

# **America Against America (USA)**

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*Note: As a reminder to [issues6](#), against **is** much more appropriate than [Oppose](#) in the original project name, so I will use America against America as its English translation in the future.*

## Preface

From late August 1988, I was invited to the United States for a six-month academic visit. During that time, I visited more than thirty cities and nearly twenty universities, did research in dozens of government and private sectors, and discussed the United States with a wide range of Americans and foreigners. I documented my daily discussions, visits, and observations, and this book was born.

Obviously, I studied and viewed the United States as a society as an observer rather than an investigator, and I can say that my visit in the United States had a purpose, which was to get to know this number one capitalist country in more detail and in a more realistic way. We should look at it as a history, a culture, a people, a set of institutions, and not as a few abstract dogmatic concepts. In my book *Comparative Political Analysis*, published in 1987, I proposed a design for analyzing socio-political movements using a historically-socially-culturally conditioned landscape. In that book, it was by and large only a macro-framework design. This time, too, an attempt is made to use this approach to analyze a political community, the United States, specifically.

The fundamental purpose of this book, therefore, is not to explore the diverse dimensions, the colorful landscapes, and the intricate movements it depicts, but to explore the political and social management processes of American society, and although the book attempts to cover as many dimensions and topics as possible, its analysis remains consistent with these themes. The development and flux of a society is inseparable from its politics and the way it is managed. It can be said that what kind of politics and social management there is, is what kind of social development there is. It is difficult to analyze and understand the United States without this logic. I just want to answer a simple H0 question by dissecting the multiple dimensions of society: "Why is there an America?" This question is simple, but it is far beyond my ability to do so, and I know it well.

The approach of this book is to analyze American society using a framework of historical-social-cultural conditions without considering any of these factors in isolation. Human social life, political life, and cultural life are infinitely intricate and intertwined networks. It would be difficult to analyze and view one of these issues in isolation or simply.

Since it is a concrete application of the above method, it requires careful and vivid observation, documentation, and analysis of all aspects of a society. That is why this book is more about concrete portrayal and factual recording than abstract reasoning. Any abstract reasoning can only be derived from observation and analysis of facts, and for abstract reasoning to be convincing, it is important that there are no convincing facts to lay the foundation. Sometimes one needs to do a kind of work, which is to provide the opportunity to think, rather than the conclusion of thinking. Of course, the various real-life accounts in this book follow my thinking and conclusions, but I have also tried to make it possible to provide opportunities for others to think.

This book takes the United States as the object of analysis, because the United States, like China, constitutes a special phenomenon of humanity in the twentieth century, which can be called the "American phenomenon". The "Chinese phenomenon" is why this ancient civilization with a long history of more than 2,000 years has declined in the modern era. Why is it lagging behind the modern nations of the world? This has caused generations of scholars and scholars to think hard. The "American phenomenon" has a different dimension, and people wonder why this nation, with a short history of only two hundred years, has become the world's leading developed country today. I believe that scholars living in the twentieth century have a responsibility to study these two phenomena. As a Chinese scholar, he has a dual responsibility to study both the "Chinese phenomenon" and the "American phenomenon. In this way, he can better understand himself and the world, and better explore the path to China's strength.

*America Against America* is probably a strange and rather puzzling title for a book. My intention with this title is to show that America is not a simple homogeneous whole that can be dismissed with a single sentence. In the old days, when people started from a dogmatic view of America as a mere "exploitation of surplus value," a "dictatorship of the bourgeoisie," and nothing more, then the reality of America would

oppose this ominous "America ", the rigid conception of the United States. Now there is another extreme, some people imagine the United States as a rich paradise, perfect, then the reality of the United States is also opposed to such "America", idealized America. Including American society itself, it has its affirmative and negative forces, and wherever affirmative forces can be found, negative forces can be found. This is the basic meaning of America Against America.

*America Against America*, shows the basic movement of society. But wherever there is a human invention, it cannot be ironclad, and it is not and cannot be possible to subsume a society all under one established concept. *America Against America*, indicates the book's attempt to reveal what factors in American society constitute each of these two relative quantities of for. We cannot say in one sentence what America is, to say, but only: "America against America".

The more one delves into the study of America, the more one gets rid of the sketched image, the easier it is to discover this inherent contradiction in American society. As a scholar who studies a society as an object of scientific research, one should not paint one's object with a rose color, and certainly not with a coal gray color. Rather, one should objectively identify the pros and cons of the society. In general, scholars should be critical of what exists, which is the most important motivation for social development. In the case of the United States, I hold such a critical attitude. It is worth noting that the mechanisms that exist in American society, both good and bad, are the product of the historical-social-cultural conditions of that society, and they exist only in that environment, and cannot simply be applied to other societies. In this regard, it is not possible to simply imitate them between different countries.

The United States is a large country. In this big country, cite one image of America to cite an image of America in opposition to it. As is generally believed, the United States is a rich country, indeed, many people living in this place are very rich, rich enough to own a private jet airliner is not uncommon. The majority of the population can also be said to be living in "peace and happiness", ordinary people generally have a small car and other equipment. But if this is America, then one can immediately paint a different picture of America. At the University of California, Berkeley, there is a place called "People's Park". The so-called "People's Park" was originally an empty lot on Berkeley's campus, but it was later occupied by homeless people. When I

was there, there were hundreds of homeless people dressed in rags who spent the night there every day, some with small tents made of rags, others with newspapers on the ground, sleeping on the ground. The dirty, filthy, listless appearance of these Americans did not fit the concept of America in any way. Church charities came to give out breakfast each morning, and the university swimming pool was regularly opened for them to wash their bodies. On the night Bush was inaugurated as the 41st president, I saw homeless people sleeping in the doorways of the buildings lining Bush Street in San Francisco. Isn't this America? Is this America? I'm afraid I can't answer that with a single word.

The United States is also generally considered to be a Western democracy, and a typical Western democracy at that, and Americans are proud of it. The Constitution, election campaigns, separation of powers, citizen participation in politics, and so on and so forth show one side of this system, but on the other side, can each commoner really dominate the politics of this country? My analysis in this book shows that the powerful groups that dominate politics are above the common people. The constraints of private property on political democracy in the capitalist system of the United States cannot be ignored. Even American scholars have said that a political democracy cannot function properly where the differences in economic power are so great that one group can use non-political means to determine the woes of another group. A true political democracy must therefore involve the right of the governed to control economic policy through their representatives." (Sydney Hooker, *Reason, Social Myths, and Democracy*, p. 286) Economic decision-making in the United States is largely controlled by private consortia. Is this democratic? Is it undemocratic? I'm afraid it can't be answered in a single word.

Paradoxes like these abound. It can be said that the United States is a rich country, but it can also be said that the United States is a country full of poor people; it can be said that the United States is a typical Western democracy, but it can also be said that the United States is a not so democratic country; it can be said that the United States is a country with advanced education, but it can also be said that the United States has a lot of education problems; it can be said that the United States is a country where equality is paramount, but it can also be said that the United States is not so equal; it can be said that the United States is a stable We can say that the United States is a stable and developing society, but we can also say that the United

States is a crisis-ridden society. My idea is to oppose the imaginary America with the factual America.

The United States is only one capitalist country, and it does not represent all Western capitalist societies. I simply want to use the case study of the United States to promote our understanding of capitalism and, indirectly, socialism as well.

One hundred and fifty years ago, Marx and Engels declared in *The Communist Manifesto*: "With the development of big industry, the very basis on which the bourgeoisie produces and appropriates its products is itself dug out from under its feet. It produces first of all its own gravediggers." (Marx and Engels, vol. 1, p. 263) Lenin declared imperialism "dying" and "decaying" at the beginning of this century. After all these years, it should be said that capitalism is still developing and cannot be underestimated. The judgments and analyses of historical materialism are correct in terms of historical development. However, the law of the development of human society as indicated by historical materialism needs the maturity of historical conditions. When these conditions are not ripe, any subjective judgment is rather inconsistent with the logic of historical materialism. For a long time, driven by the reinforcement of ideology, once there was a total rejection of capitalism, which was influenced by dogmatism, which prevented people from judging capitalist society objectively and scientifically, and the influence of "left" ideology, which took class struggle as the outline, which disturbed our perspective of the whole world and prevented people from learning from advanced experience of other countries. It also prevents people from learning from the advanced experience of other countries. This not only hinders this, but actually also prevents people from correctly understanding and grasping the shortcomings of capitalism.

As human societies, no matter what the system is, there will be conflicts, conflicts, and needs. It should be useful to understand what methods different human societies use to resolve contradictions, mitigate conflicts, and meet needs. If my analysis of these issues contributes to the development and progress of Chinese society, then I will have achieved my original intention.

I think that the first thing to know about anything is to know and grasp it accurately or precisely, and then to analyze and evaluate it. This book is based on such logic.

There are eleven chapters in this book, and I would like to briefly point out here: (1) the uneven development of society and its various features; (2) the values that dominate political life and their flux; (3) the diverse character of the nation and its social efficacy; (4) the formal and informal mechanisms that regulate people's social activities; (5) the political forces active in society and their relations; (6) the democratic and non-democratic elements in election campaigns; (7) top-down political operations and their characteristics; (8) non-political coordination mechanisms and socialized regulation; (9) the reproduction of culture, values and even institutions and the connection with education; (10) the role of ideas in the development and management of society; (11) the various undercurrents that threaten future development.

Although these eleven chapters contain quite a few aspects, the object is a large country, so the facets actually covered are only a limited aspect of American society. From this perspective, I think the book falls short on two counts.

First: The book is limited in its coverage and cannot possibly cover all aspects of every tree in the American forest, so it should be said that there are limitations. It cannot be said that these aspects adequately reflect the subject matter of this book. I wanted to do a "peek-a-boo" thing, but the question is whether the "peek-a-boo" was found. I think we have found some, but not many. The good thing is that we can find a lot of other literature that can make up for the shortcomings of this book.

Second, I analyze American society as an observer rather than a researcher. Some of the data and materials, though sourced, do not meet the standards of rigorous statistics. I am afraid that some of the issues discussed may be subjective, or even erroneous. Therefore, I hope that people will read this book from a macro-sociological point of view, rather than treating it as microbiology.

Also, in this book, I do not want to torture the reader with too much thoughtful analysis and theoretical quotations, which is not the purpose of this book.

Finally, I would like to thank the many institutions and friends who have been instrumental in bringing this book to fruition and without whom it could not have been written.

The CSCPRC, which invited me to be a visiting scholar in the United States for three months after the delegation's visit, provided all the expenses; Fudan University, which arranged such a long period of time for me to leave my teaching job so that I could have time to study this topic; The University of Iowa's political science department, which hosted me for three months and provided me with all the research and office facilities; the Chinese Cultural Studies Center at the University of Michigan, the political science department at Miami University in Ohio, which provided me with the opportunity to study this topic. The Center for Chinese Cultural Studies at the University of Michigan, the Department of Political Science at Miami University in Ohio, and the School of International Relations at the University of California, San Diego, all of which arranged short visits for me; and the Institute of East Asian Studies at the University of California, Berkeley, where I spent three weeks as a visiting scholar and was warmly received. Finally, I would like to thank the Faculty of Law at Keio University in Japan, where I spent a week gaining insight into the "Empire of the Sun" section.

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# **I. Uneven land**

## **1. Doubt of American Manufacturing**

CA985 arrived in San Francisco via Tokyo, Japan, and then a long flight over the rough Pacific Ocean. Due to a delayed flight, it was crowded with flights arriving from Europe and Japan. The normally spacious baggage claim and customs hall was crowded and full of people. People from all over the world were excited to arrive in the United States. There was one plane, probably from France, and many people spoke French. The line to get through customs was over an hour long and people were complaining as they do in China that the wait was too long. Many people thought that the queue should not be in the West, but I did not expect to have to wait for such a long time once I arrived in the United States. The customs counters at the San Francisco airport immigration office are divided into three categories: one for U.S. citizens, two for non-U.S. citizens, and three for new immigrants. The first two entrances on the left are for U.S. citizens, which are sparsely populated and show the superiority of being a U.S. citizen. Non-U.S. citizens, who have the largest number of people at the entrance, feel inferior.

At the entry point, there are hordes of Japanese people. Nowadays, Japanese people are traveling and doing business everywhere in the world in hordes, showing the strength of a rich country and a rich people. Although many foreigners find the Japanese unlovable, this economic strength makes one impressed. It is said that because there are so many Japanese, the U.S. government is considering giving Japanese people a kind of treatment: visa-free. Statistically, this would speed up the processing of customs at the U.S. customs entrance by one-third. But diplomacy requires equal treatment, and the Japanese seem reluctant to waive visas for Americans. From the development of the Japanese nation, one can draw at least two conclusions: first, economic strength is the basic force that determines the international status and international image of a nation; second, the international status and international image of a nation does not depend only on economic strength.

The United States is a society that is quite developed in many ways, and anyone who arrives in the United States will feel a "future shock. As a result, people think about how they want to enjoy America, while others think about why America exists. To the latter question, different people have different answers. I asked a friend. One friend replied that one is the extraordinary abundance of resources, and the other is that competition for talent is encouraged. Another friend added that at least that was the case when people first arrived in the United States. I asked G, a friend who is pursuing a Ph.D. at Stanford, the answer: tradition. I found this to be one of the most abstract, yet valuable, explanations. The development of any society is not the result of purely economic forces, nor is it the result of short-term behavioral adjustments. The development of a society to such a degree of "wealth" is not the result of artificial force. What are the forces that dominate the struggle of people in this society for generations? One can come up with many specific concepts, such as innovation, struggle, thrift, and so on. The most important thing is whether these things can become a cultural gene, a tradition. No matter what factors are conducive to social development, if they do not constitute a tradition, they cannot be deeply rooted. For any good factor to have an effect, it must be the work of several generations. Americans talk about innovation all day long, but in reality tradition is very strong. The Chinese also talk about innovation all day long, but the result is that tradition is repeatedly rising and falling. It has been said that Americans speak of innovation, not in opposition to tradition. The American tradition and innovation are the same thing, and today's tradition is only the innovation of 30 or 50 years ago. The Chinese speak of innovation as being anti-tradition. However, it is not easy to counter the traditions of one or two thousand years.

Today, we cannot help but think long and hard about the influx of people into the United States. A few days ago, there was a lively discussion in domestic theoretical circles about the re-conceptualization of socialism and capitalism. The basic reason why this issue is currently being discussed in China is that after decades of socialism, it is not as good as capitalism in economic terms. Is the social development program that Marx argued a hundred and fifty years ago consistent with the course of human historical development? Can socialism eventually overcome capitalism? This is the doubt of the people of the day. I think of the movie "Hong Hu Red Guard" that was shown on a Boeing 747 flight to the United States. The Chinese have

overthrown the three great mountains that have been weighing them down for so long, but has this ensured the direction of China's social development? What impact would a revolution such as the Chinese Revolution, with the rural population as the main force surrounding the cities, have on the development of a society? It is indeed worth thinking about.

The development of the United States today, with its economic prosperity, its political process, its way of life, and its international status, has created a great deal of doubt in the world today. People in the developed world carry this deep-rooted doubt: Has the development of human technology and material life reached this point? Is it against the nature of man? Will it lead to the depletion of the earth's resources? Will it eventually lead to the destruction of mankind? Our colleagues in the Club of Rome are worried about this, and they are crying out for a long time. Those in developing countries have a different question: What is the force that has created such a dazzling material civilization? What system has created the right conditions for such development in terms of management and intellect? Is such a state of affairs accidental or inevitable? People began to doubt the system, and people began to doubt their own system. In any case, the United States has created a kind of doubt.

When you walk into the United States, you walk into this kind of doubt. Not into the United States, will also fall into this kind of doubt. A strange phenomenon is: into the doubt is easy, out of the doubt is difficult.

## **2. Manhattan and Chinatown**

The plane arrived over New York. Got off and picked up my luggage. I was nervous when everyone was gone and there was no sign of my friend who had agreed to pick me up. I heard from my friend that once you arrive in New York, you will feel a sense of terror and the crime rate here is extremely high. I was afraid of encountering a mugger, because I was quite apprehensive. Half an hour later, my friend came and I was relieved. After leaving the airport, I went straight to the United Nations building. The UN building is a magnificent building. We went to the Security Council and had our pictures taken. Then we went to the UN General Assembly and found a seat for the Chinese delegation and took a picture of it. We also took a picture of each person giving a speech at

the UN podium. While visiting the UN, I saw beautiful and valuable gifts from various countries, such as an ivory sculpture from China, a royal boat from Thailand, and a picture from the Soviet Union. This shows that the citizens of this world want a reputation at the UN, but how many countries in real life believe in the principles of the UN? It seems to be the same as a group of people, where everyone wants to join it and show their love for it, but in reality goes against it everywhere. In today's world of pluralistic interests, ideological barriers and conflicts, it is true that the UN does not play the role it should. However, the UN has also played a role that cannot be underestimated, especially in socio-economic and cultural development. The Iran-Iraq ceasefire is also an outstanding example of conflict resolution. The world today is still a world that needs to be controlled by human beings. Looking at the statue of a sword turned into a plow in front of the United Nations building, one wonders what methods one can use to melt the sword. Past history has shown that many believe that warfare is also a means of turning swords into plowshares, and the result is that swords are always turned into plowshares. New York's Chinatown feels quite familiar in style. It seems slightly dirtier than other places. It is said that Chinatown is a complex area, where all the phenomena unique to the Chinese are present. It reminds me of Poplar's "The Ugly Chinese". I didn't walk much in Chinatown, but from the outside, there are many small businesses. In this bustling area, looking at the signs full of Chinese characters, it reminds me of the distant China. This area is in stark contrast to other parts of Manhattan. One evokes Chinese culture, the other tells of Western culture. Talking about America and China is a constant topic for almost all Chinese scholars and international students in the United States. Within this eternal topic are two more eternal centers: economic development and political democracy. The economic success and technological progress achieved by the United States in this century are there for all to see, and no country in the world today has yet surpassed it. Although the Japanese are aggressive, coming to the forefront, and coming later, they still cannot match the United States in areas such as military, culture, and resources, in addition to their competitive economic strength. What needs to be analyzed is what role the economic development of the United States has played in its political development. In both areas, the U.S. is the world's most visible country. China owes too much in these two areas. Thus, both aspects have become a constant topic in the modernization process. How can China's economic modernization be achieved? The fundamental

question is whether the process of economic modernization can be completed under public ownership. Most of the developed countries in the world today are not under public ownership. This reality is the biggest challenge to people's thinking. The next question is how does political democracy develop? In tandem with the economy, or not in tandem? These two major topics have become hot topics of discussion this year. One argument is that economic modernization cannot be achieved without political democracy; one thing that counters this is that Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, and South Korea did not have political democracy during their economic take-off stage; Hong Kong was under colonial rule, Taiwan was under one-party dictatorship, and South Korea was under military intervention. Another argument is that when the economy developed, conditions for political democracy became available, examples being the democratization movements in newly industrialized regions and countries; the counter-argument is also strong: the developed Western countries were not really economically developed after the bourgeois revolution, far from the economic strength of some developing countries today, but the institutions of a democratic republic were basically established. This is a question that Chinese theorists must think about for a long time. Economic development is only a phenomenon, and either centralization or democracy may promote or inhibit economic development, but what needs to be concerned is what changes in society will be conducive to the development of political democracy after economic development. Since the economy does not develop, developing countries cannot be economically dependent on developed countries. This is mainly in terms of high technology, equipment, precision instruments, etc. But it also depends on the stage of development of each country, for example, African countries, for example, need mainly food to maintain basic living conditions. Whatever is needed, a special exchange mechanism is formed: developing countries have to offer the best things in exchange with developed countries. Thus, people in developing countries cannot enjoy the best products produced in their own countries, not even the second-class products. This is because the second-class products are intended for consumption by foreigners who come to these countries. Products from all countries and regions are available in the U.S. market: China, Taiwan, South Korea, Japan, Jamaica, Mexico, etc. The best products from all countries and regions of the world flock to the U.S. market in exchange for U.S. dollars. As everyone wanted to obtain dollars, strong competition was formed, and the products were of high quality but low price. This situation caused an unprecedented boom in

the U.S. market. This was the result of the market mechanism and the benefit to the U.S. of the world status of the U.S. dollar as determined by the Bretton Woods Conference after World War II. Of course, the mass entry of foreign products into the United States, the impact of the United States itself industry, resulting in factory closures, increased unemployment, which can not be ignored, so the two forces of free trade and protectionism have always fought.

### **3. Four “C” More**

After living in the United States for a short time, it became clear that there are several things that are particularly abundant in this society. Through the surface phenomenon of these things, some basic conditions of the dynamic organization of society can be found. Let's start with these four more things.

There are a lot of cars ( “Car” ) running in bunches in cities of all sizes, on highways and country roads at all times. Cars come in all shapes and sizes, and there are all kinds of models. When I was in Washington, Antony King, vice chancellor of Essex University in England, pointed out to me the variety of cars on the street and said, “Ten years ago, most of the cars I saw in the United States were made in the United States, but today there are all kinds of cars, especially Japanese cars.” The auto war between the U.S. and Japan is already well known. One important reason why Japanese cars have been able to break into the U.S. market is that the U.S. car market is just too big and cars are just too important to individuals. Not having a car in America is like not having legs. The highway system is very well developed, with generally three lanes on the left and right. Divided into high, medium and slow three, some places have seven lanes of cars. All kinds of cars are running on it day and night. The average family has a car, and many families have more than one. I went to a professor's house at Stanford University and there were three cars. The total number of privately owned cars in the United States is one of the largest in the world.

Phones are plentiful ( “Call” ) Everywhere you go in the United States, you can see a telephone. All offices and homes have telephones. Home phones also have one to several extensions. In public places, there are automatic telephones, and you can call by putting in a certain number of coins. Now there is another kind of telephone card telephone, when

you call, you just put the card into the telephone and you can call. In airports, there are rows of these automatic telephones. There are also many such phones in hotels. When I stayed at the Sheraton and Hilton hotels in Washington, D.C., there were rows of automated phones in the lobby downstairs. In universities, there are also such phones in public places, such as libraries, dining halls, conference halls, computer centers, language centers, etc. Not only are there many phones, but they are also convenient. Not only are there many phones, but they are also quick and easy to use. No matter where you call, it is very quick. For domestic long-distance calls, you can pick up the phone and dial the number and be connected in half a minute at most. It is also easy to make calls to other parts of the world, just pick up the phone and dial. One of the main characteristics of people's work is to use the phone, and many things are solved by phone, including love. Many parents have told me that their children call for two hours to fall in love, and other calls do not come in, which is very expensive. Naturally, the developed social function of the telephone system is not here, you can talk about love, but also about other things.

The number of computers ( **"Computer"** ) is also a big feature. Wherever you go, you can see the people you deal with to use computers. When I visited the National Security Council, I found that people inside use computers. University professors have computers in their offices or homes. Staying at a hotel, the whole management is computerized. At the Department of Transportation version of a driver's license, it is all entered into a computer. Shopping in stores and canteens, paying the bill is computerized. Searching in libraries, the information retrieval is computerized. When you go to a bank to deposit money, its system is computerized. Computers are used extensively in factory production, government offices, military operations, aircraft in the sky, and so on. Computers make everything fast, accurate, and easy to find. Computers can also be integrated into national or worldwide networks. When I visited the library at Yale University, their head of East Asia, Mr. Ma, immediately typed in my name and within seconds found out that my books National Sovereignty and Comparative Political Analysis were available at two other universities. Computers can also talk to each other, and as long as they know each other's computer numbers (Bignet ID), they can enter what they want to tell each other.

**"Card"** here is not the Chinese concept of "card", there are some cards in China, such as briquette card, egg card, daily necessities card, vegetable card, etc., which are all made of paper. The card we



are talking about here is a plastic card with a magnetic tape on the back to store information. Such cards, too many to mention, are credit cards, money cards, library cards, phone cards, and ID cards .....Each of these cards has different kinds. New cards are still emerging, and the newspapers once carried a story about a new service by an airline that offers free first-class treatment with the purchase of a certain number of tickets, with the voucher being one such card. I flew United Airlines from San Francisco to Iowa, and the ticket was actually a card similar to this. The card and the computer are linked together, as long as the card is inserted into a certain computer, you can do the relevant things, such as: withdrawing money, saving money, checking the number of their savings, can be used to solve the card and the computer, without having to find a bank clerk. Almost everyone who has a job takes out a wallet, which has a large number of cards. Because of the card, the wallet also changed, there are several bags inside specifically for the card. I am afraid that the leather wallets made in China now cannot be exported to the United States or other western countries because there is no place to put the cards.

These are the "four C's". What is important is the role they play in social organization and social management.

The number of cars makes the whole society constitute a dynamic whole, with vehicles moving not only people and goods, but also ideas, concepts and spirit.

The abundance of telephones, so that the whole society constitutes a well-connected information system, and the transmission of language is accompanied by the transmission of emotions and information.

The multiplicity of computers, which allows for a high degree of integration of the management of the entire society, and computerized information is a fair management.

Cards, which symbolizes the management of the whole society, frees people from the management of physical objects (people and things) into symbolic management.

The development of these four aspects is crucial to a society, where they are a driving force and a channel for political socialization and political communication. The progress of these aspects makes the institutions, principles and spirit of a society more and more deeply rooted, materialized and consolidated.

The "four C's" have brought about many problems, and modernization has come at a cost to human society and nature.

More cars – more pollution, more traffic accidents, more waste.

More phone calls – more interference, eavesdropping.

More computers – social communication systems have become vulnerable, and if a machine breaks down or a "virus" invades a computer, a large area is immediately affected, and sometimes a large amount of data is lost.

More Cards – more theft, more reported theft, more forgery crimes.

How a society consolidates its institutions is the major issue. It is rare to have a solid system when you start with the system alone; the only real consolidation is when the system is actually infused into the lives of the people.

## **4. Highly Commercialized**

Another major characteristic of American society or American culture is its high degree of commodification. It can be said that this is a typical capitalist "flowery world". In this typical capitalist society, almost anything can become a commodity, from human flesh, air, abstract ideas to all kinds of concrete objects, all are commodified. This is why Marx's analysis of capitalist society, in which he regarded commodities as the cells of this mode of production, was a true insight. In today's capitalist society, this feature is more fully developed, although there are many differences in the form of expression.

Commodity, which remains the basic factor of this society, has its most typical manifestation in that people become commodities. This large-scale and comprehensive commodification is the basic tendency of the capitalist mode of production, which is not dominated by people's subjective will.

The question that needs to be asked is not how this high degree of commoditization arises and to what extent it reaches. What we need to examine in the study of a society's management process is: what does high commodification do to the intricate management process of a society?

The development of modern human society, the increase in the demands of all aspects of modern human life, the complex intertwining of modern society, politics, economics, culture, entertainment, health, art, transportation and other fields, have posed a serious challenge to the management system of society. Can a political and administrative system bear all the burdens of modern society? This is a difficult question for all countries. From both theoretical and practical aspects, I am afraid that no political and administrative system has the capacity to directly manage and assume all the responsibilities. If the political and administrative system has to assume it due to structural and functional constraints, it will inevitably lead to a situation where the whip is too long to reach. Because the energy of any political and administrative system is limited, for small societies, the government has the possibility to hold its own, as in Singapore, Hong Kong, South Korea, etc. For large societies, especially those with hundreds of millions of people, it is unlikely that the government can directly and comprehensively manage all levels and areas of society. History has shown that societies that have embarked on this path by institutional design have often had political and administrative systems that do not address many of the basic needs of society very well, and have accumulated piles of problems. Striving to give the various spheres of social life their own organization and dynamics to meet the needs of society on their own, so that the political or administrative system plays only an indirect regulatory role, is an effective way to win in this area.

A prerequisite for the realization of this structure is to enable the various spheres of social life to form a self-organizing system that decouples these specific and complex spheres of activity from political activity. Commodification is the catalyst for this transformation process. The problems of housing, food, transportation, employment, and education are the basic dilemmas that plague every society. Many governments are plagued by these problems and cannot get out of them. The desire to retreat is not an option, and the desire to advance is not an option. The high degree of commodification has created a more particular structure in American society in these areas.

We can look at how commoditization has made these fields self-organizing systems and how they function.

Housing is a headache in many developing countries. The governments of some developing countries have worked hard to make "home ownership" a

reality. But in the United States, the housing problem is better solved. Although the streets in the big cities are full of homeless people wandering around, but most people have spacious housing. Each family has a housing block is the general level. Many houses, with seven or eight rooms, are actually occupied by only one or two people. New housing is still being built. Housing management is completely commoditized. Everyone who wants to have his own house, or wants to rent one, has to pay for it or rent it. Real estate becomes an important pillar in the economy, regulated by economic levers. In different areas, prices vary. What you can buy for about \$100,000 in a small central city, you may not be able to buy for \$200,000 in San Francisco or New York. A house that might cost \$400-\$500 to rent in Manhattan, New York, might only cost \$200-\$300 in a smaller town. The housing industry has always had an incentive to build homes because of the lucrative nature of property after commodification. Over the years, housing has accumulated and more and more has been built. What the government did was to regulate these activities and keep them within the realm of legality, without directly creating housing, distributing housing, or maintaining housing. The government builds a very small percentage of housing for the poor.

Food, is another problem that plagues many countries today, some of which have not even solved the problem of subsistence. Some countries have passed this hurdle, but are far from meeting the needs of society in terms of the availability and fancy variety of non-staple foods. The government is exhausted by these conflicts and shortage of commodities. But in this society, the abundance and variety of food is amazing, even to the point of being wasteful. The system of supplying food is completely commoditized. As producers, people produce what the market wants, and then the market system sells it to consumers. In between, the producer, the seller, and all other parts of the system receive a profit. Commoditization brings profit, which is the main motivation. Of course, it cannot be said that commercialization can solve all problems, and the full development of science and technology and means of production is an indispensable factor.

Transportation is a challenge that modern society is bound to face. In modern society, human development, economic development, cultural development, and social development all mean increased mobility. If this mobility is not opened up, society will face an untold pressure, and the political, economic and cultural development of society will be hindered. The problem of transportation is precisely what many

countries find difficult. Transportation means are mostly commoditized. Air traffic, which is handled by private airlines, such as United, Delta, Northwest, TWA, etc., is a completely self-sustaining enterprise. The development of the airline industry is one of the major determinants of economic development. Land transportation, the famous coach "Greyhound", connects the four corners of the country. And so on. Commoditization stimulates people to operate, in order to make profits and increase profits, each business unit must find ways to improve services and expand the scope of business.

Employment, a major logical paradox of modern society: on the one hand, the development of science and technology is crowding out more and more people, and on the other hand, more and more people need to find work and earn a living. In this society, labor is commodified. The government does not directly place people in jobs; it directs employment and creates jobs through the political system. Every business can hire its own people, and everyone can go to any business to find a job. (Of course, in theory, this is not the same as everyone who wants a particular job will find that job.) However, where commoditization is highly developed, it is not the nature of the job that matters, but the exchange value received. With the right pay, people will be willing to exchange it. With money, one can then enter a commoditized society and get anything anyone else wants. After commodification, employment is not specifically managed by the government, but by individual companies and individuals coordinating among themselves.

The development of the commodity economy has led to a dual structure of governance in society: the social self-organized system is responsible for all kinds of specific matters, and the political system is responsible for coordinating the various self-organized systems. This is a major characteristic of macro-management in this society. These are just a few examples, but it should not be assumed that commodification necessarily makes things perfect. It simply means that commodification offers the possibility of making government lighter. It is impossible for government to function efficiently if it is involved in a thousand and one things in society. But after government is lightly loaded, it still has to regulate activities in various fields, only now it has changed from direct to indirect.

Commoditization has the amazing power to push people to every lucrative place. The most typical ones like Kentucky Fried Chicken, hamburgers,

Coca-Cola, Pepsi, Crest toothpaste, Marlboro cigarettes, United Parcel Post, etc. are everywhere, even in very remote places. One could say that wherever there is a copper plate to be made, people will deliver goods and services to it. Commoditization not only promotes the circulation of goods in geographical breadth, thus contributing to the balanced development of society, but also drives goods to diversification and to every unexplored area. This is true in everyday small commodities, but also in high technology.

Everything has a dual nature, and the glamour of high commodification abounds. Human flesh, sex, knowledge, politics, power, and law can all become the target of commodification. The yellow culture on New York's Forty-second Street is probably an important product of commodification. Commodification, in many ways, corrupts society and leads to a number of serious social problems. These problems, in turn, can increase the pressure on the political and administrative system.

Therefore, commodification can reduce the burden of the political and administrative system, but there is an important premise, which is that the political and administrative system must regulate commodification. The real essence of commoditization is not that everything becomes a commodity, but that the commodity is in a rational mechanism of operation. The economic levers coordinate this mechanism, and so must the political and administrative systems. When many basic areas of society have become self-organizing systems, the political and administrative systems will have the conditions to separate from them, to move from direct to indirect management. The process of commodification is the process of these spheres becoming self-organized systems. This process does not take shape in a short time, and even after a considerable period of development, contradictions, conflicts, obstacles and confusion are still inevitable. However, the political and administrative system will be more powerful and effective than managing dozens of large self-organized systems than managing thousands of specific activities.

## **5. Remote Areas**

The term "remote areas" here is just a borrowing of the concept. In fact, these areas are neither remote nor far away. They are right next to the modern cities. When I say "remote areas", I mean the Amish settlements. The Amish are a very peculiar group of people. Their main

characteristic is their refusal to modernize, their incompatibility with the highly developed and advanced science and technology, and the preservation of the traditional lifestyle of the 17th and 18th centuries, which is a very interesting historical phenomenon. The modernization of Western society attracted and impacted the whole world, but not the Amish who were close at hand.

Not far from Iowa City, about ten minutes away by car, there is an Amish settlement called Kolona. With these questions in mind, I came to this place. As soon as I entered Kolona, I could see on the highway the 17th and 18th century European-style carriages, with a horse dragging a small carriage and Amish sitting inside, usually dressed in black. The roads here also have a special design, with carriage lanes on both sides of the carriageway. This is because the Amish do not accept modern cars and want to take horse-drawn carriages. It took the government authorities a lot of effort to convince them that horse-drawn carriages are very dangerous on the highway, and they had to install a prominent red sign behind the carriages to remind the drivers to pay attention.

Where did the strange Amish come from? Why did they come to America? This is an important clue to solving this mystery. The Amish immigrated from Europe. They were formed in the midst of religious turmoil in Europe in the sixteenth century. The Amish had their own religion, but they were persecuted by the orthodox religion of the time. It is said that the state church of the time suppressed them in a bloody manner, burning them, executing them, imprisoning them, etc. From about 1750 onwards, some Amish began to wander to escape persecution, going to Germany, France, Holland and Russia, but never finding a place to settle. They then decided to join the "New World". Here they could find land and own it. The Amish valued the land so much that they believed it was a visible gift from God, so precious that one could not leave it. This belief is one of the fundamental reasons why the Amish cling to their land and maintain their traditional way of life. Today there are approximately 112 Amish settlements throughout the United States. Although there are variations from settlement to settlement, such as the Amish's focus on farming, in some places Amish have embraced the tractor and the combine. But in general they maintain the ancient spirit and way of life.

What is the ancient spirit of life and lifestyle? The spirit of Amish life is to adopt anything on the basis of its usefulness: clothes to

protect from the cold, but not from beauty. Amish once rejected metal buttons as a luxury and a symbol of wealth. The home may not hang colorful pictures. They often hang calendars with monotonous pictures. This reflects the spirit of Amish life: simplicity, nature and self-sufficiency.

The Amish way of life is also peculiar and seems somewhat unbelievable to modern people. In the most typical Amish settlements, they refuse to use electricity, and thus there is no electricity in these villages. This reflects the spirit of self-sufficiency of the Amish. Long persecuted, the Amish have developed a self-sufficient way of life and do not depend on the outside world. They refuse to use tractors and combines and use mainly horses as a means of production. Women wear old-fashioned skirts, and no one wears modern jeans. Americans generally have telephones in their homes, yet the Amish do not have telephones in their homes. Some local Amish have accepted washing machines and refrigerators, but they do not use electricity from outside, instead they use their own diesel engines to generate electricity. When the Amish go out and about, they take horse-drawn carriages. Many Amish have never been to Iowa City, a ten-minute drive, in their lives. To modern eyes, they are a very isolated and backward group. They themselves are not aware of what is happening in the world, but they feel they are living a leisurely and comfortable life, in line with their religious beliefs.

The Amish also had some behaviors that baffle modern people. In winter, men would go out in groups to collect ice from the river and bring it back to preserve it for the summer. They knew a good technique for preserving ice, probably until September of the following year. Traditional ice harvesting techniques replaced the function of refrigerators. A similar method of ice preservation was used in ancient China. Today it is not a necessary labor, but Amish see it as a part of keeping their spirit alive. The Amish speak a dialect of German at home, not English, and they have their own schools, but most children do not have access to higher education because their own schools are not of a high educational standard and they do not want to go to the big cities.

The Amish also have a distinctive religious life. They hold events about once every two weeks, rotating among the houses. Everyone gathers around the house of the family and holds the event. The house that is chosen for the event has to make elaborate preparations and prepare



lunch. The Amish are patriarchal and women have few rights and have to listen to the men. Every boy and girl had to learn to harness a horse, which was an important part of their lives.

Over the years, despite the fact that the Amish have changed in one way or another, the basic spirit of this group has not changed much. It is curious: why has such a powerful modern civilization failed to influence and transform them? Hasn't Western civilization impacted many very distant peoples?

With this question in mind, I interviewed a writer who lives in Corona called John M. Zielinski. He has written a book called "The Amish Across America". His response was: "Imagine a person who has been raised in such an environment and educated with such rigor from an early age, he will not easily abandon these ideas. Also, the Amish are not highly educated and do not have the skills to do modern work; all they are trained to do is to plow. It is here that they feel the safest." I think the latter statement is the most fundamental psychological accumulation of the Amish. Zielinski adds; "On the other hand, the U.S. Constitution guarantees them that right and that the government cannot forcibly change their way of life or their religion."

This is a real social phenomenon worth thinking about. In the heart of the modernized world, there is such a group of people who refuse to be modernized. Their remoteness is not in the geographical area, but in the spiritual world. They are voluntarily isolated from modernization. From this we can draw an opinion that if people refuse modernization in the spiritual sphere, then it is difficult for modernization to invade them. This phenomenon can be seen in different societies. The real driving force of modernization is in the inner world of people.

Another issue that deserves a lot of thought is "psychological security". The Amish feel that their way of life provides the safest environment and that changing it would be a crisis and turmoil. This psychological fear is also an important reason for their rejection of modernization, which is naturally a process of transformation of the old social structure and the disappearance of a certain sense of security. If people are all afraid of the disappearance of the safe environment, modernization and even any social change will encounter an incomparably strong resistance.

In reconciling these contradictions, society has adopted the method and means of listening to them and not imposing uniformity. It cannot

impose uniformity either. If the government forces the Amish to accept modernization, it will only add pressure to itself. There are many examples like the Amish in the United States. People in many places have their own ways of life that are not in line with the mainstream of society, but they can exist. A part of society's contradictions are resolved in this kind of eye opening and eye closing. No one blushes at the backwardness of the Amish, but rather considers it a typical reflection of the American spirit. Some methods of management in American society are practically unmanaged. This is a more effective method of management under certain conditions.

When I returned, I saw an old couple driving a horse-drawn carriage along the modern highway. They were so peaceful, so self-contained. Is it wrong to be modern? Any choice of lifestyle comes with its own convenience and price.

## **6. Amana Immigration Land**

The Amana Colonies is a special place in Iowa. Americans call it the "socialism" or "collectivism" of the United States. How can such a place survive in a capitalist society like the United States? What kind of organization is it? It aroused great curiosity in me, a person from China, to know how "collectivism" is practiced in the United States.

In 1714, in southwestern Germany, two men started a religious movement. This religious movement evolved into the famous Community of True Inspiration, the precursor of the Amana Community. In 1842, persecuted because of their religion, the Amana ancestors traveled across the ocean to the North American continent, establishing six villages in New York State and two in Canada. As the Buffalo area where they lived rapidly urbanized, the Amana began to purchase land to the west, and in 1854, they purchased their present land. They purchased 25,000 acres of land from the government at that time and another 1,000 acres later. It was on this land that the Amana people farmed and lived. After coming to this land, the people chose to live together in a religious way of life where all property was owned collectively and all religious and secular decisions were made by a single leader. This way of life continued for over a century until 1932, when a vote was taken to separate church and state and establish free enterprise.

The charter of the early Amana states the goal of the community as follows: "The goal of the community as a religious body is not universal nor selfish, but to love God who has blessed us, to serve God in unison, and to obey God's laws and requirements. In order to achieve this goal, our collective pledge here is to receive and sign this charter together. " It is evident that the initial collectivism of this group was inspired by a religious spirit. Collectivism must be dominated by some kind of spirit, otherwise it is difficult to sustain. Is this the case? It is worth pondering.

Inspired by this spirit, all property in Amana is collectively owned, land, grain, livestock, housing, and farming equipment. The Amana has various collectivist characteristics, and in addition to collective ownership, it is responsible for educating children, publishing, and caring for the elderly and the sick.

The leadership of the Amana Settlement was unique, with Christian Metz, the leader of the movement from Europe to the Americas until 1883. After his death, it was governed by a 13-member board of trustees. This council was elected annually from a certain number of elders. Every man or widow who signs the charter, and every woman over 30 years of age, can vote. Elders used to be chosen by Metz, but after 1883, they were nominated by the Board of Elders and confirmed by the Board of Trustees. The elders led the affairs of the church and met every Sunday morning. The local presbytery met weekly and the supreme council (trustees' meeting) once a month. The local session manages only local affairs. The Supreme Conference manages both ecclesiastical and secular affairs. Under their administration, the Amana people live a communal life.

Why did the Amana people choose the communal way of life in the beginning? Its founder, Metz, said: "The Church is the servant of God, and God blesses and blesses us through the Church. Shall we not be devoted to God through total devotion to the Church? .....Therefore, everything should belong to the Church, and the Church provides needs to everyone. Anyone who does not care about this matter can go far away, and those who want to stay should accept my words." So what does Amana mean? The word Amana comes from the fourth chapter of the Bible: "Depart with me from Lebanon, my wife, age me from Lebanon, and look out from Mount Amana..."

In 1932, the greatest historic shift took place in Amana. By vote, the Amana abandoned the system of living together and moved in stride to the system of free enterprise that surrounded them. Church and state were separated, and the elders of the church were no longer responsible for the full range of leadership. This shift is well worth exploring. What were the factors that motivated the Amana people to abandon the system of common life? Was there something wrong with the system itself? Or were other external systems too powerful? Or did the people lose faith in their basic religious beliefs? What are the reasons why the system of living together is still facing serious challenges?

The answer of the official who received us struck us as very familiar: one of the basic shortcomings of the system of common life was the lack of individual initiative to work dutifully; there were many lazy people. Another reason was the skepticism of the young generation towards the spiritual principles of Amana, who were tempted by the outside life and were not willing to attend Mass eight times a week. Every year the elders of Amana selected a part of the young people to go outside for higher education, such as doctors, teachers and businessmen. The young men's wishes could not be fulfilled. There were no good jobs for the boys, and the girls had to go to work in the cafeteria of Amana. Another reason was political; the council of elders was always these people and had a tendency to be hereditary, and this hierarchy destroyed the spirit of the group.

Today Amana has a shareholding system, where anyone can buy shares. Collective property has been demutualized. Amana people who buy shares get dividends and those who are employed get a salary. There are nearly 100 private businesses, mostly stores and restaurants. The demutualized collective property is managed by a board of directors. The collective owns some factories, such as refrigerator factories, dyeing factories, textile factories, furniture factories, farms and hostels. Today people have long since ceased to live collectively. Amana's own propaganda materials made a point of stating that Amana-style communism was different from Russian political communism, and that common ownership of property was only for the purpose of solving economic problems, not a fundamental doctrine or a belief.

This explanation is actually inconsistent with the early spirit of Amana. The early life of Amana was based on a belief. But this belief was religious, not political. Under the conditions of the unity of church and state, the distinction between this and the actual life of

the people does not mean much. It is only by grasping this basic spirit that one can discern the name of the 1932 shift in Amana, the most fundamental cause of which was probably the abandonment and indifference of the younger generation to this faith. Under the powerful lure of this prosperous society, the younger generation turned to other values. Once this shift occurs in the younger generation, it is difficult for any force to ensure the longevity of an institution. This is a problem for all kinds of social systems. The problem facing many countries around the world today is a crisis of trust in the foundations of the system among the younger generation. If this problem is not addressed, the system will face challenges. The historical evolution of Amana is a very good example of this: the result of the interaction of two systems that influence each other. Amana eventually chose the dominant values of the United States because it was too weak, politically, economically and culturally, to overcome modern capitalism, which was stronger than it in every way.

The fact that Amana is now a National Historic Preservation Site is what makes it most meaningful. It teaches that in such an environment, any other choice of values becomes history. When the prevailing dominant American values will become history depends on whether there is a stronger alternative.

## **7. Vernacular Landscape**

The impression that people get when they walk around is that of a big, bustling city, with skyscrapers lined up, speeding bicycles, colorful shopping malls, and all kinds of people. The prosperity of the United States is mainly reflected in its cities and metropolises. It is easy to equate these impressions with the United States. In fact, America is not just about cities. Cities are pivotal, but they are not the same as all of America.

There is a big difference between urban and rural areas in the United States, and the standard of living in the countryside is far from being comparable to that of the big cities. You can't get to know the real America without going to the countryside, or at least you can't get a panoramic view. The backward conditions in the countryside have driven a large number of people to the cities, and the rural population is getting smaller and smaller. Today, the rural population of the United States accounts for only a few percent of the total population, and

more than 90 percent of the people live in the cities. Perhaps this can be explained by the fact that agriculture is well developed and does not require as much agricultural labor. In fact the United States is the world's largest importer of food (and its exports are large). On the other hand, due to the influx of people into the cities, agriculture has to be mechanized.

The more typical agricultural states are the central, east-central and several mid-western states. If one flies by plane from the East Coast to the West Coast, one does not necessarily understand exactly what is different in the vast plains from the metropolitan areas. It is only by living in these places, or driving on the highways of these plains, that one can feel the difference. It's called having your feet on the ground. I'm afraid it's hard to understand the rural landscape when the sky is the limit.

In some parts of the East and West coasts, it's not easy to see large farm fields and the farmhouses dotting those fields, and it's rare to see leisurely grazing cattle and hogs, and rare to see dusty roads. I took the train from New Haven to Philadelphia and saw little farmland. And I took a car from Iowa City to Illinois and Missouri, as well as a car ride within Ohio, and all saw large tracts of farmland. I would travel by car for more than five or six hours to see the rustic landscape.

What is a vernacular landscape, some depictions can be made here.

Agricultural states generally have vast and boundless farmland, a natural condition that the United States is uniquely blessed with. Large areas of farmland with few hills and rivers except for some slopes. This creates excellent conditions for agricultural mechanization. Like the terrain of China's Jiangsu and Zhejiang, it is extremely difficult to achieve mechanization. The farmland looks very fertile with dark mud. A friend told me that he had planted tomatoes behind the house where he lived and there were too many to eat. The land has only been developed and used for less than two hundred years, and the fertility is still there. China's land has been developed for over two thousand years and most of it has become poor.

The agricultural area is sparsely populated and you can barely see people driving around, and some of the houses that can be seen are separated from each other. These houses are very far apart. Usually, the farms are run by families. The standard of the houses is not bad,

but it is not comparable to the city. The rural areas are so quiet that the animals enjoy themselves, and many roads have signs saying "Beware of deer". Once on my way to Chicago, I saw three or four deer playing on the side of the road.

The agricultural areas have less developed commodity economies and less developed cultures, and the main centers are small towns and small cities. We passed through about dozens of these small towns. The small towns are generally more run-down. In fact, some of them are just a street with some stores on both sides. There was no shortage of major commodities, and everything was available. This is the power of the commodity economy. Small towns are generally two or three stories high old buildings, without the fruits of modern architecture. There are not many houses and the population is sparse. People in small towns are relatively conservative culturally and psychologically, and not as enlightened as those in big cities. Rural roads are also not comparable to interstate highways. Most of the rural roads are two lanes in one direction, and the surface is not as smooth as some of the better long-distance roads in China. However, these roads are clearly marked with traffic signs and clear road lines on the road surface. The roads that branch off from these highways, such as those leading to farmland or farmhouses, are paved with gravel, not tar, and are dusty and windy when driving.

There are many dilapidated houses in rural areas, some of which have collapsed and are unmanaged and probably unoccupied. Some of the houses are occupied and do not look very elegant. As people keep moving to the city, many houses in rural areas are in disrepair or unoccupied. The next generation usually goes to college in the city and finds a job in the city after college. When the previous generation passes away, they do not return to their hometowns, but either sell them at a discount or leave them to the elements. The rural areas look a little shabby, in contrast to the bright lights of the big cities. In some places, all the people have left and they have become "ghost villages".

The countryside offers some sights that are unique to developing countries, such as herds of cattle, horses and pigs in the grasslands. Naturally these herds cannot be compared to the herds on the grasslands of Inner Mongolia. The United States is generally a one-family operation that does not raise many. Farmers use two methods to raise livestock, one is called captive breeding, which is usually invisible. The other is called free-range, putting cattle, pigs, sheep and horses

in a large enclosure. Sometimes you can feel the stench of manure hitting your nose. This is a very rare experience in the United States.

The standard of living in rural areas is not as good as in cities, and many people are often worried about financial problems. Some people are not well educated and have difficulty finding good jobs and do not have the conditions to move to the cities. Many farmers can only do some small business. I went to a fisherman's house on the Mississippi River in Missouri. He usually catches some fish and sells them at home, and the price is not expensive. The place where he lived was rather shabby, and although there were larger places, they were in disrepair for many years. Mr. Y told me he had been to one of the poorest places in America. The people there lived in shabby houses with little furniture, only a few broken tables and chairs, and an unpleasant smell when you entered the house. The people there were depressed and listless. Although I can't say that such people abound in rural areas, but there are many.

The condition of rural areas is relative to that of highly prosperous large cities, and compared to some developing and underdeveloped countries, rural America is among the developed. What this comparison tells us is that the urban-rural divide will inevitably exist in any society, but that the divide has different implications for different societies. For American society, where more than ninety percent of the population is in cities, the countryside hardly constitutes a tension. Although no solution has been found to this problem, it will persist and tend to worsen, although the rural problem may not be able to make a big difference for the time being or under certain conditions. But for Chinese society, the political and social significance of having more than 80 percent of the population in the countryside is very different.

The actual process in the United States is to draw people out of relatively backward areas and concentrate them in the cities. This process is knitted together with the development process of production as a way to defuse the tensions in the rural areas. In fact, the problems that exist in the countryside are not really solved. Where is the limit of this process? Obviously there are limits. If agricultural production is seriously threatened, the urban-rural divide will become a serious problem. Under the current system, it is difficult to imagine any force or prescription that could reverse the actual flow of population.



The inevitability of the rural-urban divide is something that any society should be aware of. Differences in living standards are bound to create tensions between different populations. This tension may appear sooner or later, but the modernization process must eventually meet this challenge. The question is not how much the countryside has developed, but how many conflicts have been resolved and whether the methods of resolving them have created new ones.

## **8. Decline of the Farm**

Farms have always interested me for the simplest of reasons: the U.S. is probably only three or four percent agricultural, but they produce a lot of products for export in addition to ensuring the consumption of over 200 million people. Remember that the Soviet Union used to import a lot of grain from the United States. And many countries have small urban and rural populations of the former and large populations of the latter, but are not yet self-sufficient. Solving this problem is the key to a country's modernization. China has a population of almost 1.1 billion people, more than 80 percent of whom are in rural areas, but the supply of food and various kinds of foodstuffs is not so generous.

The problem of food has plagued mankind for countless years, probably since the beginning of mankind. So far mankind has not solved this problem. The food shortage in Africa has reached an alarming point, and how many people are facing the threat of death. I am afraid that food is the biggest gamble of human life. I remember that in Berlin, just after the Second World War, young girls could contribute their flesh for a little food because there was nothing to eat. It is difficult to talk about dignity and rights when there are difficulties with the basic need for human life to survive.

The farm I visited was one of many farms and was very typical. There were only two people in the farm owner's family, he and his wife. The son was away at college and working in another state. In the middle of a large open field, they had a very nice house, in comparison with the house seen in the city, almost. The city had all kinds of modern equipment and everything, such as telephone, electricity, running water, etc.

This is a phenomenon worth discussing. Generally speaking, no matter where you go, these basic equipment are always available. There are

times when you walk a long way to meet a family. This family will not lack anything. Various companies are also willing to provide services for this family, which actually kind of pays for itself. In terms of living conditions, the farmer is no less than anyone else. A "farmer" is, in fact, a farm owner (Farmer). The farm is private and the land is private. When you talk about farms, you should never use the Chinese concept. We may have thousands of people on a farm; in the United States there are usually only two or three people.

Let's look at some specific information to understand the differences in American agriculture. The farmer's name is Oberman. He said he had a total of 800 acres of land, equivalent to 4857 acres of land. He is responsible for farming himself, and he also employs a long day laborer, plus his elderly father sometimes helps out a little. Labor productivity is high. In addition to farming his 800 acres, he also raises pigs, and the numbers he tells are startling: he raises 1,200 pigs by himself. That's the number in the pen, which produces 2,400 pigs a year. In addition to all this, he is a director of an agricultural bank, and he manages the bank's affairs during his free time. In addition, he has to deal with social activities and make plans for the development of the society. This shows the extent to which he is able to make use of his energy.

The question is, how can a farmer have that kind of energy?

To add to the experience, we offered to take a tour of his pig farm and farmland. He first took us around his 800 acres of farmland in his car and we got a general idea. Then we were shown around his farm machinery. He has three tractors, two very large ones, and a combine, as big as the one on the Heilongjiang farm. There are also all kinds of agricultural machinery, so his farming is all mechanized. A combine can plow 80 acres a day, so 800 acres is not a problem for him. He grows mostly corn and soybeans, and when he harvests them, he has a manual air-drying facility that is highly automated. Plus the American farm is a large plain, which is a unique place in the United States. Large machinery drives up, no obstruction and no fence. With this condition, mechanization is easy to implement. China's rural areas around Zhejiang, ditches, rivers and hills are too much, large machinery is difficult to use.

It also has a highly automated pig farm with modern ingredients and a total of four stalls with a dense stocking. The food recipe has a fixed

ratio to promote the rapid growth of the pigs, and after six months of raising them, they are ready for the market. The pork he provides alone can probably be consumed by several hundred people.

Of course, there are difficulties for farmers, which is a challenge for agriculture. One of them is the economic problem; the farmer's financial income is not very high, and it takes a lot of labor. This farm earns \$20,000 to \$30,000 a year, but the combine bought with a loan is worth \$120,000, regardless of other equipment. Of course, some farms are larger and better, and the income is significant. This year, with the general drought in the United States, the farm owners are in a bad financial situation with lower incomes and about half of their income. We saw in the farmland, corn grows only half the standard height, the fruit deflated small. The low income of farm owners compared to other occupations is affecting agricultural development.

The second is the high intensity of labor. Farmers are labor-intensive, which cannot be compared with sitting in an office in the city or in an air-conditioned workshop in a factory. Farming is mainly a field operation. In any case, there is no way to avoid the vagaries of nature. Pig farming can be described as dirty and smelly. This farm is highly automated, but dirty and smelly cannot be excluded. Pigs do not know about cleanliness, there is no way out. When we visited the pig shed, the stench was so bad that it was discouraging. But the farm owner had to do it. He said that after work every day, it takes several showers to wash the smell away. This is something that I'm afraid not many people can accept in the United States.

The third is the boredom of the younger generation, which aspires to urban life due to the above-mentioned problems and the attraction of big cities. City life has cultural and recreational facilities that are not available in the countryside. This farm owner told me that he was devastated when his son graduated from college and told him he didn't want to come back for a while. But he believed he would come back eventually. If he doesn't come back, the farm will be a problem because he has only one son and there is no one to succeed him.

Despite all the problems, a number of people were crowded into agricultural production due to the market mechanism. The important issue is that the high output of agricultural production ensures the stability of political and social life. Imagine what will happen one day when Americans do not have enough food. In most developed

countries, the common phenomenon is the solution of the basic necessities of life, so that there is a sufficient influx of these products. Most of the underdeveloped countries, on the other hand, cannot solve this problem very well. Agricultural development is a stabilizer of society and a starter of the economy, and the Soviet Union has long been perplexed by agricultural problems: the economy and politics languished. The situation in other societies is roughly similar.

In a world with a growing population, agriculture is a lifeline.