual conscience; Wang Fuzhi with his condemnation of the reification of ancient or current institutions, which become obstacles to progress; Gu Yanwu's insistence that China has always been strongest when her local communities were strong, and

weakest when her central government was strongest; Huang Zongxi's reminder that it is not the emperor but the people, represented by the Confucian scholars, who are the true custodians of Confucian values; and the Modern Text School of Kang Yuwei, who argued that Confucian aspiration could be fulfilled by doing, pragmatically, what could be done towards that fulfilment in the conditions of one's own lifetime (politics in fact as the art of the possible). Of all of this young Mao, as an enthusiastic student of May Fourth thought, was certainly aware.

Although for obvious political reasons he almost never refers in later life to the “idealist” writers of the West or to Confucian philosophy, their influence on his interpretation of Marxism is obvious. Apart from Green on consciousness, the most obvious influence is John Dewey. The contrast often made between Dewey’s pragmatism and Marxist holism goes too far. Dewey believed that the only truth we can know is derived from observation of predictable change; we learn by changing things. Marx insisted that knowledge came from action in the course of revolutionary change. Chen Duxiu put the two together; in a sense it was Dewey who led Chen to Marxism. Perhaps it was the same for Mao. In any case, the idea of pragmatic action without an aim is a sort of oxymoron. And the action can be

based on values, without this precluding pragmatic action. This influenced Mao's theory of knowledge.

The third western influence (after Green and Dewey) was Thomas Kirkup, whose History of Socialism was the first thing Mao read on socialism. He told Edgar Snow that he read it "with wild enthusiasm". From Kirkup Mao learned of the contradiction within the socialist vision between Saint-Simon's etatist view and the communalist views of Owen and Fourier, and presumably read the quotation from Marx in which Kirkup shows that Marx in the end settled for the communalist alternative. In Kirkup Mao would also have read of Owen's conviction that human nature can be perfected through social change, as Owen's New Lanark Mill had changed its largely degraded pauper work force. He must also have read Kirkup's arguments that the forms of socialism may be determined by the route by which they are reached, and that socialism will vary according to national characteristics - two views which Mao's later reading of Kautsky may have confirmed.

One must of course bear in mind that when Mao read Kirkup, Stalinism lay in the future. Socialism was still open-ended. Kirkup's work had great influence in China; indeed in Sichuan in 1982 I was

told that it was about to be republished.

Of course any account of the influence of Mao's education on his later thought is bound to be to some extent speculative. However, we know something of his own self-education in Changsha library. We know something of what Yang Changji taught him. We know his response to Kirkup, a copy of Jiang Kanghu's translation of which Yang Changji had given him. We know what he would have met in the literature of May 4th which he read with care. His enthusiastic response to Dewey he gave in a published article.

We can also see that Mao shared many of the ideas with which he is thus bound to have become familiar: that consciousness motivates; that truth consists of the knowledge of predictable change through trial and error; that socialism offers a communalist alternative to centralised state control and comprehensive material allocation; that the state of China's local communities is fundamental to her strength; that the individual can only be fulfilled through opportunities for interdependent action; that the reification of institutions can inhibit progress; that socialism will be shaped by the means used to create it; that wisdom in the last analysis lies with the people not the government, and that government depends on

consent; that will power is a function of self-esteem; and that socialism will vary with national circumstances and national traditions. On most of these points, one could quote Mao. On the rest, his actions speak for their influence on him.

His earliest political activities in Changsha could not but confirm to Mao that only force could solve China's problems. It was a conclusion with which few people in China would then have argued. And perhaps the hollowness of Hunan's pseudo-democratic institutions confirmed what he had seen as the hollowness of China's earlier national parliaments. He had no reason to resist the idea that so-called democratic institutions can sometimes positively smother attempts at social change, as we have seen in certain countries since 1945. His preference was for the creation of as wide a consensus for change as possible, with those prepared to oppose it repressed. Such situations are not uncommon in history. The only question we can reasonably ask is whether or not he sustained the consensus or betrayed it (a big question!).

Within six years of the foundation of the Chinese Communist Party, Mao became identified with China's peasants. He became the leader of China's Peasant Movement Institute. He published his

Report on the Peasant Movement in Hunan in 1927. In the same year Chiang Kaishek's coup forced him into rural Jiangxi. In 1934, driven out of Jiangxi, the Long March took him to Shanxi. From then until 1949 he ruled a peasant state within the state. In Taiwan they made a distinction between two Chinese Communist parties, the Shanxi party and the Shanghai party, and "se non e vero e ben trovato", I have always felt that when Liu Shaoqi thought of China he thought first of the developed coast, but when Mao thought of China he thought first of the undeveloped hinterland.

It was in the Border Regions that Mao first had to deal with economic issues. The Border Region had to strengthen its economy in order to resist the Japanese and siege by the Guomindang. Some Communists wanted to develop nationalised industries and fully collective agriculture. This unrealistic notion Mao totally rejected. He settled for an economy of mutual aid teams and commercial and industrial co-operatives.

Stuart Schram does not believe that the economy of the Border Regions was related to Mao's Great Leap Forward strategy, especially because having no state sector they cannot be seen as a precedent. I hate to disagree with Stuart, to whom the study of

Mao owes so much, but disagree I must. When Mao wrote his Economic and Financial Problems of the Border Regions he praised the non-Communist Indusco co-operatives and thanked them for their help in setting up his own model, the South Yan'an co-operative. (This acknowledgement was cut out of later editions.) And it has always seemed to me that Indusco was Mao's inspiration. Its co-operatives were village-based. They used labour-intensive low-tech methods. They turned over their capital rapidly and ploughed it back into technological advance. Their members were peasants, but often led by technicians from the cities, mostly young. The organisation of Indusco was based on "local management, central supervision". Their management was democratic, sometimes ultra-democratic. In the frequent absence of complementary firms, they had to practise integrated development. In the conditions of the Border Regions they provided medical and educational services and extended them to the whole village. Sometimes, as Edgar Snow reported, they came to organise the economic life of a whole village or of several villages. The analogies between Indusco as Mao's model and the communes of 20 years later are too significant and too comprehensive to be dismissed.

As for the existence of a state sector, some of the Yan'an

co-operatives, usually those organised directly by administrative or military personnel, played the role that the state sector was to play (rather badly) in the Great Leap, that of providing the co-operative sector with advice, technology and credit. Thus they too formed a precedent for the commune system.

There is in fact a continuous thread from Rewi Alley's apprenticeship schemes and the self-help co-operatives created in the Shanghai suburbs by missionaries, through Indusco, through the Border Region co-operatives built on specific plans to diversify production as described in *The High Tide of Socialism in the Chinese Countryside*, to the communes of 1958. Why repudiate all this evidence of continuity?

Not much more than half way through the First Five Year Plan, Mao published in *The High Tide of Socialism in the Chinese Countryside* a three-volume collection describing the process of the foundation of individual Agricultural Producers' Co-operatives. Throughout, the stress was on presenting co-operativisation not through abstract arguments but by creating in each village a plan for increasing the income of co-operative members by economic innovation based on village resources and village proposals. I was so struck by this

change when I first looked at The High Tide that I sailed my yacht to a quiet bay on the west coast of Scotland and anchored there, safe from all distractions, until I had analysed it completely. The High Tide idea that nil-gestation investment, mainly of labour, paying off by the next harvest, could be the beginning of a spiral of growth, diversification and technological advance in collective hands was a further step towards the commune system. And the figures (which seem credible) showed that at existing levels of income quite modest increases in productivity could ensure that all the peasants, or in some cases all but a small handful of especially prosperous proprietors, could find their incomes increased. Generally, after land reform, the richest peasants had up to twice as much land as the poorest, but of their incomes perhaps 70-75% was still subsistence, and because the more prosperous peasants tended to have significantly larger families, their net incomes over subsistence were almost never double those of the poorer. Given that existing cultivation covered subsistence needs, relatively small increases in production could bring large increases in disposable incomes, and reconcile almost all the farmers to participation in a collective attempt to increase and diversify production. This, at any rate, was the argument.

The first example in the book represented an a fortiori argument. The party secretary of the proposed Agricultural Producers' Co-operative, Wang Guofan, was faced with the fact that the more prosperous families in the village would have nothing to do with the co-operative. So he organised the poor peasants to collect firewood in forests some distance from the village and sell it. This was done in the off-season, so that the labour used had little or no opportunity cost. Enough was raised to make a start on investment, and from this progress began. Within two years the middle peasants were impressed enough to join the co-operative. This example may have been largely mythical, but it constituted the motivating idea.

However, Mao, having demonstrated his careful, gradualist tactics for collectivising agriculture in a convincing way, then chose to rush his fences and the process of collectivisation encountered resistance among richer peasants. By Mao's own admission, 80,000 people were killed in the process. That is an average of eight deaths in every fifty villages. Who died and why? We will probably never know. However, it must be remembered that as late as the mid-1950s former Guomindang supporters were still carrying on covert resistance in many parts of China, and this may account for at least part of the loss of life.

Non-agricultural employment in the village continued to rise, but perhaps mainly in private hands. There is no evidence that it was provided by the agricultural collectives (though no evidence that it was not), nor any sign throughout the rest of the First Five Year Plan that the collectives took such initiatives. Whatever Mao had hoped and expected, it does not seem to have happened much. All the more reason then that Mao should try again, and the Great Leap was the second effort, this time with the theory adumbrated in *The Ten Great Relationships*, the original speech on which was given three months after the publication of *The High Tide*, which advocated decentralisation, the encouragement of local initiatives, and a dynamic relationship between economic sectors, i.e., in effect a sort of market system to the extent that it would make central material allocation less comprehensive and leave much of subsequent growth to mutually profitable quasi-market relations among sectors. This is certainly what *The Ten Great Relationships* implied, and it represented a long further step in the elaboration of the strategy, although a logical step.

The next step was the Hundred Flowers and the Rectification Campaign which followed it, which for the first time invited the

public to criticise the Party. Criticism was an essential part of the mass line as Mao had described it, but public criticism on a national scale was new. The Rectification is often assumed to have been intended as a trap for dissidents, but Mao's epigrams about tempting enemies to reveal themselves need not be taken as more than rationalisation after the event. The argument that it was so depends on the assumption that Mao was in agreement with the subsequent punitive Anti-Rightist campaign. However, there is ample evidence that he was not. For example, if he favoured the campaign, why create a photo-opportunity of himself dining with a group of prominent rightists? Mao's proposed method of dealing moderately with most of those who did not accept the revolutionary consensus is well documented.

He went on to justify the Rectification in *How to Handle Contradictions Among the People*. This was an elaboration of his criticism (later made explicit) of Stalin's denial that conflicts can arise in socialist societies. It distinguished between conflicts within the revolutionary consensus and conflicts with those who opposed the consensus; but it has little to say about those beyond the pale. There is nothing to suggest that Mao had changed his view that the best way to deal with them was to leave them alone to die off, no

doubt still unrepentant, in the fullness of time. As for those within the consensus, Mao argued that they were bound to develop differences of both interests and opinions which could then be reconciled by democratic methods.

The public criticisms which emerged from the Rectification, however, suggested that the revolutionary consensus was in trouble. This was not entirely unexpected. There had been end-to-end campaigns, launched by Mao, against “bureaucratism and commandism” since the early 1950s. Mao was no lover of jacks-in-office. Red Guard documents later represented the Great Leap and the Communes as Mao's answer to bureaucratism, and I have no doubt that this was one dimension of Mao's thinking on the subject.

Thus the Great Leap was supposed to use the mass line not just as a matter of political style but as the most effective and the most “democratic” means to carry through great social changes. All would participate, critically, in designing and implementing those changes. The people would provide the raw material of policy and the Party would process it. The economic strategy involved, by putting power in the hands of the local communities, would short-circuit the bureaucracy. Central planners would no longer

lay down the law, but respond to the effects of local initiatives.

The Cultural Revolution grew out of the Great Leap, as Roderick MacFarquhar indicates in the title of his substantial and valuable work, *The Origins of the Cultural Revolution*. The mistake he makes, however, is a mistake of periodisation. To start in the middle of the Leap and end at the beginning of the Cultural revolution leaves out, on the one hand, the origins of the Leap and, on the other, the consequences of the Cultural Revolution. This impairs judgment of both. On the one hand, the success of the Leap in its first year is not included, and it was this success which created the euphoria which made possible the ruinous distortions which then occurred. On the other hand, the book never reaches the revival of the Leap strategy in a more controlled form after the Cultural Revolution, when it proved successful. The result is that the fundamental economic strategy at issue throughout is never seriously treated. Without the strategy made clear, one is left with the conclusion that the whole movement of events from 1958 to 1976 was an ideological struggle. Roderick, in giving the discussions taking place at the top, discussions which were certainly expressed in the discourse of Marxism, at one point quotes Mao intervening to say, "the communes must maximise their commodity trade in order to

maximise their profits". On this, however, Roderick makes no comment, although the sudden intrusion of this emphatically non-ideological statement reveals that, however esoteric the language of the debate, the issues were at bottom practical economic ones.

In the same way, the Cultural Revolution is always treated as having been touched off by literary issues. However, it was just as much touched off by the clash between Mao's ideas for the mechanisation of agriculture and those of Peng Zhen and Liu Shaoqi. Mao wanted the villages to buy and own the tractors. He had proposed this in 1958. Lin Biao now revived Mao's proposals. They were sent to Peng Zhen for comment. Peng condemned them by cutting out Mao's criticism of Soviet policy on this issue. According to Red Guard sources, Liu Shaoqi wanted Machine Tractor Stations, which were anathema to Mao. Peng supported Liu and was immediately removed from office. Peng was also, of course, the patron of the satirists who had attacked the Great Leap.

The authors who were attacked at the beginning of the Cultural Revolution had all condemned the Great Leap. These authors were patronised by the leaders who were disillusioned by its failure. All

authors in China served patrons. The idea that the people under attack were honest impartial independent writers is nonsense. And at that stage no patrons or writers could publish the case for Mao's strategy.

The struggle for the succession to Mao had begun. This dominated what was published. The "thaw" of the time was a thaw on the right with a freeze on the left. However, as far as many western commentators were concerned, the situation in China now consisted of the ideologist Mao on one side and the sensible, pragmatic, liberal-minded men whom Mao was attacking on the other. Not long before, however, the same men had been regarded as Communist tyrants, apparatchiks, no different from Mao himself. Where was Deng Xiaoping during the Anti-Rightists campaign? He was leading it, while Mao was deplored it. Where was he during the Great Leap? Touring the country, accepting every extravagance presented to him. Where was Liu Shaoqi when Mao invited the young people of China to criticise their superiors? Preparing to keep control over the students by imposing Party work-teams on them. What did Libermanist reforms advocated by Mao's opponents achieve when they were attempted? Little or nothing. What did Mao's commune and brigade enterprises achieve after their

renewal in 1970 and Deng's acceptance of them in 1979? They were producing 50% of China's vastly increased industrial output value, raising the average income of the Chinese peasants to the average of economically middle-ranking countries, and filling China's banks with peasant savings to finance Deng's economic reforms.

Integrated village development on the basis of the employment of surplus rural labour is probably the best way forward for most poor countries and the best way to exploit globalisation. This is more and more being recognised. It does not even need Communism to do it; but it was Mao who first demonstrated the possibilities - not a bad epitaph.

As concrete evidence for the potentialities of Mao's strategy, let me give two examples. I do not put them forward as examples of average achievement, but at the same time neither of them was a special show place. They credibly indicate the possibilities of the system.

The first was a labour-intensive water conservancy scheme about 100 miles west of Beijing. The village was in a valley surrounded by slopes liable to erosion, which caused regular flooding. The main

crop was rice; this was about as far north as rice is ever grown. Half a million trees were planted on the slopes. They were fodder trees, which supported a large herd of cattle. Each tree was planted in a hollow which checked the run-off of water. These hollows were joined by small ditches which fed a number of very small reservoirs - small enough for men to dig out the silt by hand. In this ingenious way they solved their water conservancy problems and substantially increased production. Out of this increase, they were about to buy their first tractor.

The second example is a commune-owned factory in Qixia xian, Shandong. It had originated as a group of housewives sewing up gloves. In the Great Leap they had begun to manufacture gloves completely and to take on other sorts of textile work. The enterprise survived Liu Shaoqi's destruction of commune and brigade enterprises because it was too small to count, but it continued to expand its operations. From 1970 it was able to work openly and to expand. When nylon became available it specialised in nylon. Then it specialised in crimped nylon. When I was there in 1982 it had gone over to producing nylon-crimping machinery for sale throughout China.

At that time I lived for three months in Chinese villages in Shandong, Jiangsu and Sichuan. I had requested the opportunity to stay in three villages: one representing good average industrial performance, one exceptionally successful, and one with poor resources. Beijing agreed. The average performer was the village in Qixia xian, Shandong; the high flyer was (as one might expect) in Wuxi, Jiangsu; the poorly endowed village was Hong Ya in western Sichuan.

Living and eating with the peasants of these villages I learned far more than I could ever have learned in Beijing. When the Shandong beer flowed, the Party line got lost! This experience gave me the opportunity not only to see the economic possibilities and problems of village enterprise, but its psychological consequences. What were the effects on peasant consciousness of participation in these new ventures? The most obvious thing was their consciousness of new possibilities. The second thing was their confidence which seemed to me a good indication of a high level of self-esteem.

I was convinced from their self-assurance that village development in this form was creating the beginnings of a new civil society. There were by then perhaps two million commune and brigade

enterprises operating in the market. The greater the number of small firms and the more complex the market, the smaller became the possibility of governing the system by command and the greater the need to negotiate. Relations with customers were replacing relations with the Party hierarchy. Grassroots cadres began to identify with their firms. It was a process with some analogy to that long before described by Adam Ferguson, the undermining of feudal hierarchy by the markets; a new civil society in the making - and bitterly resented for that reason by the die-hard Stalinists. And there can be no doubt that Mao Zedong, in advocating dynamic relationships between the sectors and decentralising economic decision-making to small firms operating on the market, was aware of the political implications. He wanted the localities to have room for initiative. He had already asserted the paradox that successful centralisation was possible only if adequate room was left for local initiative - no doubt reflecting his observation that extreme centralisation in the Soviet Union simply produced counter-productive defensive measures by those at the receiving end of central commands. He saw in the exercise of this initiative "our great and glorious hope for the future". I could not but feel, as I went round the factories and the fields in these villages, engaged in animated and practical discussion of successes and hopes, that

China's rural people were well on the way to becoming active citizens.

I do not want to idealise commune and brigade enterprise. Many enterprises failed. Many were too dependent on subsidies out of village funds. There was much wasteful duplication. Many of these crude little factories were poisonous to the environment. There was much corruption. There came to be much debt. However, here is a point at which one must remember not to compare our own ideal with their reality. Some of these accusations could be equally directed to small new businesses in the West, where indeed the failure rate is substantially higher than it was in China.

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China's democratic movement was begun by Mao, although perhaps he would have resisted it had he lived; but he built better than he knew. In the Cultural Revolution he asserted that "to rebel is justified". However, as the Cultural Revolution came to be overwhelmed by chaos, some Red Guards learned a second lesson; that democracy was viable only if protected by democratic institutions and procedures. Hence the LiYiZhi poster which

assumed that Mao had sought and had achieved a significant degree of democracy, but which insisted on the need for democratic institutionalisation.

Then in 1976 Chen Erchun built this idea into a new version of Marxism which he took for granted was a Maoist version. He argued that because violence was needed to overthrow the old exploiting classes, the revolution was bound to create authoritarian government. This authoritarian power was in turn bound to create a new, post-revolutionary ruling class. There always then had to be a second revolution to arrive at democratic socialism. The Marxist course of history was thus from feudalism to capitalism to the Red bourgeoisie to democratic socialism. Chen sent a copy of this manuscript to Mao, but Mao was already dying. However, his book inspired the Democracy Wall movement of 1979. Thereafter, Red Guards like Chen led the most vital part of China's democracy movement, the part which (unlike Beijing's democratic intellectuals) sought to create a mass democratic movement. This was obvious at Tiananmen, and indeed their efforts provided the main reason why the massacre occurred. The Red Guard democrats fought on thereafter, but were successfully suppressed when Jiang Zemin, having seemed to offer a degree of pluralism in politics, changed his

mind and imprisoned Wang Youcui, Xu Wenli and Qin Yongmin.

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To find positive elements in Mao Zedong's thought and action is not to deny that he was a dictator. Although he constantly warned against indiscriminate resort to imprisonment and execution, he was ruthless when he believed he had to be; the revolutionary consensus was to be protected at all costs from its enemies. Yet to assume because most dictators are paranoics or kleptocrats or closet fascists does not mean that all are. I do not see Mao as another Stalin or another Hitler. I see him more as I see Oliver Cromwell - a man of profoundly democratic instincts forced by circumstances to play the tyrant in defence of his democratic values and ill-served by his major generals.

我本想在退休之后写一部毛泽东的政治传记，但是岁月无情，来日无多，我只好将关于毛泽东的想法整理如下，以备年轻同行或有一用。

毛泽东的经济思想不同于世界上既有的经济学门派，从 1960 年代起就无人怀疑这一点了。他的经济思想少用或几乎不用意识形态的词句表达，异常平实，对或错一经验证便一目了然。读毛泽东批判斯大林主义的文章就可以明白这一点。我从三个维度观察中国：中国文化的发展，社会主义和落后的农业国如何脱贫。

- 第一个维度的要点在于如果使公民社会(其中的市场参与者可以是集体而不一定是个人)顺利取代传统的 (或者是我们已经在一些共产主义实践中看到的) 等级秩序，从而使决策过程更民主。
- 第二个维度的要点在于如何避免落入斯大林式的国家社会主义轨道而走向五四运动所指向的更具共产主义特征的社会主义。
- 第三个维度的要点在于中国的要素比例：在世界各大国中最糟糕的人口/可耕地比例，农业劳动力过剩以及资本积累不足。

这些是毛泽东要作出回答的主要问题。不从以上三个维度出发是无法正确理解大跃进和无产阶级文化大革命的。

大跃进意在打破中央化的等级管理机制，以创建基于基层人民团体的社会主义形式，从而将大量农村劳动力剩余由负债转化为资产，并开辟参与式民主的道路。文革也有这方面原因，尽管发动文革时的社会条件已经发生了变化。威权政府有时会借助非民主的手段为建立民主机制准备条件，因此与其指责每一个威权政府，还不如去观察在其治下出现了哪些有利于民主的条件。毛泽东对中国民主化的思考可以从他对斯大林的批评看起。毛泽东最看重的是全民参与经济增长的过程，作出贡献并分享利益，这正是创造民主社会的先决条件。

我特别感兴趣的是在大跃进中没有成功的公社与队办工业如何在 1970 年代复兴并成为创造经济奇迹的主要力量。关注中国的经济学家们对这一点的忽视更让我急于知道其中的真相。西方出版的那些大部头的中国经济论著对这一问题要么根本不提或者只有鄙夷的片言只语。世界银行直到 1990 才注意到所谓乡镇企业。在中国国内，社队办工业同样不受待见。斯大林式的计划经济专家讨厌它们，因为无法控制它们。中国知识分子反对它们，因为这些读书人一直在用最大，最先进的指标来理解经济发展。一位曾经参与中国第一个五年计划的苏联经济学家告诉我，他和他的苏联同仁极力建议中国大上低技术，低资本和劳动密集型工业，但是，中国人拒绝这样做，即使现在中国坚持这种态

度的还是大有人在.

社队办工业是经济学上的有趣现象，不过这里还涉及经济以外的问题，将经济决策权分散到 50 万个村庄将产生怎样的政治与社会后果？在我终于能够到中国农村生活一段时间，进行实地考查的时候，我一直在问这个问题。下面我将从四个方面来总结我对于毛泽东的认识，这包括问答对毛泽东最常见的几项指责；毛泽东的两大“失败”——大跃进和无产阶级文化大革命；毛泽东自己对发展战略的阐述；以及毛泽东留给中国人民的遗产。

对毛泽东的四大指控

第一，空想型的理论家；  
第二，唯意志论者；  
第三，不关心经济增长；  
第四，比斯大林更斯大林。

毛泽东是空想家吗？

在 32 本不同版本的辞典中，你会找到 32 种不同的关于什么是空想家的解释。对于这样一个概念最好敬而远之。我能找到的最近似的关于理论或者意识形态的定义是：一种用以支持权力结

构的观念体系。意识形态这个词已经被用得带有很强的贬义：我们的社会(西方) 建立于科学的基础之上，他们的(东方) 基于意识形态；我们的信仰是诚实的，而他们的是虚伪的。历史上意识形态作为一种信仰是否名至实归，正反两面的例子都有。确实有一些意识形态被一些不再信仰其本来含义的人用来支撑新的统治阶级，这些意识形态自然变得荒谬不堪。还有一些意识形态其本身更近于纯粹的价值系统，为了这些价值而付出的努力是务实的。不同性质的意识形态在历史过程中交叉错位，很多时候不能说明问题反而很误导人，所以我们必须就事论事。

如前所述，在众多的文本中，毛泽东使用完全非意识形态化的语言来阐发他那与众不同的经济发展战略。只是后来才加上了理论的外衣，这里的关键是要搞清：

毛泽东的战略与政策是对理论原则的盲目照搬，还是他的理论不过是对从实践出发的战略政策的理论化总结？对这个问题的答案我非常清楚：毛泽东的战略是注重实用的，是从中国要素比例的实际出发的：太少的土地，太少的资本，大量的农村剩余劳动力。而这些剩余的劳动力既可能成为负担也可能成为财富。

毛泽东是唯意志论者吗？

唯意志论者是马克思主义理论家习用的名词，用来指称那些追求不可能实现的目标的人。毛泽东在有些时候也许适用这个定义，但是，在西方，说某人是唯意志论者还意味着他相信人类的精神能够克服所有的阻碍。毛泽东是屡次用愚公移山来说服全党，但是愚公移山靠的并不是什

么魔术，仅仅是坚忍而已，毛泽东谈论的是从新的经验中产生的新的认识。历史上，由于人类认识的快速转变而带来大规模物质环境改变的先例是大量存在的。实际上，历史的进程就是这样展开的。

毛泽东必须劝说中国农民放弃他们经年累月应付生存挑战所形成的保守心态，参与到集体创业中来。毛泽东的观点在西方有其对应版本，瑞典经济学家岗纳迈尔代(Gunnar Myrdal) 说过，亚洲农民要想脱贫就必须不但改变经济条件，还要改变心理条件。农民们必须学会前瞻，敢于冒险。这正是毛泽东所要求的。毛泽东要让中国农民从简单密集的劳动开始，积累资本逐渐走向现代化。中国的现代化过程正在进行，它起步于毛泽东的晚年。

毛泽东注重意识形态的纯粹更甚于经济增长吗？

完全不是这样，毛泽东相信的是基于社会公平的增长速度更快。勤劳节俭的人民能够提供发展的资本，而他们的需求将提供发

展的动力，英国工业革命的内在逻辑就是如此。一般认为对大众剥夺是英国工业革命的动力，我的研究得出了不同的结论。当大不列颠的人民拥有了世界上最高的购买力时，工业革命才得以启动，只有大规模的机器生产才能满足这种需求。

毛泽东的经济政策是以经济语言表述的，而不是基于纯粹的意识形态。而且应该指出，毛泽东下放经济决策权和鼓励轻工业发展的计划也是陈云所支持的，但是，陈云通常却被描述为毛泽东的反对者。

### 毛泽东是斯大林主义者吗？

我从来都不明白这项指控是什么意思。在社会主义世界里，毛泽东对斯大林主义的批评是最全面和最深刻的。毛泽东不止于批判而且着手创造不同于苏联式的社会主义。正是毛泽东的实践说明了他对斯大林主义的反对是多少严肃。例如，当毛泽东批评斯大林阻碍了民众广泛参与政治生活的时候，你尚可对毛泽东批评的动机存疑，但是，当毛泽东鼓励数以万计的社村办企业破土而出时，你只能承认，他对民主的态度绝对是认真的。

### 毛泽东对斯大林的主要批评如下：

1. 斯大林的农产品统购体系导致了农民的贫困化：“他是在竭泽而渔。”在中国，在以农业支持工业的同时，农民收入逐年增加。在 1956 年增产粮食的努力失败后，毛泽东就认识到，没有农业生产与农民收入的实质增长，无法从农业中得到更多资源支持工业化。他开始相信，鼓励村庄自我发展，整个国家的储蓄与投资将会远高于从乡村征集资本并由国家进行再投资。
2. “在 30 年中，苏联没能创造出真正的公有制。他们所做的不过是把地主们破坏生产力的剥削永久化了。”在中国的第一个五年计划期间，用来维持基层政权的费用占农民年收入的 30%，这大体相当于过去地主收租的水平。毛泽东从此放弃了对苏联制度的模仿，基层党组织的首要职责变为保证生产的增长和提高村级收入。
3. 康生批评苏联的拖拉机站不过是在“勒索农民”，毛泽东接受了康生的建议，村集体应该拥有自己的拖拉机。对拖拉机站的争议后来也成为诸多触发文革的因素之一。
4. 斯大林体制阻碍了民众广泛参与经济发展。这是毛泽东对斯大林批判得最激烈的一点。这一批判反映了毛泽东对改造人民观念的重视，可以追溯到五四运动时期的思想解放运动，是毛泽东群众路线思想来源。

5. 斯大林否认在社会主义社会内部存在阶级矛盾. 毛泽东因此说道: “在苏联, 政治已经死亡.” 当然斯大林的意思是矛盾冲突在社会主义社会是被禁止的, 任何引发冲突, 挑起矛盾的行动都是会受到惩罚的. 毛泽东则正相反, 他始终坚持只有矛盾冲突才能带来进步. 所有信仰民主的人都会接受毛泽东的这一观点. 民主的程序推动矛盾解决, 新的矛盾由此产生, 无尽的新矛盾产生, 无尽的解决方案相随, 这样社会才能进步. 不断产生解决方案是民主的自然状态, 毛泽东的 阐述了对待矛盾冲突的正确态度. 在革命中永远会有利益的和观念的冲突. 这些冲突是允许的, 并且应该通过民主的方式解决.

6. 斯大林 “不清楚关系”: 在各经济部门的关系问题上, 斯大林持减和观点, 而毛泽东则持加和观点, 各部门相互激励可以取得更大的发展. 是关于这点的专门讨论.

7. 斯大林追求国家利益而忽视了集体与个人的利益. 斯大林的军工复合体是以压制人民的利益为条件建立起来的.

8. 斯大林“不知道如何使短期利益服务于长期利益”. 毛泽东构想的发展过程是白手起家, 以劳动积累, 利润转化再投资最终将技术提升到现代化水平. 在这一过程中, 经验积累将推动新认识的

形成.

除了以上毛泽东对斯大林主义直接的批评外，还有其他一些是含蓄表达的，但就所列举的这些批评就足以看出，毛泽东所追求的是更加“民主的”发展道路。毛泽东的这些观点，我相信所有追求民主的人也都能接受。这些理念导向的行动纲领将引导人民从臣民变成公民，从而创造民主的前提条件。

很多人认为，毛泽东对修正主义的批判代表了他对斯大林主义的支持。实际上毛泽东的观点是：给掌权的斯大林式的技术专家以物质利益诱惑不是进步而是退化。利伯曼修正主义只不过是毛泽东在“两条路线”中批判的那一条（Yevsey G.Liberman，苏联经济学家在 1962 年提出以利润为评价企业效率的惟一指标，并给予企业领导更大决策权。赫鲁晓夫实际上支持这一主张。）两条路线并不仅仅是一句口号，它可以回溯到圣西门式的国家社会主义与欧文/傅立叶式的公社社会主义之间的矛盾分歧。在社会主义 200 多年的思想与实践过程中，这一分歧一直是社会主义者面对的抉择。

## 毛泽东的两大“失败”

大跃进与文革被认为是毛泽东的两大失败。它们为什么失败了？

经常听到有人说，它们失败是因为它们注定要失败，因为它们从概念开始就是错误的。我不接受这种观点。如果在 1958 年的时候我是一个年轻的中国人，我肯定会投身到大跃进的热潮中去；到 1966 年的时候我肯定会和红卫兵一起抗议官员特权和滥用权力。在两种情况下，我也许最终难免会理想幻灭，但是，就算如此，我仍旧希望自己能够区分政策设想与执行之间的不同。

到目前为止，关于大跃进失败的解释仍然是不充分的。有一些对大跃进的批评是滑稽可笑的，例如 一书的作者 (Jasper Becker) 嘲笑中国人用转桶混合腐殖质与有机矿物质制成肥料，其实英国园丁现在还在这样做，因为非常有效。该作者还笑话中国人用河泥改良土壤，他根本不知道文明就起源于幼发拉底河的淤泥。大跃进中的土法钢铁所使用的小鼓风炉也遭受广泛的轻蔑，但是，就在距离我现在所在地二英里的地方----英国工业革命的发源地之一煤溪谷 (Coalbrookdale) 就悉心保存着英国工业革命时期的土法炼钢炉。1958 年的中国，就像现代化以前的英国，到处散布着零星的铁矿。开采利用并非难事。错误出在过于乐观，天真地以为在任何地方都可以推广。这个错误很快就被毛泽东发现并纠正了。还应该记住的是，在毛泽东身后农村推行生产责任制起，土法炼钢迅速在中国各地兴起，从事这一行的农民都发了财。

小型的，用人海战术搞起来的水利工程也被一些人谴责。肯定会有一些粗糙的工程，但是我在在中国看到了一些相当好。西方专家长久以来一直推崇这种小型水利灌溉系统并反对巨型水坝，因为小型水利造价低，有效，易于修葺，所有权控制权都在当地人的手上，对环境的损害很小，不用动迁居民。

大跃进的根本思想在于利用农村剩余劳动力来推进当地的工业化并改进农业的上层建筑。人们相信通过不断加速的利润再投资，这一过程可以快速地完成。这也是大跃进这一名词的由来。不过在大跃进开始的前夜，中国的报纸预言并警告了所有在后来被证实的错误，但是，这并没有能够阻止事情的发展。为什么会尚没有令人信服的解释。

有一些导致失败的因素是明显的。大跃进发生在毛泽东批评对党内的一些领导人试图减低发展速度以缓解第一个五年计划所引发的紧张状态之后。从此中国官员相信小心谨慎已经成了政治错误。中国人没有认识到局部实验性工农业项目的成功，并不一定能在全国范围内复制，当时的邓小平也不比其他人更聪明。局部的和大跃进初期的一些成功使乐观情绪高涨，新闻媒体上的鼓动宣传更加推波助澜。计划指标被迅速膨胀。一些省级官员为了从中央得到更多的资金而抬高目标。大跃进战略的重点原本在于快速发展轻工业，因为毛泽东相信这样可以更快地回收资

本，但是，除了劳动密集的项目之外，其他所有项目都需要机械工具，这样就加重了对钢铁的需求量，所以大跃进是对钢铁超出原计划的渴求。就不难理解。比起铁矿的广泛分布来煤矿的分布相对集中，所以当运输系统被运煤任务压到满负荷的时候，在全国调运粮食的任务就被推后了。这在后来成为导致部分地方发生饥荒的直接原因。1958年，中国取得了创纪录的农业丰收。当时很多粮食甚至没有地方储存，不得已只能出口。结果当第二年遭遇天灾而大减产的时候，粮食储备严重不足。过分乐观还导致了过量消费，丰收的成果被挥霍了。一位当时在中国的俄罗斯专家告诉我他对当时的情景感到吃惊并担心粮食收购体系会崩溃。同时，由于大量的劳力被转向了工业特别是炼钢，因此当灾难到来时，他们无法被及时地转移回农业以应付人手的不足。

本来大跃进的思路是从零资本投入起步，用以及后的收入来偿还开始的成本，但是，在过分乐观的情绪感染之下，这一原则被消失了。更为根本的问题出在等级制的党政系统不适应对群众运动的指挥，只有群众的能动性被调动起来才能使运动进入正确合理的轨道。中国的地方干部，普遍受到来自上级领导的压力，不得已采用强制手段进行管理。悲剧性讽刺在于各级干部在中国数以万计的村庄里复制出斯大林式经济的缩微样本。大跃进开始以前，中国各级政权组织表示将会以民主方法推动运动进行，但是，当时的政治体制使全党的干部不是对人民负责而只是

对上级负责。大跃进本来是要给予人民权利，结果却是县级干部截留了权力。

在粮食短缺发生时，富裕农民被指责屯积居奇，成了替罪羊。毛泽东的反斯大林之道而行之的大跃进被导向了对富农的迫害。毛泽东很快发现并提出了抗议。但是，运动已经失控。毛泽东是农民运动的领袖，至此却无法阻止运动走向其反面。有人认为毛泽东死守意识形态教条，拒绝承认大跃进的失败。但是，这与意识形态扯不上关系。毛泽东相信自己的战略是正确的，从原则上来说确实如此。毛泽东希望纠正错误并使运动继续进行下去。

1970 年代，在毛泽东第二次尝试他的战略设想并取得戏剧性成功以后，人们本应修正对大跃进的错误认识，但是，几乎没有人这么做，之后邓小平确定的党的路线更是彻底否定了这种可能。邓小平的故事是：四人帮搞死了社队办企业，而他自己从 1979 年以后重新再搞。然而，1982 年我在中国做的实地考查证明这个说法是错误的，大部分我访问过的企业都是在 1970 年或 1971 年建立或者恢复的，有一些甚至是从 1958 年起就存在的，并且在刘少奇对它们的打击之下幸存下来的。

关于无产阶级文化大革命毛泽东 1966 年在山西的一次讲话中曾经说道：“中国的官员是一个阶级，而且他们的利益与工人农民的

利益是对立的。”毛泽东预言如果这些红色资产阶级的特权和滥权不受约束，中国将法西斯化。

有两件事从另一个侧面说明了文革的性质。一是张春桥为一出新编革命戏剧的角色所加的按语：“他不是地主资本家出身，参加了长征和解放战争，他忠于革命，为人正直。”那么这么一个人为什么会变成一个专横残暴的人呢？因为体制的力量，日复一日的官僚生涯将他变成了他原本最痛恨的样子。革命的干部们必须认识到这个危险。

第二个是周恩来在领导已经被打倒的中国科学院对工作人员的讲话：“我们本来可以用行政手段做到这一切，但是那样同志们就不能从中学到任何东西了。”

文革不是为了大清洗。周恩来曾说（毛泽东也同意），只有不超过5%的干部应该被走赶下台。很明显，毛泽东不再认为刘少奇是合适的继承人，因为他分不清哪些问题要用法律和行政手段解决，哪些问题需要耐心的政治手段解决。毛泽东认为刘少奇在社会主义教育运动所犯错误就是这一性质。即使这样，毛泽东仍然坚持批刘少奇是针对思想不针对个人。

那么为什么文革后来升级至近乎内战的程度？对此仍然没有全

面可信的研究成果，不过确有一些好的局部研究。这些研究说明：第一，文革中青年学生和工人对特权阶层的不满程度比毛泽东原来估计的要严重得多；第二，解放军对文革的态度暧昧，第三，受到威胁的高级干部的子弟获得了武器并向对立面开战；第四，文革成为很多人清算旧账的机会，也促成了各种新主人脉网络的建立，这是中国政治运动背后的隐性动因。第五，当“巴黎公社”式的政权在一些城市里威胁到共产党自身的存在时，毛泽东选择了后撤。

文革像大跃进一样，长远来看，有一些积极的结果。毛泽东“造反有理”的断言结合文革的经验使中国人相信要让党内官僚真正负责来就必须建立起民主制度。

## 毛泽东的新战略

1920 年代早期，当苏联尝试解决“原始积累”问题时候，经济学家 Yevgeni Preobrazhensky 指出，依马克思的观点，英国初始工业化的绝大部分资本来自圈地运动对英国农民的剥削。Preobrazhensky 认为苏联除了以类似的手法剥夺农民以外没有资本来满足工业化的需要。他把这叫做是“现实的封建制度。”

现代研究显示，在圈地运动当中并不存在对英国农民的剥夺。在

此只需指出，英格兰的土地税记录表明在圈地运动之后出现了更多拥有土地的自耕农。圈地后耕地和牧场的综合利用使四季轮作成为可能，从而促进了小型农庄的出现。因此斯大林的牺牲农民的战略完全是基于历史的迷思。

另一方面，在 1920 年代的苏联有两位社会计划的先驱人物：Shanin 和 Bazarov. Shanin 认为对农业的少量投资可以对农业生产和发展农民收入带来巨大的贡献。农民增加了需求将促进工业化。Bararov 则认为大多数经济发展本质上都是地区的。电力的广泛利用使昂贵的城市化工业中心不再必要，俄国农民摆脱贫困线所最急需的是“土路和电力支线”，最经济的发展方式是使“劳动者本人就是受益者”。Shanin 和 Bazarov 最终甚至说服了 Preobrazhensky. 布哈林也支持他们，但是，斯大林仍然选择了“现实的封建主义。”

1950 年代早期，当发达国家也开始了它们的经济计划尝试时，斯大林的发展模式被广泛接受（尽管在执行中西方不及斯大林那么严酷）。农业被高税收和国家制定的低收购价格勒索为工业化提供资本。接着爱沙尼亚经济学家雷格纳尔 努克斯(Ragnar Nurkse)提出了一个新的发展模型，他认为在众多贫穷的农业国中典型的农村劳动力过剩可以由负担变成财富，使用这些劳动力来提高产量，搞多种种植，改善农村基础设施，增加劳动密集

和低技术的乡村工业。他还详细分析了可能遇到的各种问题。结论是增加农民的购买力可以创造驱动工业化前进的有效需求。

而这正是毛泽东大跃进战略的基础。毛泽东与努克斯在这一点上高度一致。令人惊异是否毛泽东读过后的著作。毛泽东还相信，并非均衡而是不均衡在推动经济前进。罗德里克 麦克法尔轻蔑这一观点，但是这只不过是经济学上的常识，与毛泽东几乎同时代的德国经济学家赫施曼(Albert Otto Hirschman)也执同样的观点。毛泽东的观点是，技术官僚搞出来的计划和依据静态均衡制定的资源分配方案完全没有将人的主观能动性考虑在内，这种能动性可以对需求变化做出迅速的反应。这里毛泽东所要求的其实就是市场要素。

毛泽东的经济思想还与岗纳 迈尔代找到了契合点，他们都认为农民要摆脱贫困就必须改变其固有的农民意识。毛泽东的大跃进战略根本就是异想天开，不是“人有多大胆，地有多大产”，相反它与现代思想息息相通。正是毛泽东的反对者们死抱着斯大林主义。毛泽东一贯坚持他的经济理念。他并没有在 1958 年突然心血来潮由非常注重实用转向了僵化的意识形态。

毛泽东真正矛盾的地方在于，1953 年时他曾经接受了斯大林主义。不过那时中国面对着美国的敌意。这一矛盾持续时间并不长，

1953 年制定的第一个五年计划直到 1955 年才完全付诸实施，而到那一年年末毛泽东对斯大林的批判就开始了。

## 毛泽东留给中国的遗产

人们经常低估早期教育对毛泽东接受马克思主义的影响。毛泽东走向马克思主义与马克思本人的思想历程是一致的——从个人自我实现的激情到认清“阶级结构是阻碍自我实现的主要障碍”。五四运动的思想来源是欧洲的启蒙思想家，而马克思也包括其中。马克思对民主思想的贡献在于他断言不受控制的资本主义与不受控制的政府一样是对民主的威胁。马克思的其他思想我认为并不具有很高价值。他的历史学是贫乏的；他的经济思想充满了矛盾（资本主义一边成长壮大一边使绝大多数消费者陷入贫困化，这怎么可能？），他的哲学是第三手的雅格布·伯麦（Jacob Boehme）和梅斯特艾科哈特（Meister Eckhart）的神秘主义（当我读到黑格尔时，立刻就想到了 Boehme）。

从哲学角度来看，毛泽东接受了格林（Thomas Hill Green）的意识概念。毛泽东的群众路线就是领导者与被领导者共同创造新认识的方法。在其它地方有人会将这种方法称为“参与型研究”。毛泽东的认识论将群众路线与马克思主义挂钩，但是你也可以追溯到杜威那里，因为毛泽东强调反复试错的过程，这是杜威的实

用主义哲学：在我党的一切实际工作中，凡属正确的领导，必须是从群众中来，到群众中去。这就是说，将群众的意见（分散的无系统的意见）集中起来（经过研究，化为集中的系统的意见），又到群众中去作宣传解释，化为群众的意见，使群众坚持下去，见之于行动，并在群众行动中考验这些意见是否正确。然后再从群众中集中起来，再到群众中坚持下去。如此无限循环，一次比一次地更正确、更生动、更丰富。这就是马克思主义的认识论。

毛泽东的群众路线不仅与他的认识论紧密联系，而且还见于他在《实践论》中所阐述的：通过实践而发现真理，又通过实践而证实真理和发展真理。从感性认识而能动地发展到理性认识，又从理性认识而能动地指导革命实践，改造主观世界和客观世界。实践、认识、再实践、再认识，这种形式，循环往复以至无穷，而实践和认识之每一循环的内容，都比较地进到了高一级的程度。这就是辩证唯物论的全部认识论，这就是辩证唯物论的知行统一观。

除了五四运动引入的欧洲启蒙思想，中国也有自己的启蒙思想。王阳明关于“理”的学说推崇“知行合一”。王夫之反对照搬古代的典章制度阻碍今天的发展。顾炎武认为中国历史上当地方拥有自治权时国势趋强，而当君主专权的时候，国势趋弱。黄宗羲认为仕作为儒家价值的看护人应该代表人民而不是君主的利益。

康有为认为儒仕应该避免空谈努力实践，追求尽可能接近自己的理想，政治因此成了一门关于可能性的艺术。青年毛泽东在五四时期肯定受到了东西方启蒙思想的洗礼。

尽管由于明显的政治原因，毛泽东后来几乎从未源引西方“理想主义”作者或者儒家学者，但是这些人确实对毛泽东理解马克思主义的方式有深刻的影响。除了格林的认识论以外，约翰·杜威特别值得提及。杜威的实用主义与马克思的整体论之间的对比经常被过度引申，杜威相信人类所能了解的真理只能来自对可预测变化的观察，人类通过对事物的改变来学习。马克思认为认识来自于革命性变革过程中的行动。陈独秀将两者结合，在某种程度上是杜威将陈独秀引向了马克思主义。毛泽东很可能也是这种情况。务实的行动不能没有目的，而目的基于价值观，这些都可以从毛泽东的认识论里发现回声。

在格林和杜威之后的第三个西方思想源头是托马斯·克库伯，他的是毛泽东读到的第一本关于社会主义的著作，毛泽东告诉埃德加·斯诺，他如饥似渴地阅读这本书。克库伯谈到了圣西门的国家社会主义与欧文/傅立叶的公社社会主义的矛盾分歧，介绍了欧文关于人类的本性可以通过社会变改得到完善，就像欧文在自己的磨房工厂里进行的社会实践改造了在那里工作的原本赤贫的没有受过教育的工人。克库伯还认为社会主义的形式应

该由实践所处的具体环境决定，不同的国民特质有不同的社会主义形式相对应。

应该注意在毛泽东读到克库伯的时候斯大林主义还没有出现，社会主义仍然是一个开放的思想体系，克库伯在中国曾经产生过很大的影响，1982年我在四川的时候还听说他的书再版的消息。当然毛泽东的早期教育对其后来思想的影响的研究只能是一种猜测，我们所知的包括毛泽东在长沙图书馆的自学，还有他的老师杨昌济的影响---是杨昌济送给毛泽东一本由江亢虎翻译的克库伯，我们还知道他在五四运动前后可能读到的书籍，以及他在一篇文章里对杜威思想的热烈回应。

毛泽东将很多思想融会贯通：意识动机；通过试错法找到可预测的现象从而形成知识达至真理；社会主义提供了在国家集权控制和统一物质分配的共产主义形式之外的另一种选择；地方自治而非中央集权是决定中国国力的基本因素；个人的自我完善只能通过与他人的互助合作达到；僵化的制度阻碍发展；以什么样工具创造社会主义就会得到什么样的社会主义；智慧归根结底来自人民而不是政府；政府的基础是共识；一个人意志力的大小决定于他自尊的程度；社会主义依国情与传统的差异而有所差别。所有以上这些观点，要么有毛泽东的原话为证，要么可以由他的行动中得出。

毛泽东最初在长沙的政治活动让他不得不相信只有武力才能解决中国的问题。湖南的省议会与中国的国家议会都是徒有其表。所谓民主制度有时确能窒息社会改良的真正努力，这为 1945 年以后许多国家的情况所证明。毛泽东的优先选择是团结尽可能多的人共同反抗压迫。压迫与反压迫构成了历史的主线。我们要问只是：毛泽东最终是坚持了这个信念还是背叛了它。（这是一个重大的问题）

在中国共产党建立之初的 6 年中，毛泽东在党内一直是代表农民的，他是中国农民运动讲习所的领导人。1927 年他写出了湖南农民运动报告，同年蒋介石的政变迫使毛泽东进入江西农村。1934 年，红军被迫退出江西开始长征，并一路打到陕西。从那时起直到 1949 年，毛泽东领导着一个国中国——一个农民的中国。在国民党人眼中，有两个共产党，一个陕西党一个上海党。有一点我无法证实但仍然相信：当刘少奇想到中国的时候，他首先想到的是沿海的发达地区，而毛泽东想到中国的时候，他首先想到的是内陆的不发达地区。

在边区的时候，毛泽东初次开始处理经济问题。边区必须加强经济来抵抗日本军队和蒋介石的封锁。当时一些共产党人希望发展政府所有的工业和完全集体化的农业。毛泽东反对这种不切

实际的想法，他采取了共助组和工商合作社的道路。

施拉姆 (Stuart Schram)不相信边区经济与毛泽东的大跃进战略有联系，因为边区时期不存在国有经济。施拉姆对毛泽东研究贡献良多，但这一点我无法不反对他。在边区的经济问题与财政问题一书中毛泽东称赞非政府经营的工业合作社，并且将延安合作社树为榜样。(这一部分在再版时被删除了)。我一直相信，工业合作社是毛泽东本人的主意。合作以村为基本单位，充分利用劳动力，将所得收入迅速投入再生产，从而积累资本和技术。合作社的成员主要是农民，而领头的往往是从城里来的年轻技工。工业合作社的组织是“地方管理，中央监督”，管理是民主的，有的时候是超民主的。由于没有配套企业，他们不得不什么都做。在边区现有的条件下，合作社的收入支撑了村里医疗和教育的开支。据斯诺报道，合作社充当了全村甚至跨村的经济生活的组织者角色。边区时期毛泽东推崇的工业合作社模式与 20 年后人民公社之间深刻的相似性是不能被忽视的。

边区的另外一些合作社，由边区政府或军队组织管理，提供技术和资金。它们就像大跃进时期国有经济部门，同时也可将其视为公社制度的先声。

加入了中国共产党的新西兰人路易 艾黎搞的“工合”(Gung-Ho)

组织和美国传教士在上海郊区搞的自助合作社和边区的工业合作社有相通之处，这条线索一直贯通到 1958 年人民公社的建立，毛泽东在中国农村的社会主义新高潮 中将人民公社定义为更大区域内的合作，目的是提高分工和生产多样化。我们不能否定这其中明显的连续性。

在第一个五年计划执行刚刚过半的时候，毛泽东就在 中国农村的社会主义新高潮一书里指出了个体农民要走合作化道路的方向。从始至终毛泽东强调的是通过激发农民的创造性和利用农村的资源来制定生产计划增加合作社社员的收入。新高潮的思想立足于缺乏资本的现实，用集体的组织手段充分调动农民的主动性，劳力投入获得后续的投资，积累技术迈向人民公社。相当可信的数字显示，农民的劳动效率和收入水平在原来基础上都有提高。在土改之后，最富有的农民拥有的土地一般是最穷的农民的两倍，但是，富民 70% 到 75% 的收入要用于养家，由于富裕农民往往家庭规模更大，所以他们在基本生活保障线以上的收入不到贫民的两倍。在保证基本生活需要之后，任何小的生产效率提高都可以带来可支配收入的显著增加。这使几乎所有的农民都加入到集体中来，进行分工合作。

新高潮一书中给出的第一个例子是农业合作社的党支部王国番在村里富家不愿意入社的情况下，带领贫民进山拾柴卖钱。这是

在农闲时做的，所以几乎没有机会成本，等他们攒够了钱就开始投资，合作社越搞越大。两年以内中农们看到有利可图都入了社。这个例子也许是虚构的，但它的逻辑是可信的。

这说明毛泽东本意是要用渐进的办法来搞合作农业，但是后来他急于推进，合作化遭遇了富民的抵触。据毛泽东自己说，在这一过程中有 80000 人被处决，平均每 50 个村庄有 8 人，这些人是谁又是因为什么被杀，我们可能永远也无法知道。但是，必须说明的是，直到 1950 年代中期，前国民党的支持者依然在很多地方进行暗中破坏，那些被处决的人当中应该包括了这部分人。

在第一个五年计划当中，合作社并没有创造很多非农业的工作岗位。因此大跃进就成了第二次机会。在《论十大关系》出版后三个月，毛泽东就在讲话里提出中央要放权，调动地方和各部门的积极性，这实际上用市场手段减弱中央统配，由部门间的准市场互利关系来促进经济增长。《论十大关系》是毛泽东经济思想的权威阐述。

接下来是双百方针和反右运动，这是党第一次邀请公开的批评，批评本是群众路线的组成部分，但是全国规模的大批评还从未有过。反右被认为是给异见分子挖的陷阱。是毛泽东的引敌深入的策略。但是，实际上毛泽东从未同意过对右派进行惩罚。（如果他支持那么惩罚，为什么又宴请一批知名的右派并公开与他们

的合影). 事实上，毛泽东反复要求对于绝大多数不接受革命思想的知识分子要耐心教育.

在中，毛泽东对斯大林否定社会主义社会存在阶级矛盾提出了批评，对敌我矛盾和人民内部矛盾进行了细致区分. 对于那些拒不接受革命思想的人，毛泽东认为最好的办法是让时间来解决他们. 而对于人民内部的意见和利益分歧则必须通过民主的方式解决.

有人持有反右破坏了党内共识的观点并不令人吃惊. 1950 年代初毛泽东就发动了“反对官僚主义和长官意志”的运动，他对官老爷是深恶痛绝的. 文革中红卫兵将大跃进和人民公社说成是毛泽东对官僚主义的斗争，我毫不怀疑毛泽东也是从这个角度来思考这个问题的.

大跃进不只是把群众路线当作政治时尚，而是把群众路线当作是最有效最民主的社会变革的工具. 人民参与设计完成这个变革，提供制度雏形，党来加工完善. 在经济领域，权力下放，中央官僚机构无权下命令，而只能对地方的动议进行反应.

麦考法尔在他的一书中说文革脱胎于大跨进. 他的考察的历史阶段很成问题. 他从大跃进的中期入手止于文革之初，这样就忽略

了大跃进本身的起源和文革的后果。这样对大跃进和文革的认识都难以成立。因为大跃进初期的成功被排除了，而正是这一成功所造成的过分乐观导致了后来灾难性的政策执行扭曲。而且他的书根本没有触及文革开始后得以复活的大跃进战略，这一次相对克制的政策取得了成功。麦考法尔绕过了根本的经济战略问题，营造出从 1958 到 1976 年的全部运动不过是意识形态之争的假象。在书中作者引述了共产党领导层的多次讨论，在一次争论中毛泽东插话道：“公社必须尽可能多产商品才能多赢利。”对此，麦考法尔没有评论。而这一完全非意识形态的言论反映出无论党内辩论使用的是多少深奥的政治语言，问题仍然是实际的经济问题。

文化革命被很多人视为由文化问题触发，其实经济问题仍然占有一席之地。毛泽东的农业机械化主张同彭真、刘少奇的不同。毛泽东让村庄购买拥有自己的拖拉机，他是在 1958 年提出这一建议的。文革后又由林彪重提。但是彭真在传达时故意将毛泽东对苏联拖拉机站政策的批评砍掉。根据红卫兵的批判材料，刘少奇想搞苏式拖拉机站。彭真因为支持刘少奇，再加上庇护攻击大跃进的杂文作家而被免职。

文革开始时受到攻击的作家们都对大跃进持批评意见。这些作家受到对大跃进态度消极的领导人的保护。在当时的中国，所有

作家都是为自己的保护人服务的.说这些作家是独立的根本是无知.

毛泽东的继承之争开始后，言论出版成为重要的较力场，当时右派的解冻就意味着对左派的封口。在西方评论家那里，这被视为是意识形态化的毛泽东与务实的亲自由领导人之间的斗争。而正是这些所谓的务实领导人在此之前一直被称为和毛泽东一样的共产主义暴徒。反右的时候，邓小平在哪里？他是反右运动的领导，是毛泽东对反右感到痛惜并反对扩大化。大跃进的时候邓小平又在哪里？他在全国各地巡视，对所有的浮夸和反常没有提出任何异议。当毛泽东要求中国的年轻人批评他们的领导的时候，刘少奇在哪里？他在组织党的工作组去控制学生。毛泽东的反对者提出的“利伯曼”式的改革方案在一度实行之后没有取得任何明显的成果。而毛泽东的社队办企业在 1970 年代复兴一直到 1979 年邓小平上台发展的如何？他们贡献了中国一半的工业增加值。使中国农民的收入达到了中等国家的水平，中国人的储蓄是邓小平开始他的经济改革的本钱。

利用农业劳动力的剩余来发展农村可能是绝大多数穷国在全球化时代的最佳选择，这一点已经被越来越多的人认识到。不一定相信共产主义才能办到，但是是毛泽东第一个发现了这种可能

性---- 这是一个不错的墓志铭.

关于毛泽东经济发展战略的潜力，我举两个例子. 第一个是一个水土保持的项目，在北京以西 100 英里的一个村庄. 山区坡地经常受到洪水的侵扰，当时的粮食作物是水稻. 村民们在山坡上种下了 50 万棵树，这些树的树叶可以作为饲料，树窝能储留雨水. 坡上的小垅就像是小型水库，农民手工清理淤泥保持水土不流失. 这种办法涵养了水源同时发展了牲畜生产. 使农民有钱购买自己的第一台拖拉机.

第二个例子山东栖霞县的一个社办工厂. 这个厂最初是从组织家庭妇女缝制手套开始的，在大跃进中他们除了手套还生产其它纺织品. 因为这个厂太小，才得以从刘少奇对社队办工厂的扫荡中幸存下来. 从 1970 年开始，它扩大生活. 当尼龙出现后，它转向了生产波纹尼龙布. 当 1982 年我去这个厂考查时，他们生产的尼龙轧纹波机已经行销全中国了.

1982 年我得到去中国考察的机会. 我计划在中国的山东，江苏，四川的三个村庄里呆了三个月，这三个村庄的经济条件分别是很好，中等偏上和很差. 北京同意了我的计划. 很好的那个在江苏无锡，中等偏上的村子在山东的栖霞县，很差的那个在四川西部的洪雅. 在这三个村子里我学到的东西比我在北京学到的多

得多。在山东我和农村干部一杯下肚，就不再有什么不能谈的了。这让我不但了解到村办企业的潜力和问题，也看到了它对农民的心理影响。村办企业让农民有了新的眼光，他们变得自信起来，在我看来这是农民自我意识革命的开始。

农民对这种发展方向的肯定使我相信这是通向新的公民社会的开始。当时全中国有大约 200 万个社队办企业参与市场活动。小企业越多，市场就越复杂，大量的企业和复杂的市场让行政干预变得更困难，市场中的谈判活动的影响越来越大。商业往来取代了党内的上下级关系。基层干部开始认同自己在社队企业里的角色，这类似于亚当·弗格森(Adam Ferguson) 提出的市场对封建等级制度的侵蚀。一个新的公民社会在中国兴起，它当然被死硬的斯大林主义者痛恨。毛泽东肯定是意识到了经济权力下放对在市场上活动的小企业的政治影响。他就是想给在生产一线的人发挥创造性的空间。毛泽东早就认识到了计划经济的悖论：中央计划的成功只能来自于基层享有充分的自主权。

毛泽东认为苏联式中央集权控制只能在被控制者那里引起阻碍生产的反制反应。我在中国农村的田野和社队工厂里看到听到的是积极务实的行动和期望，中国的农民正是变成活跃的国家公民。我不是在理想化社队派企业，很多企业最终不成功，很多依赖于村落里的补贴还没有产生效益。有不小的浪费，不少对环

境还有不良影响。甚至滋生腐败。但是我们不能用自己社会的理想样本来评判别人的现实。西方的小型企业也受到几乎同样问题的困扰。实际上西方小企业的失败率甚至要高于中国。

中国的民主运动是从毛泽东开始的。在文革中他说造反有理，在文革陷入混乱以后，红卫兵学到的第二课就是没有制度和程序的保障民主就是无法存活。因此在李一哲大字报里，作者认为毛泽东推动的民主已经达到了相当的程度，需要建立相适应的民主制度。1976年陈尔晋上书毛泽东，他说由于需要用暴力来推翻旧的剥削阶级，革命必然创造一个威权政府，这在革命后形成一个新的统治阶级。因此需要二次革命。马克思主义的历史观应该是从封建主义到资本主义再经过红色资产阶级进入民主社会主义。陈的主张实际上成了民主墙运动的基调。之后，源自红卫兵的这支追求中国民主的力量，完全不同于北京的那些要求民主的知识分子，一直在寻求推动广泛的人民民主运动。64的结局与这一支民主力量的发展引起邓小平的警惕有重大关系。由昔日红卫兵推动的民主运动在90年代以后仍在继续直到江泽民收回了他对多元政治的有限支持，监禁了王有才，徐文立和秦永敏等人为止。

寻找毛泽东思想与行动中的积极因素并不是要否认他是一个独裁者。尽管毛泽东一直反对滥用刑罚和处决，但在他相信必须这

样做时，并不手软。为了保护革命 事业，革命的敌人必须付出代价。大多数独裁者都是偏执狂和窃国大盗并不意味着所有独裁者都是如此。我决不认为毛泽东是另一个斯大林或者希特勒。在我看来，他更像是奥立弗 克伦威尔---- 本质上倾向民主，但是由于环境所迫不得不大权独揽，他这么做正是为了捍卫民主的价值，因为他的将军们既不理解也帮不了他。