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Title:

Differing Reactions to Deng Xiaoping’s Speeches on Political Reforms
and The Lead-up to The Tiananmen Incident 1989

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I certify that this sub-thesis is my own work and that all sources have been acknowledged.

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ABSTRACT

This sub-thesis analyses the differing political interests of political figures and groups in the lead-up to the Tiananmen incident in 1989. The main figures and groups discussed in this study are Deng Xiaoping, Party conservatives, Party reformers, political activists, and the Tiananmen protesters (Chinese students and workers). There are several different ways to uncover the political interests of these groups. In the case of Deng, his interests were reflected quite clearly in his major speeches on political reform. So were the ambiguities and contradictions, as he attempted to appeal to different interest groups through the speeches. I have also used the speeches to analyse the political interests of the Party leaders and some political activists, but in a different way. The interests of these particular groups are examined through their reactions to Deng’s political ideas in the speeches, and how they interpreted the speeches according to their own political beliefs and interests. However, due to the limited availability of reliable material, it is not possible to carry out a similar analysis for the students and workers. To understand their political interests, I have analysed the political trends and developments that were responsible for defining their political interests during the second half of the 1980s.

There were many differing political interests and demands from the aforementioned political figures and groups during the reform period. They all apparently knew what was best for the country. There were the conservatives who preferred limited political reform and emphasised tighter political control. There were those who wanted comprehensive political reform and the democratisation of China. Then, there was Deng Xiaoping who was rather inconsistent in his political strategies, but knew exactly where he wanted to take the country. As China reformed, the political interests of the above-mentioned groups became sharply contrasted, as can be seen through their differing reactions to Deng’s speeches. Each group and individual remained resolutely true to their political beliefs. Reluctant to concede any of their political demands, possible compromises never eventuated, and these differences in opinions eventually gave rise to serious political contention within and outside the leadership. This contention, together with the overheated economic situation, evidently led up to the Tiananmen incident in the spring of 1989.
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Bibliography
1.1 Introduction to the Thesis

This thesis looks at the causes of China’s political contention in 1989, with a specific focus on several major speeches of the then Chinese paramount leader, Deng Xiaoping, on political reform; and the differing reactions of state leaders and political groups to the speeches. When one looks at the question of the causes of political conflict that contributed to the grim political climate in 1989, the emphasis has always been given to the power struggle within the Chinese Communist Party (hereafter CCP) and the ideological confrontation inside and outside the political leadership. Some commentators have also viewed China’s reform in the political sphere as a well-established cause of China’s political crisis in second half of the 1980s and in the lead-up to the spring unrest in 1989. However, in the case of political reform, the sole emphasis has always been on how limited the reform was during the reform period, particularly in term of its scope and pace. This limited political reform, as many have argued, had caused widespread resentment among the increasingly discontented political activists, and thus gave rise to severe political contention by the end of the 1980s.

Having said that, it may be useful for us now to look at the causes of China’s political contention in 1989 from a different analytical angle, one that might allow the possibility of other causes contributing to the situation. Such other possible causes, as this thesis will attempt to show, lay in the differing reactions of various political groups to Deng Xiaoping’s political ideas which he promoted in his speeches in 1978, 1980, and 1986. As the paramount leader of China, Deng had always attempted to appeal to all different interest groups, in order to protect his own political power as well as to lead with consent. His attempt in doing so was clearly reflected in his speeches, which tend to be ambiguous and even contradictory at times. It is therefore not surprising to see how different and varied the reactions and responses to the speeches were; different political groups interpreted the speeches and the reform policies according to their own beliefs and interests. As a result, those reactions, over time, were more and more at variance with each other. This was also the case with the political interests that different factions attempted to secure out of the
reform. The end result of this difference in opinions was the rise of serious political contention, which generated a highly volatile political environment in the lead up to the Tiananmen incident in spring 1989.

A comprehensive analysis of Deng Xiaoping’s speeches and the nature of political reactions following the speeches is perhaps one particular area of study related to the issue of political crisis during the reform period that has not been adequately explored so far. Despite the widespread use of Deng’s speeches particularly in biographies, they are rarely used to offer a full discussion of the ambiguity and contradiction of the speeches, nor analysed to see if there was any concrete impact that the speeches could possibly have on the political community. In fact, compared to other political issues related to Deng, little work has been done on the issue. This could be due to the complexity and contradiction that shrouded Deng’s rhetoric such that, while it intrigued many, only a small number of scholars have undertaken research into the issue.

The need for a comprehensive analysis of Deng Xiaoping’s major speeches on political reform and the differing reactions to them has also become increasingly crucial as the present CCP leadership begins to toy around with the idea of putting political reform back on the agenda. Since the election of Hu Jintao as the new CCP General Secretary last year, there have been talks among the new lineup of the Party leadership of endorsing new political reform policies. In February 2003, at the Second Plenum of the 16th Central Committee, the decision was made to “further along the road of political reform”. Thus, it would be interesting to draw a parallel comparison between Deng’s speeches on political reform and those made by the present leadership. Will the current leadership use similar tactic as Deng’s, i.e. to be as ambiguous as they could be, so that they would appear appealing and ‘open’ to the increasingly diverse Chinese society? Or will those currently in power rather choose a practical but cautious approach to political reform so that the reform will not meet a similar fate as Deng’s and accordingly prevent another Tiananmen-like political crisis in the future? This is partly the reason why this study is worth doing. The research not only uncovers the political priorities of Deng and of the leadership, but also by looking simultaneously at the speeches and the reactions they generated, it offers a better understanding of how the political contention between those in power and those outside

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power could become completely beyond repair in 1989 – a situation that the current Chinese leadership would want to avoid.

For all these reasons, an analysis of Deng Xiaoping’s speeches and the responses from various interest groups following the speeches will form the main theme of this research. The study aims to show, as has been argued earlier on, how the differing reactions generated by Deng’s speeches gave rise to severe and widespread contention within and outside the Party leadership, which partly responsible for generating a hostile political atmosphere in the spring of 1989. Much of the contention stemmed from the differing political demands and interests that various factions were desperate to secure out of the reforms. As the reforms deepened, so did political conflict. Evidently, the clash between various political interests was so acute that it forced the progress of political reform to a standstill and paralysed the whole reform process. It was in the wake of this political setback that students and workers initiated a major pro-democracy protest in 1989 and demanded further political reform.

My research will primarily focus on the differing political reactions of various groups and individuals to the idea of political reform, as well as the underlying political demands and interests that determined the nature of those reactions. Similarly, it is also important to pay special attention at the reasons and factors behind these differing political reactions. The groups and individuals that will be brought into focus are mainly those who played active roles in the lead-up to the Tiananmen incident namely, Deng Xiaoping, the Party leaders, political groups and individuals outside the leadership circles, and students and workers. In addition, where relevant and necessary, a discussion of international events and circumstances pertinent to the issues of political reform and the Tiananmen incident will also be made.

In an analysis of Deng Xiaoping’s speeches and the responses they engendered in the light of the political confrontation at the end of the 1980s, the study aims to achieve the following objectives:

i. To obtain a new kind of understanding, with the benefit of hindsight, of the relationship between Deng Xiaoping’s speeches and the differing reactions to the speeches, and the rise of the political contention which led up to the Tiananmen incident.
An analysis of the differing political interests and demands both within and outside the Party leadership to observe the changing nature of the political behaviour and orientation of Deng Xiaoping, and other political leaders and groups throughout the reform period.

1.2 Literature Review

There is a considerable gap in the current body of knowledge on the issues of Deng’s policy pronouncements and the causal relation it might have with the volatile and tense political situation in the late of 1980s. It has not been researched enough to establish such a link, although there are some studies that have significant relevance in respect to the information and ideas of this study. In many cases, existing research may only focus on the issues of the reform policies that Deng endorsed in his speeches, or discuss the political crisis on its own without actually seeking to relate both two subject matters through a deeper analysis. Yet, the intellectual contribution of prior research, in many ways, helps this study to be built on the platform of existing knowledge and ideas while, at the same time, filling the current gap in the body of knowledge.

It is interesting to point out that earlier works on China’s political reform have already identified the different political interests within the CCP leadership. Falkenheim (1982) and Ng-Quinn (1982) are among those who identified the factional conflict between the conservative and the reform-minded CCP leaders, which was arguably becoming increasingly visible with Deng’s call for political reforms in 1978 and again 1980. The differing reactions of the factions to Deng’s policy agenda was mainly over the scope of the political reform policies, and whether or not they should remain interdependent of the simultaneous reforms in the economic sphere. This made reform policies one of the main bones of contention within the leadership circle. Yet, none of these earlier works identified the depth of these factional Party conflicts, nor any of the potential fragmenting effects that this conflict could have on the reforms, the Party leadership, or the larger political environment.

By contrast, studies that were carried out after the Tiananmen incident, with the benefit of hindsight, offer better analyses of the issues related to the factional Party conflict and the political crises in 1989. Although references to Deng’s speeches were only made occasionally, the different reactions to political reform between the factions were made
clearer, and thus reflected their attitudes towards Deng’s reform policies. In many ways, McCormick (1990), Goldman (1994), and Baum (1996) came to the similar conclusion that the conservative faction within the CCP leadership now and again was successful in gaining the upper hand and prevailed in their fight against democratic reform and changes. Goldman in particular moves one step further by focusing on the democratic elites network whose members were not necessarily the CCP leaders. Her work on the democratic elites offers valuable information on the elites’ views on the reform policies, information hardly available elsewhere. The studies also agree that Deng’s political rhetoric had little consistency with his behaviours and actions, and thus creating a lot of confusion and uncertainty among political activists and even the Party leaders themselves, particularly in regards to where Deng’s loyalties exactly lay.

However, none of the aforementioned studies attempts to put together the differing reactions and interests of the CCP leaders, political groups, media, students, and workers to Deng’s reform policies in order to see the extent of the clashing political interests that caused great frustration, particularly on the part of those who sought for much more fundamental political change. Even scantier is information on students and workers, and their reactions and attitude to Deng’s reform policies prior to their active involvement in the Tiananmen demonstration. Little work has been done in analysing such issues. Prior research on students, as presented by Cherrington (1991) and Calhoun (1994), examine in detail the student movement during the Tiananmen protest and, what both scholars term, their “struggle for democracy”. However, they pass over the political orientation of the students and their political interests prior to the Tiananmen protest.

This is a major gap in this area of study. None of the issues surrounding the political crisis has been clearly examined within the context of differing reactions to Deng Xiaoping and his speeches. In fact, it is practically difficult to find works solely devoted to analysing Deng’s speeches on political reform and the reactions that were prompted by them. This is one particular flaw in the current literature that this study hopes to set right. On the other hand however, there are some major contributions in the existing literature to the area of study of this research. This research can use information offered by prior work done on the reactions to Deng’s reform policies and bring those sources of information together to highlight the differences in political opinion. There is also an ample amount of works that could be used in providing strong reasons for, and explanation of, the differing reactions of various factions towards Deng’s reform agenda. In doing so, it is the aim of this research to
fill in the gap in the current literature pertaining to China’s political crisis in the late of 1980s.

1.3 Methodology

Due to my limited ability to read Chinese, this thesis will mainly use English materials. However, this does not mean the research will be short of primary sources. Media reports such as those in the Foreign Broadcast Information Service (hereafter FBIS) and Xinhua News Agency, will be generously used in this research and thus provide the research with strong primary sources. The FBIS and Xinhua, available in RG Menzies Library in the form of microfiches and printed media, are collections of news reports from various Chinese leading newspapers, as well as from media broadcasts, that have been translated into English. Further primary materials are also available from internet websites, where a number of them, including the key documents of Deng Xiaoping’s speeches, have also been translated into English. Likewise, the availability of so many strong secondary sources relevant to the area of study also complements the limited use of Chinese materials in this research. Many of these relevant secondary sources are in form of books, and articles in published magazines and periodicals. Additional materials such as a film on the 1989 Tiananmen incident, The Gate of Heavenly Peace (1995) which offers a combination of strong narratives and commentaries of the incident and the state of Chinese politics during the reform period, has also been studied and used in this research.

Methodologically, textual analysis will be used in most part of the research. This is the most appropriate technique to elucidate the complicated nature of Deng’s speeches on reform as well as the differing political reactions following the speeches. This technique is also relevant in analysing the intensity of different interests and beliefs of political actors. In this context, an attempt will also be made to explain more convincingly the evolution of the interest groups whose political interests became more contradictory as the reform progressed.

As for the structure of this research, I will use the combination of historical and political analysis. An historical and political analysis is necessary in this research as it traces the evolution of interest groups and their political demands and beliefs from the beginning of the reform period until the political crisis in 1989. In this context, Deng’s speeches will be used as a useful time frame for the purpose of a clearer analysis of the changing pattern
of political beliefs, interests, and attitudes of those groups. The research will also attempt, where it is appropriate, to look at the course of the political reform itself, which, first of all, was almost parallel to Deng’s changing attitude towards the reform during the decade; and second, was closely associated to which political faction had Deng’s ear and accordingly gained the upper hand in deciding the nature and the scope of the reform. Thus, to begin this historical and political analysis, the following section of the chapter will look at a brief overview of the historical and political background of the reform period.

1.4 Economic, Cultural, and Political Changes During the Reform Period: A Brief Overview

Before we analyse the differing reactions to Deng Xiaoping’s major speeches on political reform in the following chapters, it is worthwhile first to look at the general overview of the extensive and profound changes that China underwent over the reform period. By giving some general idea of the social, political and economic changes that had taken place throughout the reform period, it will be easier to understand how the differing political demands and interests of various factions could come about. Similarly, it will also prevent the political changes under study from being examined in complete isolation from the simultaneous developments and changes in other areas that had taken place throughout the reform period.

Since China embarked on a course of reform and the open door policy in 1978, the economic, cultural and political conditions of the country had changed rapidly. But the changes were not necessarily for the better. As the following paragraphs will show, the Chinese population had moved steadily from serving under a command economy to a more relaxed economic system; from being ideologically constrained to having the capacity to speak their own minds and political beliefs; and from being fed government-controlled information to having considerable access to various kinds of publications and ideas. Yet, all these changes did not necessarily entail positive impacts on Chinese society or bring benefit to all the population. Many undeniably welcomed the economic and political reforms as they now could enjoy the newly acquired private wealth, and to some extent, autonomy as a consequence of the reform. However, there were also a similar number, or probably more, of Chinese who were evidently suffering from economic or political disadvantage as the changes following the reform inevitably penetrated into people’s daily lives.
1.4.1 Economic Changes: Material Inequality

The launching of economic reform in 1978 not only created opportunities but also gave rise to considerable number of unsettling problems. With the introduction of power devolution within the economic system as part of the reform programs, it essentially gave the Chinese a considerable sense of autonomy, something that allowed them to be more active in finding ways to develop themselves economically on their own. In the state’s initiative to boost and unleash the potential of Chinese people to move towards economic modernisation, the state’s control over the economic activities of factories and other production teams was now loosened. The economic obligation to the state that the people or factories had to fulfil was also simultaneously lessened. So was the state power over the everyday lives of the citizens. Consequently, there was a growing number of people and production teams who were in the position to enjoy certain degrees of independence from the state and develop their own economic interests. This created a competitive atmosphere as each individual with talent and initiative raced against each other to make money and generate private wealth.

As a consequence of the above economic charges, the Chinese population, as Gordon White argues, underwent significant structural transformation during the reform period:

Existing groups have become internally more complex as a consequence of diversification in economic sectors, forms of ownership and levels of income. New groups and strata have also emerged: in the countryside, ‘new rich peasant’ households which have made money quickly in recent years through specialised agricultural production or diversification into local industry, trade and services; in the cities, private business-people generally, and a small number of successful entrepreneurs in particular, who have amassed small fortunes through personal initiative, specialised skills or good connections...

The competitive nature of the economic reform however did not benefit every sector of the Chinese population. Among those who were seriously displaced by the reform were a significant number of Chinese workers throughout the country. Despite the so-called economic miracle, millions of factory workers were laid off following the factory reform while millions others were forced to work in disgraceful working conditions. The factory reform, which will be discussed more closely in chapter four, was part of Deng Xiaoping’s urban economic reform that was launched in 1984. Despite its main aim to free urban factories from state ownership and grant self-responsibility to managers, so as to increase

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productivity, the reform failed to further autonomy or economic advantage for workers. But more importantly, it was also unable to provide economic securities similar to those offered by the Maoist iron rice bowl system, causing widespread resentment among the disadvantaged workers. While a selected portion of the Chinese society had an easier access to economic resources and wealth, the have-nots, including a significant numbers of factory workers, were left struggling with their lives even to make both ends meet. This is partly the reason why Chinese workers, as will be discussed in chapter four, reacted so violently against Deng’s reform policies during the political crisis in 1989. However, while they might share the students’ demand for further political reform, the workers were mainly seeking to safeguard their own economic interests rather than actually fighting for a cause of a deeper democratic reform.

Chinese students were another group that felt itself displaced by the economic reform. Like the workers, it was unemployment that became a serious issue among these students, particularly university graduates. In 1985, when the government decided to modify the job assignment system, it supposedly gave graduates more, if not better, opportunities for finding suitable jobs. It did give students some good chances of jobs, but only to some extent. Concomitant to the advance of economic reform, there had been increasing preferences in employment sectors for those with technical and scientific background. This new development, not only disadvantaged those who were without such educational background, but as China progressed through reform, the supposedly homogeneous group of the educated was inevitably divided into their own have and have-nots.\(^3\) This material inequality, which was later further compounded with other broader economic crisis suffered by the general population, had changed the students’ overall view of Deng’s reform policies, particularly those in regard to political reform. As chapter four will show, students began to react against official policy lines and demanded fundamental change to the political system.

Whether intended or not, one of the significant outcomes of the economic reform was the emergence of a differentiated Chinese society. The uneven distribution of, and access to, monetary rewards among the population, including the workers and the students, created rifts between the haves and the have-nots which was widened as China progressed through reform. The fact that, firstly, the Party was unable to rectify this economic situation,

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and secondly, they underestimated the intensity of the widespread dissatisfaction, particularly among the economically disadvantaged, meant that tensions in China were extreme. It was due to this economic crisis, coupled with the growing political crisis, that a massive demonstration broke out on the streets of Beijing in 1989.

1.4.2 Cultural Consequences of the Open-Door Policy

Apart from the domestic economic reform, Deng’s simultaneous decision to open China to the outside world also had huge impacts on society. Among the deliberate open-door policies that had been set out by Deng were those: “to use special economic zones, open up coastal cities and provinces, send numerous students, scholars, and technicians abroad, promote the tourist industry, and rebuild the infrastructure (communication and transportation)...”. Beside the general economic benefits that had already been anticipated from the open door policies, there were several significant parallel cultural changes that Chinese society underwent as the result of the policy. Jing Lin offers a good summary of these changes:

Open door policy has enabled the people to learn about the outside world. The tremendous differences between China and the developed countries in terms of economic development and living standards shocked the people once they had a chance to learn of them; and the pursuits and adventurous spirit of Western countries made a deep impression on them, particularly the younger generation. After their contact with the West, some intellectuals started to realise that there was something fundamentally wrong with the socialist system. Therefore, concepts like efficiency, wealth, and competition became appealing to the public, and gradually a fresh outlook on their own society and themselves grew out of the comparisons.

From the above passage it is clear that all the cultural exchanges with Western countries, and the outside world in general, had magnified the cultural differences between China and the rest of the world in the eyes of the Chinese. By having direct contact with Westerners and simultaneously being exposed to foreign ideas, the Chinese gradually came to the realisation that China was far too behind the times in terms of technology, education, and even way of life. The Chinese were now becoming aware of the fact that their overseas cousins in Hong Kong and Taiwan, or even in Singapore, were far more affluent in

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comparison with their poor living conditions.\textsuperscript{6} For the rising generation of Chinese students, and another 70,000 of them who were sent abroad to study throughout the reform period, the inflow of foreign ideas to China and their own direct contact with foreign cultures made them hungry for knowledge, progress, and a better future, as well as for finding solutions to China’s mounting economic and political problems.\textsuperscript{7} The students and intellectuals also came to a realisation that there were other political alternatives available that China’s political system could be modelled on. Equally important, the acquisition of foreign technology as well as personnel from advanced western countries that was necessary to ensure the rate of the economic modernisation could be rapidly advanced was already a clear indication to some Chinese that the once sacred Maoist principle of self-reliance had become outdated.

As a result, regardless of the leadership’s continual assertion of the superiority of the communist ideology, the open door had shown the Chinese that the ruling ideology was not that superior after all. The ideological principles had been tampered and distorted to serve power struggles or personal vendettas in the CCP leadership. It also became evident that the only real beneficiary of the people’s unquestioned obedience to the ideology was none other than the CCP. The Party had consistently used the ideology as a mechanism in preserving its roles, as well as serving the interests of some powerful individuals. Having said that, the ideology no longer embodied the people’s aspirations, nor would it function to fulfil the needs of the masses. In fact, some of the communist ideals, including those of improving the people’s livelihood had been abandoned by the Party, making it much harder for the Chinese to seek for fundamental improvement without the support of the Party.

The changing perception towards communism was further facilitated by the Chinese media, which also underwent a significant change in disseminating new ideas and information to the people during the reform period. With the gradual relaxation of economic and political environment, the media was no longer confined to its role as the formal mouthpiece of the Party authorities. Throughout the reform period, it also served the needs of newly emerged “more differentiated and pluralistic semi-autonomous groups...[who] sought to articulate their self-interests within the system”.\textsuperscript{8} Moreover, as Deng’s government focused less on imposing ideology on the public and the media, various kinds

\textsuperscript{7} Ruth Cherrington, \textit{China’s Students: The Struggle for Democracy}, p. 63.
of ideas and political values, different cultural genres, much more livelier media entertainment and other diversified media materials were allowed to flourish. Equally significant was the staggering increase in the number of newspapers and various publications during the reform period which, despite government watchdogs, reached a combined annual circulation of 25.98 billion by 1987. This boom in publications undoubtedly had considerable impact particularly on educated youth. The media not only satisfied their thirst for knowledge but also played a key role in familiarising youth with democratic ideas and other forbidden political domains.

This increasing popularity of Chinese media among the young population later contributed to the rapid decline in confidence towards the ruling ideology. More and more young people, particularly the educated ones, were convinced that the ideological principles were no longer compatible with reality. The knowledge that they gained from traditional education, in they view, was no longer applicable to the changing nature of Chinese society. As a result, these educated youth began to turn to and study foreign ideals and political beliefs that they thought could offer practical solutions to rectify the problems facing contemporary China. It was against this new development that Chinese students and media, as will be discussed in detail in chapters three and four, spoke openly of their disaffection towards the ruling ideology by pointing out its flaws, and at the same time promoted western political ideals that they thought could help to further Deng’s reform.

The open door policy clearly accelerated the deepening of the economic reform. People’s way of thinking and ideology underwent changes in a big way. Due to the inflow and exchange of information through the media and other means, most Chinese by now realised how backward China actually was compared to the rest of the world. But not all Chinese had the courage to show their dissatisfaction toward Communist rule. The only group that showed some continuous frustration was the rising generation of Chinese students, and to a lesser extent, intellectuals and workers. Evidently, the inflow of foreign ideas, including the ideals of democracy and freedom, held so much appeal to the students and intellectuals that they no longer seemed to accept the principles of the ruling ideology. Instead, they believed that the foreign ideas could provide panaceas for all economic and political problems facing China at that time. It was based on this conviction that the group

9 Ibid., p. 16.
11 Ibid.,
developed its political demands that were later voiced much louder as political tensions grew and the crisis approached in the spring of 1989.

1.4.3 The Impact of the Reform on the Party Rule

There is no question that the economic reform and the open door policy also had a profound effect on the Party rule during the reform period. The effect however was not always favourable as the social, economic, and cultural changes within society, in many ways, tended to challenge and threaten Party rule. Although the Party did not succumb to the challenges and threats, not even after the 1989 incident, thanks to Deng’s [ambiguous] manoeuvring, the rise of numerous interest groups and other consequences of the reform continued to provide the grounds for potential confrontation between the state and society.

One particular group that put up some serious challenges to the Party machinery was the losers of the reform. This group comprised of those, including factory workers, whose living standards were depressed by the painful effects of the economic reform and the burst of inflation. Due to their impoverished living conditions, and the fact that the Party had done so little to ease their economic misery, these losers of reform were becoming sceptical of the CCP’s political rhetoric with its wishful dream of modernising China. The rhetoric, as it appeared to the discontented population, no longer matched China’s reality. Despite the deepening of the reform, open unemployment, urban crime, inflation, corruption of public officials and institution remained unsettled. Many Chinese argued this was mainly because “the country’s reformers don’t know what they are doing or where they were going…” that their economic deliberations failed to alleviate the desperate living condition of the population, let alone to find the solutions for those problem and bring them under control.12

As a result, there was an increasing disillusionment among the Chinese with the Party authority and the integrity of the hegemonic political institution. The CCP obviously saw this crisis of confidence as an extremely disturbing development. Evidently, from the beginning of the second half of 1980s, the Party rule and the ideology were challenged from below. Young Chinese would ridicule those who applied for Party membership as it was no longer a respectable decision to do so, while a TV series “He Shang” (River Energy) in 1988

critically questioned the superiority of the ideology and traditional Chinese culture.\textsuperscript{13} This development clearly not only threatened the political institution but it simultaneously posed a severe challenge to the ruling ideology on which the rationale of the Communist rule was based.

This was not the only threat that the CCP had to endure during the reform period. Those who benefited from the reform, particularly the open door policy, could equally undermine the supremacy of the political institution and the ruling ideology. It was mentioned earlier that among the main consequences of the reform and open door policy was the emergence of numerous new groups whose interests were in conflict with the existing political order. There was also an increasing familiarity among these interest groups with foreign ideals which consequently made them deeply disillusioned with the Party, the state, and the ruling ideology. Moreover, compounded with the erosion of central authority at lower levels and the expansion of private sectors at which many of the new interest groups emerged from, more and more people became less dependent upon the state for economic and even political reason.

Evidently, these new developments within the society had placed the well-being of the Party and its leaders in serious jeopardy. The rapid expansion of the urban private sector as well as another 10 million small enterprises had replaced the CCP’s role as the “powerful economic and political force in Chinese society”\textsuperscript{14} This undoubtedly weakened the command and the control of the CCP over the population. Similarly, as Marxist principles were now largely ignored by young people and intellectuals who were now increasingly in favour of Western ideals and modes of thinking, more people started to fight for a much more enlightened political system and mentality in China compared to those who actually stood up for the present regime and ideology.\textsuperscript{15} This unmistakably is a reflection of the changing nature of the people’s loyalty to the political institution. It therefore made it much harder for the Party to rule or demand any form of unquestionable compliance from the people as it used to.

It was for all these reasons that there were serious differences over the reform policies within the Party leadership, causing the unity of the Party to be fragmented and

\textsuperscript{13} Nan Lin, \textit{The Struggle for Tiananmen}..., p. 40.
\textsuperscript{15} Jing Lin, \textit{The Opening of the Chinese Mind}, p. 57.
divided. The hardliners understandably had a great deal of difficulty in accommodating the rapid changes following the reform. They also feared that current developments could spell the end of the Party’s total monopoly of power and ideology. It was due to fear and uncertainty, that they deliberately put some brakes in the way of the reform by launching sporadic anti-bourgeois campaigns as well as directly attacking the policies of reform and open door. On the other hand however, despite their vulnerability to bourgeois charges from the conservatives, the Party’s proponents of reform still wanted China to move ahead with a large-scale, synchronised political and economic reform. These differing political reactions to Deng’s reform policies, which will be discussed more closely in chapter three, undoubtedly deprived the Party of an effective and legitimate leadership that ideally could solve any contradiction that emerged within the Party or society.

So, what was Deng’s reaction during these economic and political crises? It can be said that he reacted rather ambiguously in dealing with the crises. There is some evidence that he was concerned with the problems facing China at that time, but that he also cared a great deal about his own political fate and survival. As a paramount leader, Deng believed so long as he maintained good relations with the rest of the Party leaders and the general population, his authority, as well as of the state would remain secure. So, he played a balancing act between the hardliners and the reformers, and was seen occasionally shifting to either side but carefully not to venture too far in either direction. Deng also extended his game of political equilibrium with the rest of the population. He showed his sympathy over economic misfortune and kept reminding those that suffered that it was all part of the reform risks that would ease with the deepening of the reform. Yet, he would not go further than that as otherwise, he would send the wrong messages to the population and more importantly, to the two differing Party factions that were constantly fighting for his attention.

There was, of course, no question that Deng and the CCP remained firmly in power throughout the reform period, as there had not been any organised opposition against them to successfully gain a foothold. Yet, the impact of the consequences of reform on the Party rule could not be easily overlooked. As a consequence of the reform there had been an emergence of numerous groups whose interests were at odds with the state, and widespread crisis of confidence in the political institution and ruling ideology among the population.

Thus, the Party found it increasingly difficult to regulate the increasingly complicated, if not pluralist, society, and regain complete control over the populace. As a result of these unresolved and differing political reactions, discontent was just lying beneath the surface throughout the reform period until its outburst in 1989.

1.5 Thesis Organisation

The thesis is divided into five main chapters:

Chapter 1:
This chapter introduces readers to the general idea and outline of the thesis. The background, rationale, and objectives of the thesis are discussed to provide the main reason why the analysis of differing reactions to Deng Xiaoping’s major speeches is worth pursuing. The literature review has identified the gap in the prior research that this study aims to address. Equally important, the general overview of the social, political, and economic changes that China had undergone over the reform period will put this research in perspective.

Chapter 2:
An analysis of Deng Xiaoping’s major speeches on political reform throughout the reform period is the main theme of this chapter. The three main speeches that will be analysed are Deng’s speeches in 1978, 1980, and 1986, all promoting political reform. This chapter will discuss some of the ambiguous and contradicting contents of the speeches, and the reasons behind the speeches. The analysis will show how much the speeches were influenced by two of Deng’s own political concerns: one, to secure his ultimate authority and second, to use the political ideas in the speeches as part of his political strategy for furthering economic reform rather than as a means of fixing the current flaws within the political system.

Chapter 3:
Attention is shifted from Deng Xiaoping to the conservative and reformist factions in the leadership circle, political groups outside the Party leadership, Chinese medias, as well as prominent political activists. This chapter explores the reactions of these groups to Deng’s speeches on political reforms, which bring to light the differing political interests and demands that they wished to secure out of the reforms. The differences in opinions and
the clashes of interests among these groups were mainly over the goals and the scope of the reforms. As this chapter will show, the clashing interests between these groups were becoming increasingly apparent as the political reform proceeded. The increasingly severe political contention not only brought the reform into sudden standstill but also created a grim political atmosphere that was beyond repair.

Chapter 4:

This chapter examines the two groups that were actively involved in the political crisis: Chinese students and the factory workers. As there is a scarcity of sources that provide reliable information on these groups’ reactions of Deng’s speeches, this chapter looks directly at their political interests. The discussion will show how different, but not necessarily contradicting, the political interests of the two groups were. The workers’ interests were evidently much more particularistic in nature than those of the students. Whereas the students sought for broader political reform, the workers mainly concerned with their practical livelihood issues. Yet, these differences in political interests did not hinder both groups to march down Beijing streets for a democratic cause in 1989.

Chapter 5:

Concluding discussion on the differing reactions to the major speeches. Without putting all the reactions together, one would not be able to understand the intensity of the political contention during the reform period between the groups and individuals discussed previously.
CHAPTER 2

AN ANALYSIS OF DENG XIAOPING’S MAJOR SPEECHES ON POLITICAL REFORMS

2.1 Introduction

Political reform in China has yet to produce really conclusive outcomes. Prior to the beginning of the reform period in 1978, there were continuous calls for political reform aimed particularly at reforming the Party apparatus, as well as instituting both centralism and democracy within the political system. However such political reforms received less credit than they deserved. Mao Zedong, in particular, manipulated any stated goal of the reforms to his advantage and turned them into a means to achieve higher levels of political supremacy over the state, and of his own personal prestige. Moreover, the survival of such political campaigns could not be guaranteed and could be aborted automatically if they created widespread antagonism towards the Party.¹ Such a deal clearly left the country with no choice but to accept rule from the top-down, no matter how erroneous and misleading the Party’s directives were.

The question of political reform re-emerged in 1978 as Deng Xiaoping began to consolidate his power over the central leadership. There was perhaps no other Party leader who could better spearhead a potentially full-scale political reform than Deng. He was no stranger to Chinese politics and extremely familiar with the system. It was also due to this political knowledge that Deng, despite the difficult journey leading to his reinstatement to power, succeeded in establishing his own independent position within the Party leadership. Later, as Deng was about to launch his economic reforms, there were demands, particularly from his pro-reform supporters, for him to push simultaneous reforms in the political

¹ The Hundred Flowers rectification campaign in 1957 is a classic example. Among the outpouring criticisms directed at the CCP were the familiar disapprovals of the prevalent bureaucratism and the monopoly of power by the Party’s top leadership. However, as the criticisms were getting out of control and Mao’s authority was increasingly, although indirectly at most of the times, under attack, the campaign was immediately aborted and the critics were relentlessly purged. Thus, throughout the Mao period, the right for advocating reform as entirely denied, and the elite Party members solidly rallied around Mao without question, reform advocates found little gain to oppose Mao in political sense. Frederick C. Teiwes, Politics and Purges in China: Rectification and the Decline of Party Norms, 1950 – 1965, 2nd ed., (Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1993), pp. 207 – 210.
sphere. Deng saw the rationale in the demands and thus, he began to gear up in setting a
course towards major political reforms that had been sidelined by the Party for so long.

This chapter sets up a basis for understanding some of Deng’s political ideas through
speeches on political reform between the years 1978 and 1986. It attempts to highlight the
ambiguities and contradictions in these speeches. In some ways, they were responsible for
the emergence of differing political reactions later. Having said that, this chapter analyses
and discusses some of the conflicting political ideas and reform policies that Deng proposed
through these speeches. Accordingly, it looks at the different factions or political groups
that those ideas and reform policies were targeted at and attempted to appeal to. The reasons
for, and some of the political backgrounds of, Deng’s ‘choices’ of factions will be discussed
as this will uncover whether or not Deng’s political vision was determined by his own
personal interests or whether it was a pure response to the immediate political situations and
needs, or both.

There were a substantial number of important speeches delivered by Deng during
this period but only a few of them entailed political reforms. Some of these political reform-
speeches will be analysed in this chapter. One of them is the speech that Deng made on
December 13, 1978 at the closing session of the Central Working Conference prior to the
Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee of the CCP. The other one is his
speech during a meeting with the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CCP on
August 18, 1980. A series of speeches on political reform that Deng made between
September and November 1986 will be the final speeches to be brought to attention.

The analysis of these speeches will demonstrate Deng’s latent conservatism in his
supposedly pragmatic political vision. While many of the political ideas in the speeches
attempted to appeal predominantly to those whose interests were in favour of political
reform, there were few parts of similar speeches that were aimed at those who were not
supportive of such changes. Through his speeches, Deng could be seen as resolutely
standing by, for example, Party norms including centralised leadership and highly
centralised decision-making process, when it was true that these were exactly the kind of
political practices that the reform policies sought to amend. The analysis of the speeches
will also uncover how much of the policy orientation in those speeches was determined by
Deng’s own political interests. In one way or another, Deng would make an authoritarian
speech, particularly when the political situation was not so favourable, with the intention of safeguarding his political interests.

Equally important is the fact that, while political reforms seemed to be the main agenda of the speeches, one will see how Deng used such reforms more of a means to facilitate economic reform than as an end in itself. Yet, Deng cleverly made this one important fact somewhat less obvious in the speeches. Instead, he continued to appeal to the previously non-politically active part of the population to participate and become politically involved in their local affairs. What Deng actually did, as this chapter and the next will show, was not only misled many political groups with respect to his true political vision but, along the way, also provided the foundation for different power groups to develop and define their own roles and interests. This was a new development that led to the differing reactions to Deng’s speeches.

2.2.1 December 13 1978: Loosening tight political dictatorship of the old guard.

This particular speech of Deng’s is one of the most significant speeches that Deng made during his political career. The significance of this speech lies in the fact that it was the keynote address for the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee of the CCP in 1978. It not only demonstrated the return of Deng to the front line of the central leadership, but also indicated that he had slowly gained enough power and influence to dictate the whole Party apparatus. Having said that, one would see how much the policy orientation of this speech was determined by what had been going on prior to the time when the speech was made. This includes Deng’s leadership struggle with Hua Guofeng, whose faction was the main target of this speech. Equally the target of the speech were those who were in favour of political reform, particularly those pro-reform Party leaders who had assisted Deng in getting the upper hand in the leadership struggle.

Perhaps to show his commitment to the pro-reform forces, Deng started the speech with a sharp criticism of the excessive bureaucratic practices and the over-concentration of power within the Party:

...the Party was afflicted with bureaucratism resulting from, among other things, concentration of power. This kind of bureaucratism often masquerades as “Party leadership”, “Party directives”, “Party interests” and “Party discipline”, but actually it is designed to control people, hold them in check and oppress them. At that time many
important issues were often decided by one or two persons. The others could only do what those few ordered.²

It is known that, within the Chinese political system, decision-making processes were mainly concentrated at the top echelon of the Party. The processes were highly individualised and it was supposedly, as the Party justified, made it easier and quicker to reach consensus on important issues. Deng seemed to recognise these problems of excessive bureaucratism within the Chinese political system as well as the impact such problems could have on the system. However, Deng seemed to be unsure if he really wanted to combat such practices. There was no mention in the speech of whether there was actually a pressing need within the Party for those problems to be fixed, let alone for Deng to suggest Party leaders to devolve their power of decision-making to lower hierarchies.

This is perhaps where Deng’s ambiguous attitude is most notable. He advocated political reform policies throughout the speech but was quite unsure when it came to implementing such policies within the core of the leadership and the Party itself. Deng was clearly reluctant to talk openly about reforming the Party leadership, possibly because he did not want to offend Party conservatives. But one factor that arguably could be the main reason for Deng’s hesitation was that his power mainly lay in a centralised leadership. This means, the more centralised the leadership was, the more power that Deng and the Party could monopolise and consolidate. This is perhaps why Deng, in the speech, repeatedly emphasised how much China needed a unified and centralised Party leadership, but under a different justification – only this kind of leadership could guarantee the stability and unity of the country.³

In contrast, when Deng was faced with similar kinds of problems in economic management, he knew the exact kind of reforms that the managing system should undergo. Deng argued that economic management in every factory and production team give way to economic democracy. This meant a devolution of power to the lower levels of economic management should be made possible. Greater autonomy in decision-making, in regards to economic operations and other undertakings, should be given to various localities,

³ ibid.,
enterprises, and production teams. Deng also saw the need to instil “the democratic rights of the workers and peasants, including the rights of democratic elections, management and supervision” so that “not only every workshop director and production team leader but also every worker and peasant is aware of his responsibility for production…”

What Deng was trying to do here is clear. It was not so much about political reform, although that was how it appeared to be. It had more to do with Deng’s need to see his economic reform to progress smoothly and thus, he employed the political reform policies to achieve that objective. In fact, Deng had already envisaged what China would achieve if political reform was fully implemented within economic management:

once a production team has been empowered to make decisions regarding its own operations, its members and cadres will lie awake at night so long as a single piece of land is left unplanted or a single pond unused for aquatic production, and they will find ways to remedy the situation. Just imagine the additional wealth that could be created if all the people in China’s hundreds of thousands of enterprises and millions of production teams put their minds to work.

Having said that, Deng made it clear the political reforms at this stage was designed as a perfect complement to economic reforms by putting into practice a rather democratic political system of loosening the Party’s bureaucratic control over the population and devolving power to the lower levels. This in turn would transfer some degree of autonomy and responsibility, and develop a sense of participation among the population, an important ingredient for the success of Deng’s economic reform.

Even so, the speech did reflect the direction of Deng’s policy orientation at that time and the kind of political group he appealed to. His advocacy for structural reforms was his first indication of responding to the demands of political activists, including the democratic elites, who had been long sought political reform within and outside the Party. These groups, spearheaded by reform-minded political cadres such as Hu Yaobang and Zhao Ziyang, had been trying to alleviate problems, such as bureaucratism and power monopoly, from continuously burdening the Party apparatus. They had been struggling non-stop to

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4 ibid.,
5 ibid.,
6 ibid.,
7 The term ‘democratic elite’ was first coined by Merle Goldman to describe a group of intellectuals that formed their own political network around Hu Yaobang. The members of the network might have different concerns and emphases but they were all had one common political objective to accomplish, that is, to put limitation on the party’s power and to democratise the political system. Merle Goldman, Sowing the Seeds of Democracy in China: Political Reform in the Deng Xiaoping Era, (London, England: Harvard University Press, 1994), p. ix.
make administrative and fundamental political reforms possible, even if that meant they were subjected to continuing persecution and retaliation during the multiple campaigns launched during the Mao era.

With Deng being reinstated to power and joining the Party leadership in 1977, the democratic forces were almost certain that time was now on their side. And they were not wrong. Despite the fierce opposition from the remaining Maoists in the Party, and with Hu Yaobang’s insistence, Deng reinstated almost three million people, mostly those purged both during the anti-rightist campaign and the Cultural Revolution, comprising Party officials, scientists, intellectuals, and skilled workers, and returned them to public life.\(^8\) In no time, the democratic forces re-established their networks, and began to gather momentum. More importantly, as can be seen through Deng’s speech, the pro-reformers were gaining increasing influence within the Party.

However, Deng’s inclination towards the pro-reform faction was not entirely due to the work of the democratic elites. It was not a co-incidence either. Deng had his own reason for his ‘marriage of convenience’ with the faction. Again, it was Deng’s own political interests that he needed to safeguard. After being purged twice,\(^9\) Deng sought to fully regain his former power and influence. Although restored to his former positions as the Party vice chairman, vice premier and PLA chief of staff in 1977,\(^10\) Deng realised that his interests would not be fully secured if Hua Guofeng, the self-proclaimed heir of Mao’s empire, continued to occupy the centre stage of Chinese politics at that time. Hua, despite his relatively weak status compared to Deng’s, managed to elevate himself to the Party chairmanship by tactically suggesting the policy doctrine of the “two whatever” in 1977.\(^11\)

\(^8\) ibid., p. 28.
\(^9\) Deng Xiaoping was first removed from the Party leadership at the beginning of the Cultural Revolution in 1966. He was arrested and had been labelled as a part of the ‘revisionist’ camp that was seeking opportunities to subvert the Chinese revolution and to take China to capitalist road. After being released from imprisonment in 1969, he spent almost a decade in self-exile. Deng was later rehabilitated to power in 1973, and by 1974, he replaced Zhou Enlai (who was seriously ill at that time) as Vice Premier of the State Council, the Vice Chairman of the Standing Committee of the Party’s Central Committee and the Chief of Staff of the People’s Liberation Army. However, Deng fell under criticism from the radical elements within the CCP leadership throughout 1975. Upon the death of Zhou in January 1976, which was followed closely by the Tiananmen Incident in April, Deng was once again removed from his positions in the Party and the government and denounced with similar ‘capitalist’ label that he was associated with 1966. David Goodman, Deng Xiaoping and the Chinese Revolution: A Political Biography, (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), pp. 73 – 85.
\(^11\) In January 1977, in an attempt to revive Mao’s ideological and charismatic authority, Hua Guofeng suggested that “we must resolutely uphold whatever policy decisions Chairman Mao made and unswervingly carry out whatever Chairman Mao instructed”, a notion that was later widely known as the ‘two whatever’. The notion fundamentally highlighted certain elements in Maoism that favoured class struggle, economic
As a result, the remaining Maoists and Hua’s loyal supporters praised Hua for his seemingly unconditional loyalty to the Maoist legacy and instantly elevated him to a new personality cult. Confirming Deng’s fear, this development decisively shifted the balance of power of the Party leadership towards Hua.

However, given Hua’s lack of a real power base, Deng knew that by campaigning against the concept of the ‘two whatevers’, he would easily and effectively neutralise Hua’s influence and control over the Party organs. This was the beginning of Deng’s coalition with the democratic forces, as he needed the support of their network to assist him in his attempt to launch a political offensive campaign against Hua. Given the advantage of the network’s easy access to publication and newspapers, there had been a remarkable “mobilisation of elite opinion through the press”, all were counter-attacking the ‘two whatevers’ notion.12 Much to the annoyance of Hua and his supporters, the attack on his doctrine led to a larger nationwide ideological debate. Following the debate, Hua’s ‘two whatevers’ concept was increasingly seen as cutting itself from reality as it stressed more on the continuity with the past, particularly at times when the public outcry demanding for reform and change was running high.13 As the public confidence towards Hua was at a low ebb, it presented Deng with the best opportunity to assert his own notion of “seek[ing] truth from facts” as a pragmatic guide to determine the correctness of policy and would offer the correct way to comprehend the fundamental ideas for Mao’s words and actions.14 Deng’s notion evidently negated Hua’s ‘two whatevers’ and had further weakened Hua’s power base. As a result, the balance of power in the Party leadership was no longer in favour of Hua but instead decisively towards Deng, and to a lesser extent, to the pro-reform factions.

Through his alliance with the pro-reform faction to weaken Hua’s influence, Deng managed to secure his political interests and simultaneously gained a greater influence in the core of the leadership, as illustrated by the ‘value’ that this speech had during the Third Plenary. In this case, one perhaps could argue that this particular speech on political reform might be only political gestures that Deng made to the reformers, or it could be only a mere

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favour that Deng made in respect to the group. This is because, the speech did seemingly have political reform policies written all over it. But looking beyond the surface, many of the political reform policies were only instrumental ends to the economic reform. This means political reform rather had secondary, or even lesser, importance, in Deng’s policy agenda. Moreover, Deng himself was also quite adamant about the need to preserve the Party’s leadership. This reflected the strong conservative side of Deng, which continued to have an effect on his supposedly pragmatic judgment and political vision throughout the reform period.

2.2.2 August 18 1980: Strengthening Deng’s Authority and the Creation of New Power Groups.

This is another important speech of Deng’s, which he made during an enlarged meeting with the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CCP. In many ways, this speech embodied similar tones and ideas to the December 1978 speech, including the development of grass-roots democracy and the encouragement of political participation among the population. There were new political issues as well, such as the voluntary resignation of veteran Party members. However, by looking closely at these political ideas and the factors that drove Deng to push such ideas, one would realise how much Deng’s political interests once again determined his political vision. Deng, through this speech, directly asked the elderly Party members, for the reasons Deng gave, to step down from their positions in the state leadership. Simultaneously, Deng brought his own entourage to fill in the vacated leadership position which further strengthened Deng’s authority in the central leadership. On the other hand, Deng also appealed to factory and educational management to assume responsibility. In doing so, Deng gave reason for these people to define their own roles and interests. Hence, different power groups whose interests were not necessarily similar to the Party/state were simultaneously developed. This provided a perfect set up for the next stage which led up to the political crisis.

One of the important political issues that Deng raised in his speech was the over-concentration of power within the Party and state leadership. As an extension to his argument on the similar political issue in 1978, Deng this time questioned the real value of having too much power in one person. He argued that,

overconcentration of power is liable to give rise to arbitrary rule by individuals at the expense of collective leadership...if a person holds too many posts at the same time,
he will find it difficult to come to grips with the problems in his work and more important, he will block the way for other more suitable comrades to take up leading posts. Having too many deputy posts leads to low efficiency and contributes to bureaucracy and formalism.\(^\text{15}\)

Deng was disturbed by the fact that there were quite a number of leading veteran Party members who held two or more Party positions at the same time. As the above part of the speech shows, Deng was concerned with the difficulty that these veteran members might have with coming to grips with the demanding administrative tasks. Thus, by indirectly suggesting the availability of “other more suitable comrades to take up leading posts”, Deng was actually asking for those elderly Party members to step down from their positions in the state leadership. In fact, his speech also included an important proposal of how this potential shake-up should be done:

Comrade Hua Guofeng will no longer hold the concurrent post of Premier, which will be assumed by Comrade Zhao Ziyang; Comrades Li Xiannian, Chen Yun, Xu Xiangqian, Wang Zhen and I will cease to serve concurrently as Vice-Premiers so that more energetic comrades can take over; Comrade Wang Renzhong will cease to serve concurrently as Vice-Premier, so that he can concentrate on his important job in the Party; and Comrade Chen Yonggui has asked to be relieved of his post of Vice-Premier and the Central Committee of the Party decided to endorse his request.\(^\text{16}\)

Unlike his ambiguous attitude in 1978 when dealing with the issue of excessive bureaucratism, Deng seemed to be quite confident with his political idea this time. He even named those, including himself, who should step down from their positions in the Party. But was it really the reason given above that made Deng took such a clear-cut political decision? Looking at the political background against which the speech was delivered, this is probably not really the case.

One of the important political backgrounds that should be brought into attention is the continuous, albeit weakening, Hua-Deng leadership struggle. It should be noted that the leadership struggle that took up much of Deng’s time and energy in 1978 did not end with Deng’s reinstatement to his positions. It is true that between 1978 and early 1980, many of Hua’s clique in the Party’s apparatus had been replaced by Deng’s own people,\(^\text{17}\) and that


\(^{16}\) ibid.,

\(^{17}\) Wu De, one of the Hua’s top political allies, was the first one to get ousted from office in autumn 1978. After Deng’s request to reverse the verdicts of 1976 Tiananmen Incident, Wu De found himself in hot water as he, the then mayor of Beijing in 1976, was the one who ordered militia force into the square beneath the Gate of Heavenly Peace which led to the Tiananmen Incident. Another Hua associate, Wang Dongxing, was also
Hua’s credibility as Mao’s heir was increasingly in dispute due to the intensified hostility surrounding the ‘two whateverism’. However, as Hua was still hanging on to his positions as the Premier of the Central Committee, and the Chairman of the Party’s Military Affairs Commissions, he was still indeed nominally in command of the Party and the state leadership.

Deng did realise the slim chance he had to shun Hua and his remaining clique through any possible regular means. Thus, the only way through which he could secure his opponents’ exit was by emphasising on the need to reform the political system. This is what Deng’s directives of voluntary resignations and the leadership shake-up was all about. By announcing the forthcoming resignations of several Party leaders (including Hua and even Deng himself), and putting greater emphasis on how vital the resignations were to support Deng’s initiative of grooming younger cadres for leadership positions, the directive would leave Hua with little choice but to submit to Deng’s pressure. Therefore, this policy directive, without question, provided an excellent medium to serve Deng’s political interest, particularly in getting the much-needed upper hand in the leadership struggle.

However, one thing that Deng no doubt realised was that, with him bringing in new Party members into the leadership, it was inevitable that those newcomers would form their own alliances and make it possible for new political factions within the Party to emerge. The same situation applied to younger cadres who got promoted to fill leading Party positions. What is more important that could possibly come out from this new development is that, given the different political experience and knowledge, these new factions could contend with the old conservatives. They could have different approaches to reform policy to those of the old conservatives, and therefore would articulate different policy goals and political rationale. As a result of this inner-party policy differences, and with Deng attempting to appeal to different interest groups in his speeches, it not only led to differing reactions to those speeches but it also widened the political splits within the Party.

removed from his major posts in Politburo and became a merely ordinary committee of the body after refusing to accept decisions made during the central work conference in 1978. His positions were taken by, Deng’s very own allies, Chen Yun, Wang Zhen and Hu Yaobang. Later, in February 1980, the Fifth Plenum of the Eleventh Central Committee saw the ultimate resignations of Wu De and Wang Dongxing, plus another two of Hua’s top allies, Chen Xilian and Ji Dengkui, from their remaining party and government posts. Richard Baum, Burying Mao: Chinese Politics in the age of Deng Xiaoping, (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1994), pp. 62–63; Ruan Ming (translated and edited by Nancy Liu, Peter Rand, and Lawrence R. Sullivan), Deng Xiaoping: Chronicle..., pp. 106–107.
The Party newcomers were not the only ones that Deng’s speech attempted to appeal to. Factory managers, workers, students, and intellectuals were also mentioned in this speech in regards to the roles that these groups could play in Deng’s political reform. In his political directive of power devolution, he suggested that economic enterprises at various production levels as well as universities and research institutes, assume responsibilities and make autonomous decisions in their operations. This is how Deng wanted the reform to be carried out:

We should first experiment with this reform in selected units, then gradually introduce it into more units, instituting a system under which factory directors and managers assume responsibility under the leadership and supervision of the factory management committee, the board of directors of the company, and the joint committee of united economic entities. We should also consider reforming the system under which university and college presidents and heads of research institutes assume responsibility under the leadership of the Party committee.\(^{18}\)

Deng’s primary emphasis here was to reorganise the system of management of production teams as well as educational institutions by giving them responsibilities and autonomy. In Deng’s view, these managing systems perhaps had a better understanding of local needs and circumstances. Therefore, with certain amount of autonomy in their hands, and the freedom to act on their own, they would be able to manufacture better solutions to any issues that arose. In many ways, this political directive clearly offered a good solution to break down the rigidities of the overly centralised and bureaucratised system of the state’s economic planning. More importantly, it could lead to the rise of better productive forces in China’s economy.

Similarly, Deng also appealed to factory workers through the introduction of congresses or conferences in which workers’ representatives and office staff could participate. These congresses or conferences would be given “the right to discuss and take decisions on major questions of concern to their respective units, to propose to the higher organisations the recall of incompetent administrators, and to introduce... the practice of electing their leaders”.\(^{19}\) The idea of establishing congresses and conference was perhaps not exactly new in China’s political scene. There had been workers’ congresses or county revolutionary committees, as they called them, which were first established in the 1950’s but were tacitly abolished during the Cultural Revolution. Perhaps the only difference Deng’s workers’ congresses had with the old ones was that the representatives and staff

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\(^{19}\) ibid.,
would be theoretically given certain amount of political leeway, such as freedom of expression, so that their views and discussions could propagate adequately.

While Deng's directives of power devolution and the introduction of congresses embodied strong political ideas, the reason behind the directives however remained exclusively economic. It is clear that one main reason that motivated Deng to appeal to these particular groups is that, with these groups assuming political responsibility and autonomy, it would ensure the successful adjustment of Chinese economic system from central planning to what Deng called economic democracy. Thus once again, it was economic reform that gained greater attention from Deng than the political reform itself.

However in doing so, Deng indirectly established new forms of social organisation, which would behave in a political environment according to their own roles and interests. The political directive would give both room and reasons for students and workers to politically participate in their local institution. Accordingly, there would be a strong tendency among the students to form their own social, or even political groups, and so would workers with their own grass-roots factions. One therefore could see the emergence of new power groups as an unintended consequence of Deng's speech. However, whether unintended or not, Deng himself had actually set up the setting for the next stage that led to the political crisis in 1989.

Deng Xiaoping was perhaps less ambiguous or conservative this time than he was in 1978. He seemed to be clear with his policy orientation in this speech. He, for political reasons given above, was principally devoted to renewing the internal vitality of the Party's leadership through the voluntary resignation and the promotion of younger cadres to leading position. He also widened his appeal of political reform, notably to the lowest grass-roots level by opening up more spaces for political and economic participation. However, while he was less ambiguous this time, his speech in many ways would facilitate the formation of new factions within the Party as well as some new power groups outside the political leadership. As these new factions and power groups might well acquire a certain degree of political strength, one could expect some political contention in the near future.
2.2.3 September – November 1986: Weakening the Opponents of Economic Reform

Deng’s speeches during this period were basically a revival of his 1978 and 1980 speeches on political reform. Reforms to overcome bureaucratism within the Party, and the state; to stimulate the initiative of the people and of the grass-roots units, and to have younger leading cadres to fill in the core of the leadership circle had been on the Party’s agenda, particularly during the years following Deng’s rehabilitation to the central power. Again, in 1986, the call for similar kind of political reforms resurfaced.

As before, economic reform was the main reason for the resurgence of the pressing need for the political reform. Only this time, the main target of the speech was different. Deng’s previous speeches were mainly directed to the proponents of economic and political reforms. This time, Deng used the political ideas in this speech to indirectly criticise the excessive interference of two Party organisations in economic activities, which seriously impeded the progress of Deng’s economic reform. In other words, the purpose of the speech was to weaken the power and authority of the opponents of the reform programs. On the other hand, Deng once again attempted to appeal to groups of workers and intellectuals for them to participate in the process of democratising their respective managements. While it was not likely for any new groupings to emerge as a result of this speech, the new appeal that Deng made on the existing power groups nevertheless demonstrated his continuous need of wanting to see these groups to be politically active.

The pressing need for political reform that would allow the resumption of the smooth progress of the economic reform was made clear by Deng during his meeting with Yoshikatsu Takeiri, the Chairman of the Central Executive Committee of the Komei Party of Japan on September 3, 1986. In this meeting, Deng re-emphasised the need for political reform in China:

> Whenever we move a step forward in economic reform, we are made keenly aware of the need to change the political structure. If we fail to do that, we shall be unable to preserve the gains we have made in the economic reform and to build on them, the growth of the productive forces will be stunted and our drive for modernisation will be impeded.\(^\text{20}\)

It was obvious that there was nothing particularly new in Deng’s speech this time. As a matter of fact, he was re-stating the need for the political structure to undergo some

vital readjustment so that economic advancement could be made sustainable. Having said that, Deng still itemised the overly familiar problem of rampant bureaucratism within the political structure as the greatest barrier to China’s modern economic development. Only this time Deng made himself clear on the close relationship between bureaucratism and the overlapping functions of the Party and the government. Deng argued that such a relationship would undoubtedly create highly centralised governing bodies, with the entire administrative and decision-making processes confined in the hands of a small number of people. As there was every chance that such political practice could pose more harm than good to the economic reform, Deng had suggested the following directives:

First, we should separate the Party and the government and decide how the Party can exercise leadership most effectively. This is the key and should be given top priority. Second, we should transfer some of the powers of the central authorities to local authorities in order to straighten out relations between the two. At the same time, local authorities should likewise transfer some of their powers to lower levels. Third, we should streamline the administrative structure, and this is related to the devolution of powers.

The directive of power devolution was quite a familiar theme by this stage. However, this time, the purpose of the directive was twofold. One of the purposes was a typical one: power devolution was important in stimulating the initiative of grass-roots units and of workers and intellectuals. These were among the groups that Deng attempted to appeal to in this speech. Deng argued that delegation of powers in enterprises and other fields was crucial as was motivating workers and intellectuals to participate in decision-making processes.

The other purpose of the speech was tactical. Deng used the speech to remind Party members the real purpose of power devolution. It came to Deng’s knowledge that many of the Party members misused the power that had been granted to them. Evidently, although the process of power devolution had been carried out as early as 1980 and later followed

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21 ibid.,
24 The first form of power devolution that was launched in 1980 was the household responsibility system which was first introduced in September that year. Under that system, the agriculture was decollectivised and every peasant household, in order to use a certain amount of the collective land, had to conclude an agreement with the production team. In doing so, the households, now had become autonomous units of production, only needing to deliver a certain quantity of their output as a state tax and to meet the grain quota obligations while the surplus could be sold on the market. Despite the emergence of bureaucratic problems from power decentralisation, the system was evidently a success with remarkable economic results in the early 1980s. By
by the comprehensive urban reform programs in 1984, it was not actually successful in curbing the growth of bureaucratic power particularly among the party members at the lower echelons. Those party members evidently exploited the decision-making powers granted to them as a political medium in gaining economic wealth through illegal means and self-promoting themselves as part of a special privileged class.

Moreover Deng had also identified an increasing trend among high officials who tended to interfere with the process of decentralising power to the lower levels. Such interference clearly impeded the economic reforms from progressing smoothly. During the meeting of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee, Deng made remarks on how,

> without political reform, economic reform cannot succeed, because the first obstacle to be overcome is people resistance. It is human beings who will – or will not – carry out the reform. For instance, we encourage devolution of powers, but other people take powers back.

Attention should be given to the last sentence of the above speech. There it suggests the main reason for the urgent need for political reform. The sentence was, in actual fact, referring to two organisations – the Central Discipline Inspection Commission and the State Planning Commission – and how these two organisations controlled, and interfered with, almost every economic activity that they could lay their hands on. The Central Discipline Inspection Commission, headed by Chen Yun, was initially set up for inspecting cadres’ discipline and had been given wide-ranging powers in dealing with any breaches of Party discipline. However, by 1980, the Commission’s area of concern was “much more far-reaching than a narrow definition of the term ‘discipline’ would suggest” and this even included the handling of organisational and economic matters. The State Planning

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25 Under the urban reform, the state owned enterprises were transformed into independent economic entities with managerial autonomy where factory managers would assume the full responsibility for their own profits and losses, and manage their own affairs such as job description and the right to set wages and bonuses, without interference from the central authorities. Similar to the household responsibility system, the urban reform also introduced factory responsibility system that allowed the enterprises to retain profits for their own use after meeting a certain amount of taxes and profits as set by the state. Benedict Stavis, *China's Political Reforms: An Interim Report*, (New York: Praeger, 1988), pp. 40 – 41.


29 ibid.
Commission was initially responsible for determining and laying out strategies for the state’s production targets and quotas. Over the following years, the Commission (which was also headed by Chen Yun in 1986) had worked closely with the specialised central-government economic ministries and the state’s organs of planning and control.\(^30\)

Due to the important roles attached to the two commissions, no one really dared to question the legitimacy of their powers and actions, not even when the two commissions exploited their privileged positions in an attempt to reverse the trends towards economic modernisation for their own economic benefits. By the second half of 1985, the State Planning Commission in particular had hardened their resistance to any kind of political reforms initiated by Deng. The Commission was becoming increasingly reluctant to decentralise their power or to employ economic means so that macroeconomic management could be made possible.\(^31\) Similarly, the Central Discipline Inspection Commission abused its given power to relentlessly attack economic crimes without even bothering to comply with the existing legal procedures which necessitated the Commission producing evidence of criminal acts before they could take further action on the offenders.\(^32\) On top of this, the members of the Commissions blatantly exploited their unlimited power and bureaucratic privileges as well as their easy access to “capital, raw materials, foreign exchanges, and licenses for import and export…” to secure economic resources and make “astronomical profits” out of it.\(^33\)

Such trends proved to be detrimental to Deng’s economic reforms. Given the rampant abuse of power within two of the Party’s main organisations (and the fact that such activity had not only been confined within these two bodies), and the increasing dominion of gluttonous elites over a significant portion of the population, it was not difficult to understand why growing doubt and scepticism started to replace people’s confidence and trust in Deng’s economic reform. Therefore, in his desperate bid to change such popular views of the reforms, as well as to save his own political reputation, Deng could not see any other way out but to confront both economic and political obstacles.

On the other hand however, the resistance to Deng’s economic reforms was not merely an opposition to the whole idea of opening China to market economy. It also

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\(^{31}\) Ruan Ming, *Deng Xiaoping: Chronicle of an Empire…*, p. 154.

\(^{32}\) Ibid.,

\(^{33}\) Ibid.,
reflected the apparent divisions between the reformist faction and the conservatives in the Communist leadership. In fact, the tension between the two camps had fully preoccupied Deng and was partly responsible for the ‘short void’ of political reform (and even economic reform to a certain degree) between 1981 and 1985. The conservatives who were spearheaded by Chen Yun, and his allies Deng Liqun, Hu Qiaomu and Wang Zhen were firm believers in dogmatism and totalitarianism, and hence, were totally against the idea of reforming the entire political structure, or of any radical reforms to modernise the Chinese economy. Whereas the reformist faction, led by Hu Yaobang, Zhao Ziyang, Wan Li and Zhou Yang, were clearly the leading force for much more fundamental economic and political changes in China.

Despite the fact that both factions represented the core of the leadership, a complete reconciliation between the factions was not even an option. Instead, the clash between the two contending factions was further complicated by the ideological justification of the economic reform. The conservatives clique, for example, took advantage of the ideological uncertainty that was looming at the beginning of the economic reforms34 and launched ideological campaigns against, bourgeois liberalisation (1981); the existence of rightism (1981); and later followed by the spiritual pollution campaign (1983-84). These ideological campaigns were launched principally to influence the ideological predilections of the population and to ‘unpopularise’ whatever economic or political approach had been advocated by the reformist factions. The reformers were unwilling to back down so easily, and had confronted this ideological onslaught by putting up policy alternatives that could pull popular support to their side. Moreover, the fact that the top leadership was increasingly concerned with economic achievements rather than with socialist principles had made it a lot easier for the reformists to gain the upper hand in their ideological rivalry with the conservatives.

So, was Deng on the reformist’s side in 1986? The contents of his speeches seemed to indicate that was the case. His criticism of excessive interference of the two aforementioned Party organisations in economic activities and their abuse of power, and the continuous call for political participation at grass-roots levels are all strong indications of Deng’s commitment to further his reform programs. Yet, looking again at some parts of the speeches, there were also signs that Deng still reserved some of his allegiance to the old

34 At the beginning of the reform period, there was a widespread perception that “economic prosperity would lead to revisionism, polarisation, and capitalism”, Wei-wei Zhang, Ideological and Economic Reform Under Deng... , p. 73.
conservatives who, as has been mentioned earlier, were not so keen to see radical political changes to the system. In his speech on September 13, 1986, Deng reasoned why the existing leadership structure should be retained:

In reforming our political structure, we must not imitate the West, and no liberalisation should be allowed. Of course our present structure of leadership has certain advantages. For example, it enables us to make quick decisions, while if we place too much emphasis on a need for checks and balances, problems may arise.\(^\text{35}\)

This is yet another example of the hints of conservatism in Deng’s supposedly pragmatic political vision. As he was in 1978, Deng, eight years later, still defended the traditional Party norm of collective and centralised Chinese leadership, as well as its highly individualised process of decision-making, the exact kind of political practices that he always seemingly wanted to change and reform. It is difficult to say, with confidence, what exactly had driven Deng to act so defensively in regard to the question of reforming such Party norms. But it was perhaps still the same old reasons. One, he could not afford to offend the old conservatives by going all the way with political reform. Moreover, as he was now seemingly on the side of the reformers and once again advocating such reform, Deng did not really want to lose the support of the conservatives. Two, Deng’s authority mainly lay in the Party’s centralised leadership and its monopoly of power. If Deng sought for the leadership to be reformed and to devolve much of its power, he therefore put the political hegemony and supremacy of the Party, hence his own power and authority, under threat. But on the other hand, Deng was equally desperate to push forward economic reforms that could only be done by reforming the political structure. The only solution that Deng had was to be ambivalent in his reform policies, a political tactic that he had played so well to that point in time. But the spring of 1989 was to highlight the detrimental effect that his ambiguous reform policies had over Chinese politics.

Having said that, one probably could find a similar trend in Deng’s political ideas in his speeches this time. None of the ideas he espoused was truly about accommodating and institutionalising democratic practices in the political system although that was how it appeared to be. The above discussion has shown us Deng’s main priority: to use the political directives to assist the tasks of the overall reform in economic sphere, as well as protecting his own political interest. This is not exactly a surprise as Deng saw and used his previous calls for political reform in the same way. Perhaps because Deng really got caught

up in his criticism of the power abuse among the Party members that, compared to his previous speeches, there seemed to be no new groups that Deng appealed to. In some ways, this demonstrated the fact that Deng was probably half-hearted in promoting a true political reform this time. If it was not due to the urgent need to remove the obstacles that hindered economic progress, Deng probably would never have seen the need to renew his calls for political reform in 1986.

2.3 Concluding Observation

It is impossible to discuss all the political ideas and contradictions that can be found in Deng’s speeches analysed in this chapter. Those that have been discussed here are only few examples of the more important ideas and contradictions. After the above discussion, one would realise that much of the emphasis has been put on how much Deng’s own interest influenced his political vision. To recapitulate, one of Deng’s interests was his need to reform Chinese economy rather than fully reform the political system. This means political reforms had a rather secondary priority on the reform agenda. In fact, as his speeches suggested, Deng’s political directives were clearly more a political strategy for furthering economic reform rather than a means of fixing the current flaws that burdened the political system. Because the absolute prerequisites to economic well being were not entirely economic but political as well, the basic characteristics of Chinese politics such as monopoly of power, central planning, excessive bureaucracy, and lack of autonomy at grass-roots levels had been set as the ultimate targets of Deng’s political reforms. Another interest that Deng needed to secure was his own political survival as well as the Party’s. This means he, at all cost, had to safeguard some of the Party norms including the centralised leadership, where much of his power and authority lay, from the encroachment of the political reforms.

The reason for this emphasis on Deng’s political interest is that, when readers come to the next chapter, it will be easier for them to see differences, in terms of political interests and demands, that Deng had compared to those of the Party leaders, political groups, students, and workers during the reform period. Thus, it will set up the basic understanding for the differing reactions to Deng’s speeches. Nevertheless, it would be interesting if Deng’s speeches were equally responsible for the emergence of politically conscious social groups. They were perhaps, as has been mentioned in chapter one, the same interest groups that Gordon White identified in his analysis of the Chinese society during the reform period.
If that was the case, as we will find out in the next chapter, they significantly had different ideas about the direction political reform should take. They also perhaps wanted to see more democracy practised and institutionalised in the system. Having said that, it is necessary for us to first see Deng’s definition of democracy.

In 1979, at the Party’s forum on the principles for the Party’s theoretical work, Deng defined his concept of democracy:

The socialist road, the dictatorship of the proletariat, the leadership of the Communist Party and Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought [the Four Cardinal Principles] – all these are tied up with democracy. What kind of democracy do the Chinese need today? It can only be socialist democracy, people’s democracy, and not bourgeois democracy, individualist democracy. We practise democratic centralism, which is the integration of centralism based on democracy with democracy under the guidance of centralism.36

It should be pointed out first that this particular speech was in response to a student demonstration in defiance of the party dictatorship and Marxist ideology in 1979. The demonstrations, known as the Democracy Wall Movement, were first started as a popular poster campaign at Xidan, denouncing the tragic Cultural Revolution and the condemnation of political persecution authorised by Mao. The campaign, as matter of fact, initially did get the nod from Deng’s faction. But such tolerant attitude was drastically replaced by total disapproval37 as its participants (who were mainly students, dissident organisations, young workers, and unemployed intellectual youth) began to organise demonstrations with words such as ‘human rights’ and ‘democracy’ as their rallying banners. What the party leaders saw at this point was a clear reference to of the 1919 May Fourth Movement, in that it could lead to similar political unrest during a decade of Cultural Revolution.

One therefore can argue that it was this particular political event that had decisively defined Deng’s concept of democracy. All party leaders, both the conservatives and the reformists, had one great fear: a repeat of Cultural Revolution-like political instability. With

37 Deng’s initial tolerance of the poster campaign was partly because he used the campaign as a political ploy to win over popular support, within and outside the Party, in his leadership struggle against his Maoist opponents and thus would help him to consolidate his position in the central leadership. He even saw the whole situation of people putting up big-character posters as perfectly normal and it was a sign that China was politically stable. However, once Deng had gained the upper hand in his political struggle with the remaining Maoists, and more importantly, as the campaign and the demonstrations began to test the limits of acceptable criticism and actions by criticising Deng and his economic reforms, challenging the fundamental premises of the Party, and even demanding for a radical change of a political system, Deng launched government crackdown on the movement in January, 1979. Merle Goldman, Sowing the Seeds of Democracy..., pp. 41–47.
China on the verge of experiencing a new course of economic modernisation in 1979, Deng realised that China also inevitably had to be more pragmatic and open towards the values and the institutions of democracy. However, from Chinese experience, the universal (i.e. the western) concept of democracy tended to bring in the kind of political values which were incompatible with, and competing against the mainstream political ideology. Equally important, such political values also posed a direct challenge to political authority and undermined political stability. Therefore, by defining the concept of democracy strictly in terms of the Four Cardinal Principles, Deng drew a clear distinction between collective socialist democracy, and individual bourgeois democracy. In other words, the Four Cardinal Principles now became the litmus test for determining whether one’s political behaviour and actions was acceptably democratic or otherwise. It was also the best measure to secure both political democratisation and economic modernisation without having to sacrifice political stability and unity.

However, this is where another contradiction of Deng’s political thought lies. In the above speech, Deng made the idea of democracy centralism looked as if it was practicable. But the question remains, whether or not it was possible to fully carry out democracy when dictatorship, collective leadership, centralism, and the Four Cardinal Principles were also practised at the same time? Even if it was defined as people’s democracy, but with all these Party principles engulfing the concept, there was probably not much democracy or freedom left for the Chinese to enjoy. It is however should also be acknowledged the fact that the CCP elite have been long forced into public pronouncements of theory that have little to do with reality. In this sense, Deng perhaps could be seen as merely following a strong tradition. Having said that, one could say that Deng was not simply a reformer. He was a conservative reformer. He advocated economic liberalism but remained unsure about political tolerance. He encouraged open door policy but was not ready to accept its repercussions. But Deng perhaps did not realise the fact that, once political adjustment and democratic procedures were practised and carried out, albeit in limited space and time, such processes would profoundly change the Chinese economy, society, and politics in many different ways. One could no longer expect homogeneity from society, and the same could easily be said about the reactions to Deng’s speeches.
CHAPTER 3

POLITICAL REACTIONS TO DENG XIAOPING'S SPEECHES:
PARTY FUNCTIONARIES AND POLITICAL GROUPS

3.1 Introduction

Each time Deng Xiaoping made a speech on the urgent need for China to push through political reforms, public enthusiasm for genuine political reforms ran high. This consequently produced a certain political dynamic both within and outside the governing bodies. One of the ways to understand such political dynamic is by looking at the reactions to the political ideas that Deng made in the speeches. As has been mentioned in chapter one, a full treatment of the reactions is critical in providing insight into the thinking of the various political groups and individuals discussed below, particularly of their own understandings and interpretations of Deng's political ideas. It will also uncover the real political interests behind those reactions. While it is true that the analysis of these political responses and reactions alone cannot provide an adequate explanation for the political crisis in the spring of 1989, it does demonstrate, from this particular analytical angle, how the differing reactions to the speeches, together with their own preconceptions of desired outcomes of the political reforms, had gradually sewn the seeds of incipient crisis.

This chapter specifically focuses on the political reactions to Deng's speeches, particularly those of the CCP leaders (both the reformers and the conservatives) and some significant groups of political activists outside the governing bodies. It is important to examine their reactions as many of them were central figures in the Tiananmen crisis. Among the most notable reaction to the speeches are those of the party leaders, such as the reformers Zhao Ziyang and Hu Yaobang, the conservatives Chen Yun and Hu Qiaomu. I will also discuss the reactions of some political groups and activists outside the party circle, such as Zhen Ziming and Wang Juntao. It should be pointed out that some of these political reactions did not come immediately after the speeches were made. But this should not affect their significance. Another important fact is that the political philosophy of these groups and individuals discussed were not entirely static. Their views could and should change as China progressed through reform and they cannot be fully understood in isolation from the larger political and economic development.
In examining the political reactions to Deng’s speeches there is a gradual change in the way various groups and individuals reacted to the speeches. Regardless of the early signs of optimism and enthusiasm in the reactions to the 1978 speech, reactions to the later speeches were completely the opposite. Pro-reform party leaders and different political groups seemed to be increasingly reluctant to dutifully carry Deng’s (and to some extent, the conservatives’) political ideas. Instead, they seemed to formulate their own reform policies which were ostensibly much more radical in nature than Deng’s. Likewise, the political interests and demands that these different groups wished to secure from the reforms were also different from both Deng’s and the conservatives’. Based on these differences in opinion and clashing interests, which evidently became more apparent and contradictory as China approaching the end of 1980, a serious political contention arose within and outside the leadership. The grim political atmosphere was clearly beyond repair by the spring of 1989.

3.2.1 Political Reactions to the 1978 speech

As already mentioned before, this was Deng’s speech at the closing session of the Central Working Conference, which served as the keynote address for the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee of the CCP on December 18, 1978. It should be mentioned that the contents of the Third Plenum’s communiqué, which was drafted by Deng’s own protégé Hu Yaobang and his pro-reform network in the Central Youth League and the Central Party School, was very similar to Deng’s speech. This reflected the ‘power’ gained by the speech and by Deng himself. So, it was not surprising if the Third Plenary Session was regarded as the pivotal turning point at which Deng gained “steadily in political strength and confidence...”, and simultaneously weakened the political legitimacy of the ‘whateverists’ within the leadership circle.

The first group that will be discussed below is the group that the speech attempted to appeal to the most, that is, the pro-reformers. Discussion will be focussed on the actions

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1 The Third Plenum’s communiqué clearly mirrored Deng’s speech as the former adopted, among other things, a number of new political orientations that included a revival of the Party’s work styles of seeking truth from facts; a pursuit of socialist modernisation as the new primary focus of the party work; decentralising power and authority within economic management to oppose the excessive bureaucratics practices; and a commitment to safeguard people’s democracy by fully implementing democratic centralism. See “Communiqué of the Third Plenary Session of the 11th Central Committee of The Communist Party of China”, in Beijng Review, No. 52, December 29, 1978, pp. 6 – 16; Chang Chen-pang, “The Political Significance of the Third Plenum of the Eleventh CCPCC”, in Issues and Studies, February 1979, pp. 1–10.

2 Richard Baum, Burying Mao: Chinese Politics..., p. 63.
from two party leaders, first Hu Yaobang, and then Zhao Ziyang. We will see how Hu Yaobang, as early as 1978, already had a different political opinion to Deng. Hu basically insisted that political reform should be given equal priority to the economic reform. Whereas Zhao, a devoted economist, seemed to have no problem in accepting Deng’s idea on power devolution. There will be also a discussion on political groups outside the leadership which the speech also had strong appeal to. The first political group was the short-lived Democracy Wall Movement who seemed to have a field day at the time Deng made this speech. Another group is the April Fifth veterans, whose reaction was expressed in their underground journal, the Beijing Spring (Zhongguo Zhichun).

Discussion will then return to the centre stage of the leadership to see the reaction from the conservatives, as well as of the whateverist faction. The conservatives were basically supportive of Deng’s political ideas. However, that was not because they were genuinely enthusiastic about reforming the political structure. Instead, like Deng, they used the speech as an effective weapon in their continuous political battle against the whateverist faction. For the whateverists on the other hand, their unconditional loyalty to the Maoist legacy was clearly not enough to gain more support to balance the power in the leadership. Evidently, Deng’s rising authority, accentuated by the ‘power’ of the speech, pushed Hua Guofeng and his whateverist faction further to the sidelines.

3.2.1.1 Reactions from the Pro-reform Party leaders and Political Groups

There is no question that the pro-reform Party leaders were highly supportive of Deng’s political ideas which sought to reform the political system through power devolution. Hu Yaobang and his pro-reform network, in particular, were exceptionally pleased with the speech as it signified a clear victory on for their position. As a long-time ally of Deng,3 Hu knew and acknowledged the personal prestige and political influence that

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3 Hu Yaobang first joined the CCP in 1933 and worked under Deng Xiaoping for the first time during the civil war against the Goumindang in 1945. Their first close professional and social relationship began around this time when they were working together to establish the party’s authority in Sichuan and the Southwest. In August 1952, both Hu and Deng were transferred to Beijing where Deng was elevated to work at the Party centre and Hu, a month later, became the first secretary of the Youth League, a position which gave him a network of associates that was later to form a part of his reformist network in the post-Mao period. Just like his mentor, Deng, Hu was twice removed from Party positions. After his purge during the Cultural Revolution, Hu was rehabilitated to public life just as Deng was rehabilitated to power in 1973. Hu was appointed as a vice president of the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) and was put in charge of reviving the academic activities of the organisation. However, when Deng fell under criticism throughout 1975, so did Hu and both of them were purged once again in 1976. Both of them reappeared a year later with Deng returned to his former positions and Hu to his vice president position at the Central Party School. Merle Goldman, Sowing the Seeds of Democracy..., pp. 23–28.
Deng had in the public arena. Thus, as the marriage of convenience between Deng and the reformist factions was forged by the spring of 1977 for reasons discussed previously, Deng, much to the delight of Hu and his network, successfully regained the control of the political agenda. With Deng acting as their security blanket, the pro-reformers used the opportunity to influence the agenda of the 1978 work conference at which Deng made this speech. Evidently, and looking from the content of the speech, the group was successful in doing so. The conference agenda was shifted from the one that had been drafted earlier by Hua Guofeng and Wang Dongxing to a new agenda of debating issues similar to the proposed topics on Democracy Wall, such as the reversal of the verdict of 1976 Tiananmen incident and the institutionalisation of democracy within the political system.4

However, despite the fact that both Hu and Deng advocated the promotion of political reform, there were still a few important points on which Hu’s political opinion was at significant variance with Deng’s. For example, Deng, in many of his speeches, always saw political reform as a means to complement the ongoing economic reforms. Hu on the other hand, tended to put a greater emphasis on the idea of reinforcing democratic safeguards within the political system, and to see political reform to be elevated to parity with the economic reforms. In his speech at the Discipline Inspection Work Conference in July 1979, Hu argued that the political reform programs should have similar far-reaching significance as was already the case with the Four Modernisation program, so that it could create a win-win situation for both the economic and political reforms.5

Hu also argued that “the Party’s work style was an important bearing on whether this magnificent political program is realised”.6 Interestingly, his descriptions of Party’s work styles were similar to Deng’s prerequisites for a successful economic modernisation programs. Hu listed among the important work styles that should be restored and brought into full play were those of seeking truth from facts and integrating theory with practice.7 While Deng, in his 1978 speech, argued that “only if we emancipate our minds, seek truth from facts, proceed from reality in everything and integrate theory with practice, can we carry out our socialist modernisation programme smoothly ...”8 Thus Hu, in many ways, had interpreted Deng’s words according to his own political beliefs and interests. He took

4 Ruan Ming (translated and edited by Nancy Liu, Peter Rand, and Lawrence R. Sullivan), Deng Xiaoping: Chronicle of an Empire, pp. 47-49; Merle Goldman, Sowing the Seeds of Democracy..., pp. 48–49.
6 Ibid., p. L3.
7 Ibid.,
8 Deng Xiaoping, December 13, 1978, “Emancipate the Mind, Seek Truth from Facts...”
Deng’s measures to achieve the economic modernisation as significant party’s work styles which could reinforce democratic ideals within the political system.

However, this is the kind of political argument one perhaps would never have found in Deng’s speeches. The reason for this, one can argue, is that Hu’s line of argument was very tactical in nature. Unlike Deng, Hu and other reformists from the beginning had never wanted to see political reform in instrumental terms, nor to keep the issue of the political reforms moderate on the policy agenda, as this would effectively put limitations on how far the political reforms could actually be pushed in practice. Given the reformists’ past success in pushing political reforms back into the policy agenda through their persistent lobbying pressure on Deng, Hu’s speech here can be seen as part of the reformists’ continued effort to prepare the ground for yet another round of combative political debate that could possibly produce a similar outcome as it had done previously.

Zhao Ziyang, on the other hand, could perhaps be seen as having similar political interest with Deng. He did support the idea of democratising the political system and that was because he knew what the reform could do to help his economic plan. Zhao, on many separate occasions, had been emphasising to his audiences the vital importance of studying thoroughly both the guidelines presented by Deng’s speech, and of the Third Plenum’s communiqué. For example, at the Third Sichuan Provincial CCP Congress, held in Chengdu in late January 1979, Zhao (a member of Sichuan’s provincial CCP Committee) emphasised the need for the Chinese to explore and learn democracy economic modernisation could be easily promoted and realised. According to Zhao, the lack of democratic practices within the Chinese political life over a prolonged period of time had inevitably produced a string of leading cadres as well as a significant portion of the Chinese population who were completely ‘democracy-illiterate’. Although it might take a significant amount of time before the Chinese could fully master the idea of democracy and its practices, Zhao was positive that there was nothing of greater significance at this stage than this timely political reform. Thus, clearly taking cue from Deng’s speech on instilling democratic rights at lower levels, Zhao urged the Congress members to “give full play to democracy...[and]...learn democracy through democratic practices”.

10 Ibid.,
11 Ibid.,
Judging by his words and his positive reaction to Deng’s speech, Zhao was clearly in line with Deng. In fact, he was also in line with Deng in terms of the reasons for promoting those political ideas. Being the First Secretary of Sichuan province and a pragmatic economist, Zhao was more dedicated to promoting and experimenting with economic policies at local levels, and was less interested in involving himself in discussions regarding highly sensitive political issues. In fact, even before Deng’s speech on transferring some degree of autonomy and responsibility to production teams at the grass-roots level, Zhao had already been talking openly about the poor performance of economic enterprises due to their overly centralised management. In October 1978, a couple of months before Deng’s speech on power decentralisation, Zhao went ahead with his economic plan to reform the factory management by implementing what he called as “system of division of responsibility for factory managers”. Six industrial enterprises in Sichuan were given managerial autonomy on a trial basis at that time. One therefore can argue that Zhao’s positive reaction to the speech was perhaps because, as the speech put an emphasis on the persistent problem of overcentralisation in enterprise management, it decisively put the stamp of approval on Zhao’s own economic experiment (which later became a model for the whole state to emulate).

There were, however, different kinds of reactions outside the political leadership. Most were, of course, supportive of the political ideas in the speech. But many interpreted the ideas, particularly the concept of democracy, in a much more liberal way. The Democracy Wall activists, for example, saw Deng’s idea of instilling democratic rights at the grass-roots level as Deng’s tacit understanding of their demand for freedom and democracy. In fact, they saw the speech as the sign of support that Deng lent to the cause of the movement. However, Deng’s political interests and those of the movement’s activists did not necessarily coincide. The previous chapter has shown that Deng mainly saw his political ideas of power devolution and instilling democracy at lower levels as part of his political strategy for the advancement of the economic reforms. The activists, on the other

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13 Richard Baum points out that, Deng, as a matter of fact, did endorse the spirit of the Democracy Movement in his 1978 speech in which Deng argued, “the masses should be encouraged to offer criticisms. There is nothing to worry about even if a few malcontents to take advantage of democracy to make trouble” [Appendix I]. Deng, in the same speech, also warned the Party members to “stop...bad practices such as attacking and trying to silence people who make critical comments”. [Appendix I]. Earlier on, in February 1978, Deng also backed the revised Constitution that guaranteed people the freedom of speech, correspondence, the press, demonstration, and the freedom to strike, and granted the Four Great Freedoms of speaking out freely, airing views fully, holding great debate and writing big-characters posters. Richard Baum, Burying Mao: Chinese Politics..., p. 74.
hand, were somehow convinced that Deng was seeking fundamental political change, just what they wanted to achieve from the reforms.

Other political activists also saw and interpreted Deng’s political ideas in a similar way to the movement activists. Among them were a group of closed-knit April Fifth veterans, which consisted of influential pro-democracy activists such as Chen Ziming and Wang Juntao. Given the permissive political atmosphere at the end of 1978, and the growing political activities of the Democracy Wall movement, these political veterans put together and published their own underground journal, the Beijing Spring (Zhongguo Zhichun), which dealt with many sensitive political issues. Thus, through the journal, these political veterans expressed their views on Deng’s political ideas. In some ways, they seemed to share Deng’s idea of democratising Chinese political life. In the January 1979 edition, the journal put a particular emphasis on people’s democracy:

So if we want to have a system of democracy in politics, we must have a system of people’s democracy in economic management. Yugoslavia has already achieved excellent results in testing such a system. We shall learn from Yugoslavia’s example; this will encourage our workers to exert great efforts for the realisation of the Four Modernisations...

In some ways, these political activists suggested that Deng and the Chinese leadership consider Yugoslavia’s democratic economic management as a model of people’s democracy. On one hand, their suggestion seemed to be in accordance to Deng’s political idea of using democratic practices and people’s democracy as a means to further his economic plan of the Four Modernisations. But that may not be the case. Yugoslavia’s economic self-management, as they called it, was not a typical socialist economic planning. Under the system, which was established in 1950s, the economic management of the country was completely transferred from the state to the workers. In other words, the system eliminated state political power over the state economy. Except for the general economic guidelines, which were still outlined by the central authorities, the management of enterprises was completely controlled by the workers. Formulation of business policy and plans, investment and borrowing decisions were all in the hands of the elected management

14 George Black and Robin Munro, *Black Hands of Beijing: Lives of Defiance in China’s Democracy Movement* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc, 1993), p. 44. It should also be noted that Chen Ziming and Wang Juntao were among the most influential leaders of the Chinese democracy movement in post-Mao period and played significant roles in 1989 Tiananmen protest. Both Chen and Wang, as well as another democracy activist, Han Dongfang, are the central figures in Black and Munro’s *Black Hand of Beijing*.

boards. Workers evidently had greater influence over production and income than the state authorities.\(^\text{16}\)

Having said that, one could see clearly what those activists wanted the political reform to be like. When they said they supported Deng’s idea of people’s democracy, they actually wanted a real Yugoslavian-like democracy where people, i.e. workers, had real control over their economic destiny. However, this is not the kind of democracy that Deng had in mind. Deng’s people’s democracy, by definition, was tied up with the Four Cardinal Principles, which meant Party leadership held the ultimate power in every aspect. Could this be a misinterpretation on the part of the political veterans? This could be the case, but not when one considers the fact that these political activists were experienced politicians in a variety of issue areas, and the issue of democracy was one of those areas. This was their actual political goal: to see China move in a democratic direction by incorporating autonomy into all aspects of public life.

### 3.2.1.2 Reactions from the Conservative faction and the Impact of the Speech on the Whateverists

There were mixed reactions in the conservative camps to Deng’s speech. Some leaders were rather cautious in their responses. Hu Qiaomu, a conservative Party leader, from the start, had been less than enthusiastic about Deng’s idea of reforming the political structure. Unlike Deng, he did not see any defects in the present system or the ruling ideology and thus, was discreetly against political reform. Thus, when Deng made the speech at the work conference, Hu, at the end of the Third Plenum, warned that “three winds blew through society, the “anti-Communist Party wind”, the “anti-socialist” wind and the “anti-Marxist-Leninist-Maoist” wind”.\(^\text{17}\) Although he did not mention any names or events in particular, the proximity of his warning to the end of the Third Plenum showed that there was every possibility that he was referring to Deng’s decision to open up China and further political reform.

Other conservatives were more supportive. But their reactions did not exactly stem from their enthusiasm toward the prospective political reform. Chen Yun for example,


\(^{17}\) Ruan Ming, (translated and edited by Nancy Liu, Peter Rand, and Lawrence R. Sullivan), *Deng Xiaoping: Chronicle of an Empire...*, p. 53.
reinforced Deng’s political idea of ‘seeking truth from facts’ but not because it could facilitate economic or political reform. Instead, he used the idea to lead a direct confrontation against Hua Guofeng and his economic programme. Being a conservative in economic areas, Chen did not see the rationality in Hua’s overly ambitious economic plan which sought to import advanced foreign technology and capital equipment from the West and Japan on a massive scale. This plan, according to Chen, overlooked the fact that out of a population of one billion Chinese at that time, 800 million of them were peasants. Thus, by taking advantage of Deng’s 1978 speech on the importance of ‘seeking truth from facts’ in formulating any reform policies, Chen severely criticised Hua for being totally ignorant of China’s reality. Hua’s idea of ‘imported modernisation’ could only lead to a disastrous outcome of “a national economy of high speed, high accumulation, poor results, and low consumption”. Chen clearly had interpreted Deng’s ideological formula of ‘seeking truth from facts’ in a way which could help him to oust Hua and his whateverist clique from the Party and not so much to bolster Deng’s promotion of economic modernisation or political reform.

If this was the case, then what happened to the whateverists after the speech was made? Needless to say, Hua and his ‘whateverist’ clique were extremely hard hit by the criticism, and by the immediate overhauling of Hua’s economic program. The faction was pushed further to the sidelines, and had to face severe political humiliation. Deng’s ‘seeking truth from facts’ had also led to the reassessment of both Mao Zedong’s merits and shortcomings, and the Third Plenum came to the conclusion that “no revolutionary leaders can be completely free of...shortcomings and error”, and thus, put an end to the ‘personality cult’. This could be seen as yet another political attack against Hua, who, as has been discussed in chapter two, established himself as a new ‘personality cult’ among his supporters who praised him for his seemingly unconditional loyalty to the Maoist legacy. However, it should also be noted that it was Hua himself, during the plenary session, who “proposed that newspapers and publications throughout the country and works of literature and art give more praise to the worker-peasant-soldier masses, the Party and the revolutionaries of the older generation and give less publicity to any individual”. He even

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19 ibid., p. 58.
20 Chan Chen-peng, “Political Significance of the Third Plenum...”, p. 3.
made a further proposal that the “people in the Party should call each other ‘comrade’ and not address each other by their official titles”.22

Hua however was digging his own political grave. He might have done some thinking when he saw Deng rise rapidly to power with a growing influence both in the Party and society. If Hua officially proposed for the denunciation of personality cult, there would probably be less chance for Deng to replace Mao as the great patriotic hero who was to build a modern China. But Hua must have miscalculated. The proposal proved to be much more detrimental to his own political survival than it would do to Deng’s.

From the above discussion, one can conclude that, there was not so much difference in the nature of the reactions to Deng’s speech. Many of them were rather enthusiastic toward Deng’s idea to reform the political system. But there were completely different and conflicting political interests that shaped those supposedly similar reactions. Hu Yaobang and the political groups outside the party circle saw Deng’s speech as a significant opening of a much more fundamental political reform. Chen Yun used Deng’s political idea to oust the whateverists, but Hu Qiaomu was clearly reluctant to acknowledge the need for political reform. Perhaps, it was only Zhao Ziyang who seemed to share Deng’s idea and interest at this stage. One therefore can say that, even at this early stage, there had been clashing of interests between the pro-reform leaders and political group on one hand, and Deng and the conservatives on the other. But perhaps, this difference in interests went unnoticed in the heightened enthusiasm for the new political era spearheaded by Deng. But it was not for long. An analysis of the reactions to Deng’s speech in 1980 revealed a more obvious case of differing political interest behind the reactions to the speech.

3.2.2 Political Reactions to the 1980 speech

Deng Xiaoping’s speech on August 18, 1980 is largely seen as one of the most important and influential speeches that Deng made during his political lifetime. Ruan Ming suggests that Deng’s political thoughts in this speech are “probably the zenith of Deng’s thought on political reforms”.23 Richard Baum similarly argues that “Deng’s August 18 proposals constituted the boldest manifesto for political change yet articulated by a top level

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22 ibid.,
23 Ruan Ming, (translated and edited by Nancy Liu, Peter Rand, and Lawrence R. Sullivan), Deng Xiaoping: Chronicle of an Empire..., p. 86.
Chinese leader in the four years since Mao’s death”. Having said that, it will be interesting to see what Party leaders thought of the new list of Deng’s political proposals. Since this speech was mainly aimed at the Party leadership and sought to renew its vitality, the following discussion will look at the differing reaction of the conservatives and the reformers to the speech. The conservatives, as it will be shown later, were rather alarmed by the amount of political openness proposed by Deng. They feared such political openness would only jeopardise China’s sacred political stability and unity. In contrast, the pro-reform leaders rather welcomed Deng’s political ideas. So did other political activists outside the leadership. But, their interpretations of the speech were not exactly couched in similar political ideas as Deng’s. Rather, those interpretations contained much more liberal ideas, ideas in accordance with their own political interests.

3.2.2.1 Reactions from the Conservative Party leaders

There were several conservative Party leaders who openly disagreed with Deng’s decision to initiate much more broader political reform in 1980. Among them were Hu Qiaomu and Chen Yun. After the dissemination of Deng’s speech within the Party circle, both of them raised serious concerns about the potential impact that the speech could have on China’s political unity and stability. The concern even turned to fear when they viewed the matter in the light of a massive uprising in one of then most rebellious Soviet satellites, Poland. In July 1980, an uprising broke out in Poland when the worker-intellectual alliance rose against the Polish Party leadership due to the ignorant attitude of the latter towards the former’s grievances of economic discrimination against them, and the visible decline in the standard of living. Instead, the Party officials, who still enjoyed luxury, made the workers’ living conditions even worse by announcing a price hike for meat and other basic food products on July 1, 1980. The people responded to the announcement by staging a nationwide strike.

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25 The alliance later resulted in the disintegration of Polish Party leadership and was replaced by Solidarity, which was essentially a national labour movement. The movement was later defined as “a uniquely Polish combination of socialism, democracy, nationalism and Catholicism”, as it wanted the Polish socialism to built democracy from the grass root so that people can have a real input end involvement in their public lives. It also demanded full access to the media and a law defining the limits of censorship. Evidently, the fall of the Polish government in the hand of Solidarity had sparked grave concern among the party leaders in China as there was already a significant portion of the Chinese intellectuals who viewed the birth of Solidarity as a model of peaceful political upheavals. Nicholas G. Andrews, Poland 1980 – 81: Solidarity versus the Party, (Washington: National Defense University Press, 1985), pp. 25 – 38.
Due to the critical political situation in Poland, Hu Qiaomu, about a month after Deng’s speech, sent a letter to Hu Yaobang (Hu Qiaomu later altered the content twice before distributing it to various central units, government sectors, and all mass organisations). In it he reminded Hu that, like Poland, China also had notable “conflicts of an economic and political order...[and that] the coalition of minority political dissidents and the dissatisfied mass of workers could constitute a gigantic force”.

Following Hu Qiaomu’s letter, the Propaganda Department, in October 1980, issued a statement which among other things, expressed similar concern of the impact of Deng’s speech on China’s political discourse:

On the basis of Comrade Hu Qiaomu’s suggestions, we estimate that the Polish events effectively furnish a subject of discussion and serious thought. We do have problems in China similar to those in Poland, and if they continue to develop we will have to face the same consequence. The dissemination of Comrade Xiaoping’s speech “On the Reform of the system of Party and state leadership” should cease. The Polish situation is not merely on economic problem, but a political one as well. It results from chaos in people’s internal thought.

While Hu Qiaomu’s and the Propaganda Department’s hypothesis on the impact of the Polish political crisis on China’s political orientation perhaps went unheeded by Deng, it was more likely to find sympathetic ears among the elders and the Party conservatives. The Polish political crisis had rekindled the fear of this faction of an outbreak of ideological discontent in Chinese universities as had been the case in 1956. Chen Yun, in particular, contrary to his initial support of Deng’s political reform in 1978, warned the Party of the likelihood of putting China into Polish-like political jeopardy if there was not enough

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27 ibid., pp. 93 – 94.
28 In 1956, Mao Zedong was in similar position as Deng was in 1980. In 1956, de-Stalinisation was just begun when in February that year, Khruščev made his anti-Stalin speech at the 20th Congress of Soviet Union Communist Party. This event, together with the death of the Polish Party leader, Bolesław Biełiński, in March 1956, had inevitably led to the outburst of internal Party conflict between the revisionists and the dogmatists. The revisionists and intellectuals preferred liberal ideas, such as cultural independence, and thus opted for political change within the doctrinaire Party leadership, which the dogmatists clearly wished to see remain unchanged. At the same time, Mao in China had just launched his “Double Hundred Policy” reform which demanded the abandonment of the Soviet model of development and the elimination of Stalinist dogmatism in China. However, the advance of the reform had put Mao in a tight spot. If he wished to continue his attack on the Stalinist dogmatism, it would boost the morale of the Polish liberals to commit to democracy and challenge the Party leadership. Nevertheless, Chinese university campuses in the 1950s quickly copied such ideological challenge “with some students boycotting class and signing petitions”. The Party authorities immediately took repressive actions against the university students to end the ideological discontent. Nicholas G. Andrews, Poland 1980 – 1981..., p. 18 – 20; Ruan Ming, (translated and edited by Nancy Liu, Peter Rand, and Lawrence R. Sullivan), Deng Xiaoping: Chronicle of an Empire..., pp. 2 – 3.
attention paid to Party propaganda and the state economy. Moreover, there were already a substantial number of party members who went beyond the principles of Party leadership in advocating the shifting of real power to the people at lower levels. This had, in effect, magnified the Polish fear, which the elders had dreaded for so long.

Again, Hu Qiamu's and Chen's very cautious and conservative responses to Deng's speech, without question highlighted the widening leadership split over the scope and pace of political reform. While in 1978, the split was less obvious, by 1980 however, Party leaders were visibly split into those who held conservative political opinions and strictly called for limited political reform and nothing else; and those reformers who sought more fundamental change in the party-state. Hu and Chen, together with the elders, clearly belonged to the conservative camp, and undoubtedly had trouble in accepting Deng's 1980 political manifesto for further reform. They were disappointed with, and felt violated by, the content of Deng's speech, and his decision to concede political stability over the reform. In the years to come, Deng's violation dramatised the idea of democracy and political reform in the eyes of the conservative reformers, who then had have a budding distrust of the reform itself.

3.2.2.2 Reactions from Party Reformers and Political Groups

It was however a completely different case with the reformers and political groups outside the leadership. Deng's speech was clearly well received by this particular camp, as is evident in the unprecedented wide support for the advance of Deng's political goals and priorities. The reformers were generally convinced that Deng's remarkable display of political initiative implied the fact that political reforms had now gathered fresh momentum and credibility. Zhao Ziyang, for example, regarded Deng's political directive of power devolution within economic enterprises as setting "a clear orientation for China's political and economic reforms". Deng, as has been discussed in chapter two, proposed for the reorganisation of the managing systems in production teams by giving them responsibilities and autonomy. Once again, taking cue from this particular political idea, Zhao after the Third Session of the Fifth National People's Congress, called for a clearer scope of decision-making power in economic management:

29 Ruan Ming, (translated and edited by Nancy Liu, Peter Rand, and Lawrence R. Sullivan), Deng Xiaoping: Chronicle of an Empire..., p. 94.
31 "Orientation Set for Modernisation", in Ta Kung Pao, September 18, 1980, p.3.
We shall promote socialist democracy, strengthen the socialist system, improve the leadership of our government at all levels, and enhance stability, unity and liveliness in the country as a whole. We shall vigorously expand the decision-making power of enterprises and the power of their workers and staff to participate in management, restructure the economic system step by step, combine regulation through planning with regulation by the market and run our economy by relying on economic organs as well as economic leverage and legislation.\(^\text{32}\)

It is clear that Zhao’s concern was more on economic than political reforms. But, that should not come as a surprise, given the fact that Zhao had been an expert on economic reform, as is evident in his success in initiating the reforms of economic policy leadership in Sichuan province in 1978 (which later had earned him his ‘Premier’ leadership of the State Council in 1980).\(^\text{33}\) However, what was more important is that, compared to his view on political reform in 1978, Zhao seemed to have grasped a better understanding of the economic rationale for the transformation of the political system, although his emphasis visibly remained stronger on the economic front. His expressed support for the promotion of socialist democracy and the reform aiming at improving the state leadership had clearly endorsed Deng’s views on the very issues of inculcating the political and economic participatory value at grass-roots levels, and renewing the leadership’s internal vitality.

While Zhao seemed to share Deng’s political ideas, other reformers interpreted the ideas in their own ways. Hu Yaobang, for one, irrespective of his ongoing close collaboration with Deng, continued to appear unaffected by Deng’s reform initiatives. He, of course, supported Deng’s call for political reform and to bring democracy into full play. But he also had his own way of looking at these political issues. Moving a step ahead from his political philosophy in 1978, Hu, by 1980, essentially saw democracy both as a means and an end to the reforms.\(^\text{34}\) In contrast to the conservatives’ argument, Hu argued that, in order to prevent the outbreak of Polish-like political upheaval, China should indeed establish a proper democratic political system. This is because, according to Hu, only through a full-scale democratisation of the system could the beliefs and aspirations of the people be fully heard by the central authorities.\(^\text{35}\) Hu’s approach to Deng’s political ideas was clearly different from Zhao’s, not to mention the conservatives’. Hu clearly used Deng’s political ideas as a significant platform to secure his own political interests. He put

\(^{32}\) Ibid.,


\(^{34}\) Wei-wei Zhang, Ideology and Economic Reform Under Deng Xiaoping ..., pp. 36 – 37; Merle Goldman, Sowing the Seeds of Democracy in China..., p. 70.

\(^{35}\) Wei-wei Zhang, Ideology and Economic Reform Under Deng Xiaoping ..., p. 37.
more stress on strengthening the democratic rights of the people and countervailing the tight party control, than on the need to uphold the very idea of Party leadership.

While Hu Yaobang’s political philosophy might have caused immediate alarm to many Party conservatives, his interpretation of Deng’s political idea seemed to be well-received by other liberal Party members. One of them was Liao Gailong. He was a member of the Policy Research Office of the Party’s Central Committee, which was responsible in planning policy options for the leadership. In his controversial interpretation of Deng’s speech, Liao argued that only by giving the highest priority to political democracy and extensive freedom as the ultimate goal of political reform could economic modernisation and common prosperity in the people’s livelihood be secured. Liao backed up his argument by making a clear reference to Deng’s 1980’s speech:

Comrade Deng Xiaoping’s speech on 18 August points out the principle for revising the constitution: our constitution must be perfected, must be clear and accurate, and must genuinely ensure that the masses of people can enjoy adequate democratic rights and the right to manage the state and various enterprises and business, that various nationalities can really practice regional autonomy, and that the people’s congress at various levels will be improved, and so on...These were Deng Xiaoping’s words.

It was clear that Liao had used Deng’s proposal of revising the constitution, which would ensure autonomy and freedom of the Chinese, as the justification of his abovementioned argument. But his interpretation of the speech made an important departure from the speech itself, particularly in terms of its political meanings. In his interpretation, Liao suggested several bold institutional innovations, including transforming the system of people’s congresses into a bicameral legislature similar to the legislature system that Soviet Union was practising at that time. This new institution (with a reduced number of standing committee members to ensure its efficiency), would act as a check and balance on the government’s and Party’s power, as well as an effective means of handling contradictions among the people. Thus, this new institution, as Liao argued, would not only have greater power to carry out the Congress’ regular work of law making and supervising the government, but also would effectively safeguard the interests of the common people.

38 Ibid., p. U7.
Liao's bold policy proposal of the institutional innovations was part of his report on Deng's 1980 speech at an academic seminar on the CCP history, organised by the national party school system on October 25, 1980. Being a member of the policy research office under the CCP Central Committee, Liao was responsible for coordinating policy and theoretical recommendations for the leadership. He even played a prominent role in drafting certain political reform proposals in this period. This, and the fact that he was a firm reform advocate, offers one persuasive explanation for his intriguing proposal for democratising the political system. From Liao's viewpoint, Deng's speech offered a strong endorsement of, and blueprint for, fundamental reform policies. Thus, it had opened wide the doors for reform advocates like Liao to re-assert their views and proposals on political issues.

There seemed to be similar kinds of liberal political opinions in the Chinese media during this time. The vocal support from the liberal reformers for ultimate democratisation of Chinese politics had prompted the Chinese media and to publish commentary berating the familiar defects of overconcentration of power, personality cults, and the system of lifetime tenure for Party leaders. At the same time, they also considered the feasibility of industrial democracy, religious and intellectual freedom, an independent judiciary system, and even a student protest movement. For example, Xu Wenli, an underground writer and the editor of the April Fifth Forum, stressed the imperative importance of grass-roots democracy. He reckoned the potential success of Deng's political reform could only materialise if the reform initiative were promoted from the grass-roots level and "should not be as a favour or order from the government". Xu might have agreed with Deng's idea of expanding democracy at the grass-roots level. But while Deng saw such a policy implemented under the supervision of the Party leadership, Xu instead proposed for the reform to be carried out by the grass-roots units themselves. According to Xu, the reason was that "a reform that proceeds in the upper level can hardly resist the opposition of the bureaucracy that is passed down from the old system". Looking at Xu's political idea, together with the proposals made by other reformers, there seemed to be growing signs of disenchantment with the CCP and its leadership among the faction and some political groups outside the leadership.

40 Richard Baum, Burying Mao: Chinese Politics..., p. 106.
41 The April Fifth Forum was also an underground journal, like the Beijing Spring. It was put together by several pro-democracy activists at the height of the Democracy Wall movement in 1978.
42 Chen Ruoxi, Democracy Wall and the Unofficial Journals, p. 68.
43 "Article on '1980 Reform' Program Published", p. U2.
The above discussion has shown us how different were the reaction of the Party leaders to Deng’s speech in 1980. The political interests of the leaders clearly shaped their reactions. For the reformers, they deliberately avoided the question of reforming the leadership but rather emphasised the issue of pursuing democracy and the kinds of approaches best used in dealing with the issue. One can take this as a sign of increasing confidence, and even strength, on the part of the liberal reformers and other progressive political groups in reasserting their influence and putting pressure on the balance of power in the Chinese leadership. On the other hand, the conservatives clearly took a rather cautious attitude towards Deng’s speech. In fact, some were offended by the speech and saw Deng as easily jeopardising China’s unity and stability. The fear of becoming powerless in conducting any political change or reform in a controlled manner, as a result of Deng’s support of grass-roots democracy, were looming larger in the heads of the conservatives. Consequently, these different reactions and clashes of political interests between conservatives and reformers contributed to the widening of political division within the Chinese leadership. This time, these interests were expressed more forcefully as the factions attempted to cancel out one another. In the end, as the contention of the two factions was getting severe, political reform was put on hold by Deng. In fact, the reform experienced a fairly long hiatus between 1981 and 1986. It was not until 1986 that Deng revived the reform through a series of his speeches in that year.

3.2.3 Political Reactions to the 1986 speeches

Regardless of the continuous clampdown on political reforms by the conservatives since 1981, a series of speeches made by Deng in the months of September and November gave a renewed impetus for another round of political reform in 1986. Although these speeches were addressing the overly familiar defects of bureaucratism and the overcentralisation of the Chinese political system, they, for various reasons, still managed to draw a great deal of attention, and even enjoyed popular support, particularly from the reformists themselves. Moreover, with the economic reforms increasingly suffering major setbacks due to the problematic price reform and excessive interferences from various bureaucratic organisations, there was every chance that the political reform would make a conclusive comeback this time and put to an end to the cyclical framework of political advance and retreat.
The analysis of the reactions to Deng’s speeches will show us there was a wider margin between the political interests of the conservatives and those of the political activists than before. By looking at Chen Yun’s reaction to Deng’s sharp criticism of the two organisations he headed, it was clear that the conservative faction was no longer supportive of Deng’s revival of political reform. This was because, over the years, the unintended consequences of the reforms had, in many ways, put the Party’s supremacy under constant challenges and threat. Therefore, for the conservatives, the renewal call for reform would only worsen the political situation and bring new threats to the Party. The political activists on the other hand, had completely different reactions to the speeches. There was no particular reaction recorded from Zhao Ziyang or Hu Yaobang this time. But judging from the reactions that came from discussion tables and conferences organised by political activists and academicians outside the leadership, Western-derived reform policies seemed to be very popular among this group. What they sought was clear: radical reform policies that would fundamentally transform Chinese political structure, the exact kind of reforms that Deng and the conservatives were strongly against.

3.2.3.1 Reactions from the Conservative faction

In many ways, it was the conservatives that were seriously targeted in this speech. By criticising the Central Discipline Inspection Commission and the State Planning Commission, Deng demonstrated his uneasiness towards the conservatives for impeding the economic reform. Chen Yun, who headed both organisations by 1986, was the one in the firing line, receiving not only critical comments from Deng but also from Zhao Ziyang who equally disapproved of “the practices of the Central Discipline Inspection Commission [which] contravene the state laws”. Likewise, in a similar appeal, the liberal reformers also put Chen Yun on the spot for ‘encouraging’ the members of the Commission to abuse their powers and attack the reformers under the pretext of liberalism, so that they could pose partisan challenges to the reformist faction.

Nevertheless, despite the validity of these criticisms, they did little to change, or even soften, Chen’s and the Inspection Commission’s dogmatic attitudes towards economic reforms and the reformers. In their defence, and in response to Deng’s criticism of the

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44 "Deng Confronts Chen Yun In Standing Committee", Cheng Ming, (October 1, 1986), in FBIS, October 9, 1986, p. K11.
Commission’s arbitrary meddling in the economic and state affairs, Chen justified the political correctness of the Commission’s activities:

The duties of the Central Discipline Inspection Commission include: those who violate Party and government discipline should be resolutely dealt with according to party and government discipline. Those who break the law should be dealt with according to the law. The Discipline Inspection Commissions at all levels should act in the light of this principle. Otherwise, it would be a dereliction of duty.\(^\text{46}\)

It should be noted that it was Chen who decided that the Commission should take on matters that were supposedly the government’s and the state’s responsibilities, and used Party rectification as the justification of his decision. The bureaucratic organisation visibly complied with him.

However, it was not so much about rectifying the Party than it was about fighting the constant challenges that the reform had inevitably posed against the Party’s integrity and the country’s unity and stability. By 1986 there was a staggering rise in all sorts of economic crimes (ranging from corruption, bribery, and stealing to squandering) in China. In spite of the government crackdown on criminal activities in the same year, the crime rate grew uncontrollably in scale with criminals now using violence in their activities.\(^\text{47}\) Moreover with many Party members and the government organs now favourably inclined to democratic principles, and increasingly “disregard[ed] organisational discipline and failed to enforce orders and prohibitions”,\(^\text{48}\) conservative leaders were convinced that it was only a matter of time before the entire leadership lost its control of the citizenry. Consequently, this threatened the political stability and unity that was very much valued by the leaders.

However, Deng on the other hand, was seen as offering little help to remedy the slackening of the ideological commitment, and the party-government discipline looming larger across the political spectrum. This inevitably fuelled and dramatised the issues of control and integrity in the eyes of the conservatives. That was why the conservatives decided to take matters into their own hands. Given the unquestionable legitimacy of its power, Chen relied on the Commission to carry out instrumental actions in curtailing the prevalent crime and

\(^{46}\) ibid., p. K11. This part of Chen Yun’s speech was delivered at the Sixth meeting of the Central Discipline Inspection held on September 24, 1986. Such a viewpoint had actually been expressed by Chen prior to this meeting at some separate occasions. Two of those occasions are the meeting of the Political Bureau Standing Committee on June 28 and the Party’s conference at Beidaihe in August.


\(^{48}\) ibid., p. 204.
social disorder, and simultaneously, safeguarding the Party's integrity and the state political stability.

Having said that, it was very unlikely for Chen and the Commission to retreat from the 'political assault' on economic and state affairs, as the reform had the tendency to push the central leadership to a greater risk of losing the control over the Party and society. Chen continued to stand resolutely and defended his and the Commissions' positions on the grounds that such a political move was indeed instrumental and necessary at times in dealing with issues of control. This argument clearly reflected Chen's, and perhaps other conservatives' political interest in safeguarding the Party's integrity. Thus, Deng's criticism towards Chen and the bureaucratic organisations clearly had done nothing to force the group to withdraw from their dogmatic standpoint. Instead, it aggravated the existing conflict and disagreement within the top leadership.

3.2.3.2 Other Reactions from Party Reformers and Political Groups

As has been mentioned earlier, other reactions to the speeches mainly came from discussion tables. This was perhaps due to the fact that the content of the political reforms was yet to be decided and, as according to Deng, it was 'still under discussion...to determine the scope of the political restructuring'. As a result, there were many open political dialogues which took place in the theoretical and academic fields, discussing the possible scope and content of the reform. There was a growing body of political discussions, particularly in regard to the kinds of ideal reform approaches and measures, and even the kind of democracy, that should be adopted by the central authorities. The following paragraphs analyse some of the significant discussions on, and interpretations of, the issues involved.

While there were various reactions to Deng's speeches from different groups or individuals of different political inclinations, it is interesting to note that they all had similar political demands and expectations towards political reform. Almost all of them proposed the adoption of Western political values and practices in reform policies. In fact, many wanted the policies to be less constrained by ideological preconception. Even the Party loyalists, such as Wan Li, proposed more liberal reform policies which seemed to be in line with other policy proposals from much more radical intellectuals and political activists.

49 Deng Xiaoping, September 3 1986, “On the Reform of the Political Structure”,...
Having said that, let us look at Wan Li’s proposal of reform policy\(^5\). Wan’s proposal was not exactly a direct reaction to Deng’s speech. He made a keynote speech on the issue about two months before the series of speeches Deng made on political reform. There was evidently a steadily growing mass expectation of the revival of political reforms back in May or June of the same year. Accordingly, a national research symposium on political and economic restructuring was held in Beijing, in July 1986, at which Wan made his proposal of institutionalising scientific decision-making process within the political system. Wan Li recognised the failure of the previous political reforms to eliminate the main defects of the existing political structure. This failure, according to Wan, was due to the “common practice for some leading officials to formulate [political] policy on the basis of their own experience and individual judgment” which no longer was ‘compatible’ with the present situation.\(^5\) Having said that, Wan Li recommended that governing bodies institutionalise scientific and democratic approaches in decision-making processes as part of the reform policies. Such approaches would allow policy researchers and leaders: a) to have frequent exchanges of views and information on basis of equal footing (i.e. free political discussions); b) to discuss and debate any alternative views on political issues; and c) to conduct any policy research on the basis of facts and truth.\(^5\) This therefore would ensure that the formulation of reform policies would be free from excessive political interference and the undemocratic procedures of policy-making.

However, looking closely at Wan Li’s proposal of political reform, it could be argued that the proposal was not just about the institutionalisation of the scientific and democratic approaches as a rational guide to the decision-making process, but it was also significantly a proposal for the promotion of policy researchers and specialists to leadership positions.\(^5\) If this was the case, then the deliberate political strategy of Wan’s proposal could actually lead to the formation of the kind of leadership structure that could provide effective government, one responsive enough to people’s needs and views. Not only would this be a great help in minimising the conflict between the state and society, but more importantly, it could also play a major role in pushing China’s politic in a democratic direction. However, on the other hand, the implementation of such reform policy could also

\(^{50}\) Wan Li was a vice premier and also a member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party.


\(^{52}\) Ibid.,

lead to the emergence of different and competing interests within the leadership. The new interests not only would compete with the old interests, but the new interest were more likely to put pressure on the ruling party and sought for more involvement in the decision-making process, making it difficult for the ruling party to uphold their authoritarian rule.

As has been mentioned earlier, the content of the reform has yet to be decided by central authorities. As a result, many referred to Deng's 1980 speech as political guidelines. In fact, the 1980 speech was regarded by many as "a planning document for China's political restructuring". It was later used to set the tone for many political discussions around this time. One of the political groups who used Deng's 1980 speech as references was the Institute of Marxism-Leninism of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (hereafter CASS). Taking a cue from Deng's 1980 speech of opening up the political system for popular participation, the CASS academician emphasised on the importance of preparing Chinese political system for such development. This preparation, according to CASS, could be done through theoretical studies prior to the implementation of the political reforms. These theoretical studies, among other things, would set up an understanding of how the Western capitalist political system and institutions had developed and to "find out what can be borrowed as examples from Western political civilisations". In addition, the studies would also allow China to "reorganise, analyse, and evaluate the basic Marxist viewpoint on political theories", while taking into consideration the basic points of view made by western bourgeois political scholars on contemporary Marxism. Such theoretical and practical preparation therefore would ensure, as the Institute argued, positive outcomes for Deng's political reform.

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55 The Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) is the progeny of the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) (established in 1955) which was forced to dissolve during the Cultural Revolution. CASS, which came into being in 1977, is China's most comprehensive research body which, since the time of its formation, had actively conducted wide-ranging researches in disciplines such as economics, political and social studies, international relations and humanities. Moreover, with its leadership spearheaded by a handful of prominent liberal-thinking scholars such as Yan Jiaqi, Su Shaozhi, Liu Zaifu and few others, CASS took a prominent role in disseminating many unorthodox key ideas in the occasions of political debates and forum prior to the democracy movement in 1989. S. R. Landberger, “The Chinese Academy of Social Sciences”, in China Information, Vol.2, No.1, (Summer 1987), pp. 46-47; David Kelly, Anthony Reid, “Weathering a Political Winter: The Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, 1990”, in The Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs, Vol. 0, Issue 24 (July 1990), pp. 350-351.
57 Ibid., Similar ideas of studying the political systems in the Eastern Europe and the West by comparing Marxist political concepts with non-Marxist ones was also voiced by Zhu Houze, the Propaganda Department director, at the political forum organised by the graduate students at the Central Party School in July 1986. Merle Goldman, Sowing the Seeds of Democracy in China..., p. 181.
As the political debates and discussions progressed over time, it became clearer that the direction of the new ideas coming out from the debates and discussions had begun to deviate from, if not actually oppose, Deng’s political ideas. Evidently, there were more and more demands for constitutional reforms, institutional rights and freedoms, and even the revision of Marxism, Leninism, and Maoism. Yan Jiaqi, the director of Institute of Political Science of the CASS, had recommended China to adopt a parliamentary form of government with more participation and power to be given to the People’s Congress so that the Congress could exercise legislative power and the power of supervising the government. \(^{58}\) Whereas Su Shaozhi, the director of the Marxism-Leninism of the CASS argued that, since there were many grey areas in between the socialist system and the capitalist system, pluralism of interest or even multiparty competitions should be acknowledged in Chinese politics. \(^{59}\)

In addition to this, more and more references and comparisons were made between Western and socialist ideas and political philosophies. Liu Binyan, a People’s Daily’s journalist, for example, demanded freedom of press as this, according to the Western constitutional freedom, could be used “as a check on political power”. \(^{60}\) This however is less radical if compared to Fang Lizhi’s proposal for political reform. Fang was an astrophysicist and was well known for his undisguised advocacy of a complete Westernisation of Chinese political system. In his speech at Jiaotong University (University of Communication) in Shanghai, Fang visibly defied the Party leadership and the guiding role of Marxism and instead, popularised ideas and political thought central to Western democracy. \(^{61}\)

It is without question that the reactions from political groups and individuals following Deng’s speeches demonstrated the fact there was growing political consciousness, if not intellectual pluralism, among them. It became evident by 1986 that many of them, in less ideological and more secular manner, were increasingly eager to reduce both the scope and arbitrariness of Party intervention in every aspect of life and at the same time, was also seeking to expand the opportunities for popular participation in political affairs. Evidently,

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there were political groups and individuals who were not really keen on Deng’s idea of preserving and upholding the Party leadership. In fact, they even questioned the compatibility of the traditional order and method of analysis with China’s ever growing political and economic needs. There were clearly major clashes of interest here. The conservatives were committed to retaining the Party’s monopoly of political power. But other political groups clearly sought to break down such a power monopoly. As the differences in political opinions became great, reconciliation between these different factions became increasingly a remote possibility.

3.3 Concluding Observation

Deng’s political reform experienced a series of advances and setbacks, depending on which ideological faction in the central leadership gained the upper hand. This cyclic pattern of political advance and retreat definitely affected the scope of the reforms that could be implemented as well as the pace they could proceed. Even so, every time Deng set forth and revived the issues of the political reform, it still won a significant degree of acceptance both from party leaders and various political groups outside the party circle, as is evident from the political responses and reactions discussed in this chapter. On one hand, such acceptance was mainly related to the economic rationale for the transformation of the political structure particularly during the early years of the political reforms. On the other hand however, there were a significant number of liberal party leaders, not to mention a growing number of eclectic and experimental political groups, who viewed the political reform as a priority in its own right.

As shown in the above discussion, the clashes of interests in the reform policies and policy goals among the conservatives and reformers were increasingly apparent as the political reform proceeded along its course. It is worth noting that the speeches and many of the reactions actually shared a common belief that political restructuring constituted a major step forward in overcoming bureaucratism and expanding the participation of the people in the democratisation of Chinese society. However, there were also those who remained undecided towards, and even put up challenges to, the limitations of the political reforms that had been set down by the ruling party. The circles of liberal party leaders and many political groups and individuals outside the political leadership, both in 1980 and more so in 1986, demanded broader democratic reforms and practices and much more fundamental political changes in the system than those Deng had proposed in the first place.
However, because Deng was not as flexible in political matters as he was in the economic sphere, the clashes of interests and priorities between the conservatives and the liberals in regard to the scope of the political reforms became more evident in 1986. This inevitably intensified the ideological and political contention between the two opposing camps. Moreover, as various political groups were becoming more and more active in political debates and discussions, all demanding a major shake-up of the political system, the grim political climate had become increasingly beyond repair. It was both against and because of this backdrop that tens of thousands of Chinese students launched street demonstrations in several principal cities in November and December 1986, all clamouring for democracy and greater freedom.

This chapter has analysed and discussed the differing reactions of the conservatives, reformers, and political groups outside the leadership to Deng’s speeches. Attention has also been given to the clashing political interests, which significantly shaped those reactions. However, there are still two groups that also played significant role in the political crisis in 1989. They are the students and the workers, particularly those were who actively involved in the Tiananmen demonstration in the spring of 1989. This research would be incomplete without looking at their political ideas and interests. It also will be interesting to see if there were any of Deng’s speeches or reform policies that had significant influence over political beliefs and behaviour of these groups. A discussion on Chinese students and workers will form the central theme of the following chapter.
4.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, attention was given to the differing reactions of Party conservatives, Party reformers and other political groups to Deng Xiaoping’s speeches. The chapter examined the differing political needs and interests of the respective groups, which largely shaped the nature of their reactions. A comparison between those political needs was also made in order to understand the extent of the differences between those needs, which, over time, became more contradictory. Consequently, these differences in political opinions created and intensified political contention within and outside the leadership.

There are, however, still two other major groups that were equally involved in the political contention and in the lead-up to the Tiananmen incident, that have not been discussed yet. They are the Chinese students and factory workers. Due to the significant roles that they played in the Tiananmen demonstration, it is crucial to analyse their political needs and interests during the reform period, particularly at the end of the 1980s. This will enable us to see if there are major differences in terms of political needs and opinions between those of the students and workers, and those held by the political leadership. Moreover, the students and workers are among the power groups that Deng attempted to appeal to. It would be interesting to see if there was any real impact of Deng’s speeches on the political lives of the groups.

However, unlike other groups where political needs and interests were uncovered and analysed through their differing reactions to Deng’s speeches, it is not possible to carry out similar kind of analysis on the students and workers. There is such a limited availability of reliable secondary material concerning the reactions of the groups to the speeches to be able to conduct similar analysis. This limitation could be either due to the circulation of the speeches among the groups, particularly the workers, were restricted, or there were reactions from the groups but were not reported and documented.
Having said that, in order to uncover the political interests and needs of the students and workers, this chapter will take a different analytical angle by analysing their reactions to political trends and developments instead. In the case of the students, one of the political trends that had huge influence on, and shaped, their interests and needs was the “conference fever”, which first emerged in 1986, and which grew stronger in the lead-up to the Tiananmen incident. In the case of the factory workers, one of the political developments that shaped the interests of the workers was the factory reforms of 1984. One will see, in the following discussion, how the factory reform threatened the economic security of many factory workers. As a result, more and more workers were fighting against the reforms in order to secure their economic interests. When the students were marching to the Tiananmen Square in the spring of 1989, the workers took the opportunity to voice their own political interests and demands.

In regard to the demands of the protesters during the Tiananmen demonstration, slogans such as ‘democracy’ and ‘freedom’ became the rallying banner of the protest. These were seen as the demands of the protesters for democratic reforms. Students, together with workers and a handful of intellectuals, used such political rhetoric to lay the groundwork for the demonstration. The political rhetoric clearly attracted large numbers of interested members of society, and received broad social and political support from the masses during the democracy protest. Furthermore, when the Chinese students brought in a large goddess of liberty statue, which was visibly modelled on the Statue of Liberty, into the middle of the Square, it was widely understood as a symbol of the protesters’ demands for greater democratic freedom.

The question is however, did those protesters really demand freedom and democracy? Some scholars suggest such slogans could not be the sole criterion for judging the political demands and interests of the protesters at that time. Jane Macartney, for example, argued that the ‘democracy’ or ‘freedom’ slogans were only “buzzwords” used by the protesters. What the protesters demanded was some kind of accountability on the part of the CCP, in the sense that the Party leaders, particularly Deng Xiaoping, had to live up to his promises of modernising China through extensive and much more fundamental political

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1 The term “conference fever” was coined by Zhao Dingxin to describe the emerging trend of informal campus conferences from 1986 onwards where intellectuals came and gave speeches on important issues such as science and democracy. Dingxin Zhao, *The Power of Tiananmen: State-Society Relations and the 1989 Beijing Student Movement*, (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2001), pp. 75 – 76.

democratisation. Such a view is also shared by Jonathan Unger who argues that the democracy slogan did not necessarily mean "one person, one vote". In fact, the protesters "had no desire to see the decision on who would be the nation's leaders determined by the majority of the Chinese who are peasants". More importantly, such demands were not, in any way, seeking to overthrow the Communist Party, or to harm the interests of the Party, the state, or the people, although this is how the hard-line members of the Party viewed of the political goal of the protesters.

Such an analysis, in many ways, is correct. Yet, it does not necessarily mean that the students and workers had similar demands and needs in the lead-up to or during the protest. The students might have different political demands from the workers' and vice versa. Furthermore, what these two groups wanted to secure out of the reform might also be different from those of the Party conservatives, reformers, and even of the political groups.

These differences in the political interests of Chinese students and workers will form the main theme of this chapter. Attention will first be given to the political orientation of each group during the reform period. This will provide readers with general information on the two groups and their changing ways of political thinking, which also shaped their political interests and needs. One will see that the groups' political thinking were not conceptualised in an independent way. Their political thinking was a product of political trends, and the flow of various political ideas and information that the groups were exposed to throughout the reform period. This is followed by a discussion on events and developments, some of which have been mentioned briefly above, the "conference fever" and the factory reforms, and their influence on the students' and workers' interests.

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3 Ibid.,
5 During a meeting of the CCP Central Politburo Standing Committee held two days after what the Party elders claimed as "counterrevolutionary riots", Deng Xiaoping was certain that a civil war would be inevitable if the Party "had not come down hard" on the protesters. Li Xiannian, a Party elder, also argued that if victory belonged to those counterrevolutionary rioters, it would wipe out the whole Party leadership. Such view perhaps had something to do with a very forward call made by the Command-in-Chief of the Tiananmen Square Command Headquarters, Chai Ling on the night of May 27. On receiving material aid from neighbouring Hong Kong in support of the student protest that night, Chai called all Chinese throughout the world to show their support and protest against martial law, and more importantly, to overthrow the illegal government headed by Li Peng. Very staunch she might sound and appear that night, she was however in a total state of distress in the next morning. In her private interview with an American journalist, Philip Cunningham, she spoke out, for the first time, her pessimism of any success that could be attained by the protest movement. Even when the protest started in April, she knew all along that the movement was "bound to fail". Andrew J. Nathan and Perry Link, eds., The Tiananmen Papers, (London: Little, Brown and Company, 2001), pp. 420 – 421; The Gate of Heavenly Peace, Dir. Richard Gordon and Carma Hinton. Prod. Peter Kovler, Orville Schell and Lise Yasui. Long Bow Group Inc., 1995.
The analysis of students and workers will demonstrate there were real differences in their political interests although those interests were not necessarily at odds with one another. The students generally sought to fundamentally transform dismal state of the Chinese political system and solidify democratic politics through a multi-party system. They also sought freedom of publication and the right to form autonomous student organisations, organisation that would allow the instillation of democratic rights among them in particular and society in general. The workers on the other hand, were much more inward looking. They were concerned about safeguarding their immediate interests from the encroachment of political reform. Practical issues, such as higher wages and the right to choose workplaces of their liking seemed to be on the top of the list of the workers’ interests. Interestingly, despite the differences in demands, not to mention the different educational backgrounds, both groups spontaneously joined forces and rose against the ill-equipped regime.

4.2 Chinese students: Political Orientation and Interests.

Chinese students have been one of the driving forces in many popular movements in the past century. The 1989 Tiananmen incident was no exception. In this incident, students’ demands were centred around the need for a deeper political reform that would satisfy the domestic economic and political needs. Having said that, the following discussion will look at one of the political developments that shaped the interests of the group, that is, the rise of “conference fever”. It was from this “conference fever” that democracy salons and other discussion groups were formed and developed. Through the salons, students were exposed to various political views of different intellectuals and guest speakers. Accordingly, many students later aired their political opinions and demands, which sounded very similar to those of the intellectuals and guest speakers.

4.2.1 Political Orientation of Chinese Students

In 1978, one of the aims of reforming both the economic and political system was to allow the Chinese, regardless of their social position, to make an educated manpower contribution in China’s bid to achieve the ultimate socialist modernisation. The advance of the reforms was embraced by Chinese students with apparent optimism and confidence. If a democratic environment did develop, and hopefully with less prejudice to come along with it, the future of these young intellectuals seemed to be in better hands compared to the
undue treatment received by the similar group during Mao period. Moreover, entrance exams to universities, junior middle, and middle schools were resumed in 1977. This particular change in educational policy had resulted in significant numbers of enrolments. 850,000 in universities, and more than 85 million new enrolments were registered in middle schools nationwide in 1978/79. By this time, the rising generations of Chinese students were seemingly a step closer “to become[ing] part of China’s educated elite, with the prospect of an important role in the modernisation programme and adequate rewards for their skills”.

However, the sense of optimism towards a better relationship between the CCP and Chinese students was marred by the first unfortunate episode in the reform era. The deliberate democratic agitation created by intellectuals and former students in the Democracy Wall movement in late 1978, following the Third Plenum, had effectively replaced the Party’s budding confidence educated groups with total scepticism and even paranoia. The Party leadership now, and in fact for many years to come, seemed to equate the event with the long tradition of sporadic political activism that the Chinese intellectuals and students had been closely associated with throughout history. The event had also reminded the Party of the extent of political trouble that these groups were capable of instigating. As a result, the leadership was becoming warier than before of the involvement of educated Chinese in political realm. Decisions had also been made by the Party authorities for this particular group, from now on, to be at all time under the Party’s microscope, so that any signs of unwarranted political action could easily be stamped out.

Such a decision by the CCP not only forbade any unrestrained involvement, but also denied even reasonable participation, of the rising generation of students in the state political realm for the rest of the reform era. This is evident throughout the reform period. For example, during the local elections in 1980, two successful student candidates were removed from their deputy seats in the local people’s congresses. This was due to what the Party claimed as unacceptable bourgeois ways of thinking of the student candidates. Later in 1986, the government clampdown on the student demonstration was mainly due to its Cultural Revolution-like demonstration that was more likely to “destroy normal democratic

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7 Ruth Cherrington, China’s Students: The Struggle for Democracy..., p. 55.
life and to disrupt social stability and unity...\textsuperscript{10} than to deliver the goods for Chinese politics. Likewise, a similar political conviction was also being imposed on the pro-democracy protest in Tiananmen Square in 1989. This without doubt reflects the persistent intolerance of the governing Chinese authorities to allow students and intellectuals, let alone workers, to assume any substantive role in the political reforms.

Nevertheless, despite the profound vulnerability within the political realm to which the students were continuously subjected, it did not hinder them from voicing their own political aims and demands, or disseminating new and unorthodox political ideas and beliefs among themselves. Most cases of student political activism mainly arose through the students’ dissatisfaction over fundamental questions of Chinese politics and government policies. Similarly, this is the reason that had mainly driven the students into the political limelight throughout the reform period. It was, of course, not so easy to accomplish, particularly with the eyes and ears of the Party all over the place, scrutinising every word and action of the students, and continuously exerting pressure onto the students for behavioural controlling purposes.\textsuperscript{11} Yet, student activism sporadically appeared, characterised by the usual flurry of student mass meetings and political forums, drawing up petitions and demands, the setting up of politicised student unions, and that most common student political activity of street parades and demonstrations.

Moreover, as a response to Deng’s promotion of power devolution at educational institution, the CCP introduced an educational reform in 1985. This reform was an attempt made by the CCP to replace excessive governmental control over Chinese education with “a relatively flexible management system”. The entire educational system was, of course, still effectively under the direct supervision of the CCP.\textsuperscript{12} But with this policy readjustment, university authorities now could make autonomous decisions over the curricula and teaching methods.

Apparently, this educational reform had opened many doors that allowed for new and unorthodox political ideas to be accommodated and openly discussed by students. As the university authorities could now make their own decisions, political education,

particularly at the higher educational level, took an interesting turn. It became “less doctrinaire and more tolerant of individual beliefs”. This without doubt had provided ways and opportunities for educated youths, particularly those who were sceptical of the official ideology, to search actively for new and alternative political beliefs that could offer a new foundation for the orientation of their political idealism.

The loosening CCP control over the educational system did indeed provide channels for the propagation of new political ideas among students. For example, a survey on political ideology among 1,812 graduate students in Beijing in 1987 presented a surprising, if not almost frightening, fact to the Party in regard to the current political orientation of Beijing students. When asked for the students’ views on the ideas and thoughts of the dissident astrophysicist, Fang Lizhi, the breakdown of the students’ responses was as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Views of Graduate Students in Beijing Regarding the Main Ideas and Thought of Fang Lizhi</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Should be highly praised</td>
<td>11.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Should be disdained</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worthy of serious study</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


It should be noted that the survey was carried out after the expulsion of Fang Lizhi from CCP membership, allegedly due to his close connection with, and support for, the student demonstration in 1986. To prevent any further dissemination of Fang’s ideas among students, the government, via propaganda organs, had circulated a collection of Fang’s speeches among students for them to study and criticise. Yet, as the outcome of the survey illustrated, none of the responses was actually against Fang’s idea or its dissemination. The responses clearly demonstrated to the CCP the fact that its repressing action on Fang neither could intimidate his ‘student followers’, nor it had any significant

changing effect on the students’ political beliefs. Equally important, it also shows how Chinese students, prior to the 1989 Tiananmen incident, as Chen-po Chan suggests, “had moved away from collectivism and became more self-centred in their orientation”.\textsuperscript{16} The students now had more tendency to discredit any state principle and policy they disliked while indulging themselves with more freedom to pursue individual interests.\textsuperscript{17}

The fact that Chinese students were becoming increasingly receptive of new and sometimes foreign political ideas reflects the emerging lines of differentiation in viewpoints between the students and the mainstream population. Such differentiation was mostly in terms of the stance that the students now took on the question of what political reform should achieve. As to see the extent of this differing political reaction and the orientation of the political idealism of the Chinese students, the following discussion focuses on one of the political development, which involved students to a considerable extent, that is, the emergence of the “conference fever” in 1986 and beyond.


If there were any of Deng Xiaoping’s speeches that had a significant influence on Chinese students and their political orientation during the reform period, they would doubtless be his speeches on political reform in 1986. His speeches in 1986 had initiated an increasingly open academic and intellectual environment enjoyed by many sectors of Chinese society. One sector to enjoy this environment was the Chinese students, particularly those in higher education. Realising how crucial the issue of political reform had become that year, graduate students from several prominent Chinese universities took advantage of the open environment to initiate their own political conference and campus debate. Even though such political activities of the students were constantly under the vigilant eyes of campus authorities, the campus debate kept appearing sporadically. In fact, it became increasingly widespread and popular by 1988 with several conferences were organised almost every day at Peking University. As a result, many students seemed to have caught the “conference fever” bugs and “spent most of their time in attending conferences rather than in classroom study”\textsuperscript{18}.

\textsuperscript{17} ibid.,
\textsuperscript{18} Dingxin Zhao, The Power of Tiananmen..., p. 76.
Among the first conferences organised at Peking University was the Wednesday Forum, which was formed in 1987. The Forum was rather informally organised and had its political discussion held every Wednesday on the grassy hill surrounding the Miguel Cervantes statue in the University area. It even had less than ten core members, with Wang Dan (one of the student leaders in 1989 Tiananmen protest) and Yang Tao as the key figures of the Forum. Yet, however small and sometimes insignificant this group might appear to be, it managed to invite interest from various prominent individuals who became guest speakers at its Wednesday meetings. These guest speakers ranged from US Ambassador Winston Lord to the prominent intellectual elites including Fang Lizhi and his wife, Li Shuxian, Xu Liangying, and Wu Zuguang. The speeches and lectures were mainly focussed on critical issues of modernisation and democracy. However, the campus authorities were immediately perturbed with the kind of activities that the students were currently involved in, particularly with the widespread rumour that the forum was supported by a handful of well-known political dissidents. It was for this very reason that the Wednesday Forum was forced by the campus authorities to disband.

After a few futile attempts to form an autonomous organisation with a similar purpose as the Wednesday Forum, students at Peking University were finally successful in forming such organisations which were later known as the Olympic Institute and the democracy salon (minzhu shalong) in Autumn 1988. Both organisations were formed separately and had no organisational connection to each other, except for one thing. To avoid immediate repressions and pressures to disband from the campus authorities, both bodies had no choice but to “explicitly claim to be academic rather than political entities”. Such a claim might be truer for the Institute rather than the salon. The Institute was essentially an academic organisation and would only “focus on academic matters, in an effort to stay out of political trouble”. The founder, Shen Tong, was a third year Biology student at Peking University. Despite his deep interest in political activities, he avoided any direct political involvement. Instead, he remained focussed on conducting several scientific researches concerning the current state of Chinese education and China’s social system.

20 Dingxin Zhao, The Power of Tiananmen..., p. 137.
23 Shen Tong, with Marianne Yen, Almost A Revolution, p. 148.
24 However, Shen Tong and his colleagues knew that the Chinese social system implied politics. The results of the scientific researches that they conducted revealed some problems within Chinese education such as teacher’s low salaries, the government’s inappropriate allocation of funding, and poor treatment given to researchers, clearly stemmed from the political system. In other word, the finding of the Institute’s scientific
In contrast to the Olympic Institute, the democracy salon was essentially a political meeting as the salon was formed by, in Wang Dan’s words, “[the] leftovers from the Wednesday Forum”. In fact, the salon was the Wednesday Forum. After the disbandment of the Forum in 1987, the core members regrouped right away but adopted a different name, i.e. the democracy salon. By May 1988, a total of thirteen democracy salons were organised around Peking University and the organisers believed that the salons “have provided the students with excellent opportunities for the exchange of ideas as well as for theoretical discussions”. Moreover, the credibility of the salons, or Wang Dan in particular, in conducting such crucial political meetings were reinforced by the connections that the salon had with several influential political activists outside the campus, including Yan Jiaqi, the Director of the Political Science of CASS, who acted as one of the advisers of the salon.

As political forums and conference reappeared around Peking University in 1988, so did the influential intellectual elites. Fang Lizhi and his wife Li Shuxian, were among the most popular guest speakers at the salons. They were repeatedly requested by the salons to give speeches at their weekly gathering. Similar to the Wednesday Forum, there was no subject that could not be discussed or debated. On many occasions, Fang severely criticised the ruling political party and its party principles and norms. For example, at one point, Fang was unmistakably attacking Deng Xiaoping’s concepts of ‘socialism with Chinese characteristic’:

The criteria for modernisation have to be the same everywhere. You can’t have physics with Chinese characteristic just as you can’t have modernisation with Chinese characteristics.

This is a direct reference made by Fang to Deng’s concept of socialism. The concept was first introduced by Deng in 1982 which later he defined as “socialism that is tailored to Chinese conditions and has a specifically Chinese characteristics”. In other words, the concept suggests that it is not wrong for Chinese economy to incorporate certain capitalist

\textit{Almost A Revolution}, pp. 154 – 156.

Shen Tong, with Marianne Yen, \textit{Almost A Revolution}, p. 152.


Shen Tong with Marianne Yen, \textit{Almost A Revolution}, p. 151.


elements because those elements are “desirable and necessary for achieving the socialist goal of enhancing productivity”.  

But Fang, in one of the salon sessions, clearly rebutted that concept. This is one of the many times Fang showed a strong defiance of the Party leadership and its principles, an attitude which was later copied by many of his audiences in the salons. Fang also wanted his audience to realise that democracy was not something that could be given from above. Democracy could only be attained through hard work and struggle and thus, the success of implementing democracy in China would solely depend on people’s efforts and their capabilities.

Such a viewpoint was also shared by Bao Zongxin, an influential Chinese scholar, who spoke at one particular democracy salon which was held in commemoration of the 1919 May Fourth Movement on May 12, 1989. Speaking in front of some five hundred undergraduates, Bao indirectly gave his approval to students’ political activism as part of their efforts to furthering political reform: “You, your movement, has finally made China stand up! On October 1, 1949, Mao proclaimed in Tiananmen Square that China has stood up. But that was propaganda. You have made those words real.”

Bao Zongxin and Fang Lizhi were among many guest speakers of the democracy salons but the only two whose lectures were documented and available for the purpose of this research. Yet, by looking at the content and tones of their lectures, it is clear what they and many other guest speakers had in common: an interest in promoting the ideas of democracy and democratic politics among the rising generation of Chinese students. Moreover, the fact that anyone could speak frankly during discussion sessions at the salons seemingly offered more than what the students could cope with. Students were exposed to personal opinions and trains of thought that the speakers normally would not dare to write in formal publications. There were, of course, a lot of exaggerations and overstatements made around the conference tables, solely to stir up political sentiment among the audience. There were many times, as Craig Calhoun argues, where “basic concerns about Chinese society and the appropriate stances to take toward it were spread in a variety of ways and

31 “Students Long For Democracy, Call for Reform”, Cheng Ming, (June 1, 1988), in FBIS, June 7, 1988, p. 36.
33 Dingxin Zhao, The Power of Tiananmen..., p. 76.
translated from a sophisticated intellectual discourse into a more popular influential idiom of dissent".  

However, whether those ideas were exaggerated or not, the intellectual influence of the democracy salons on the political mentality of university students were undeniably profound. As the salons opened yet another channel for the diffusion of politically new and sometimes foreign ideas, the students became increasingly politically conscious and aware of other political alternatives. Fang Lizhi himself admitted the powerful influence that he and other guest speakers had over the political orientation of Chinese students during the second half of the 1980s. Students were widely exposed, and deeply influenced by the speeches, lectures, and writings of the intellectuals, particularly those of Fang. More and more students were unafraid to be involved in free-wheeling debates on campus lawns, discussing sensitive political issues such as human rights, freedom of speech and other democratic freedom. Accordingly, this open political atmosphere had contributed to the newly found confidence and abilities of Chinese students to express their ideas in public. A survey shows that 84.2% of those with high frequency of conference attendance were either protesters or student leaders during the protest movement. This, without question, indicated the huge influence that the democracy salons had in nurturing the political mentality and revolutionising the political behaviour of most university students in the lead-up to the Tiananmen incident.

These important changes had also defined the political interests of the students. Wang Dan, who always couched his discussions in the Salon in political languages and viewpoints similar to those expressed by Fang Lizhi, was clearly influenced by them. He once voiced the main political goals that he sought were the institutionalisation of a multi-party system, freedom of publication, and legal recognition for an autonomous organisation of university students. On the other hand, he did not regard official profiteering as having more importance than those aforementioned political goals. Similarly, Chai Ling, another

39 Ibid.,
student leader of the Tiananmen protest in 1989, also repeatedly echoed Fang’s idea on
democratic rights. She stressed that democracy was a basic right that one should naturally
possess and was not something conferrable from above, or from anywhere else for that
matter.40

By 1989, it became clearer how significantly different and contrasting were the
political viewpoints held by university students and those of the Party leadership (i.e. the
Party conservatives). To begin with, while the students considered Fang Lizhi and his wife
as the champions of human rights and democracy, the CCP authorities had all along tagged
these two individuals as the political enemies of the state whose writings and teachings
unmistakably advocated Westernisation and bourgeois liberalisation. While the students
increasingly understood democracy in terms of freedom of speech, basic human rights,
freedom of association, and a more truly representative government, the CCP insisted those
interests were negative forms of Western democracy that could subordinate the political
stability and unity of the country.

But what was more important was that, the students at this stage did not see political
reform in instrumental terms at all. Unlike Deng who would only implement political
reform in areas where economic development demanded it, the students were looking for
much a more fundamental kind of political reform, whether or not it involved economic
matters. The essence of democracy and political reform, as the students understood it, was
beyond limits set by the Four Cardinal Principles, as Deng defined the concept and the
reform. Naturally, Wang Dan’s demands for a multi-party system, independent
organisation, and freedom of the press and Chai’s definition of democracy all reflected the
strong desires of the students to explore alternative political values. But these desires should
not be seen as a desire to replace the Party leadership or the whole Communist regime.
What the students were asking for was for the CCP to undertake much more fundamental
reform that would bring about significant political changes to the stagnant state of domestic
politics.

The students clearly had different political interests and goals compared to those of
the Party leadership. But how much different would their interests be compared to their
fellow protesters, i.e. the workers? Did the workers also seek fundamental political reform

with the establishment of multi-party authority? Or would they be more concerned with the economic side of the reform? This is what the following discussion will attempt to address.

4.3 Chinese Workers: Political Orientation and Interests

Unlike students who were politically orientated in one definite direction, it is hard to determine whether Chinese workers who actively involved in the Tiananmen demonstration were pro-reform or anti-reform in their political orientation. Their demands during the political crisis seemed to reflect the fact that their vested interests were in favour of the reform. These demands included higher wages, control of inflation, the right to freely choose their place of work, and the right to be represented by a genuine union organisation. However, their protest activities suggest something else. The workers who joined the protest movement constantly shouted slogans like “Down with Zhao Ziyang” while many of them carrying portraits of Mao Zedong. If anything, this could be seen as a manifestation of workers’ distaste of the reform measures and perhaps of their desire to retain some traditional ideals.

So, which political direction did the workers actually favour? How much different would their interests be in comparison to those of the students or even a plurality among themselves? One of the ways to address these questions is by looking at the political changes in the workplace that significantly affected the workers’ lives. Having said that, attention will be given to the factory reforms that were initiated in 1984. These particular reforms not only redefined the worker-manager relationship, but also altered political mentalities of the workers, and thus decisively shaped the group’s political interests.

4.3.1 The Politics of Factory Reforms in the 1980s

As has been discussed in chapter two, one of the main components of Deng’s political reform was to change the institution of grass-roots rule through power decentralisation in factory and enterprise managements. This political directive would essentially transfer much of the Party’s power of supervising factories into the hands of managers and authorities of various localities, enterprises, and production teams. This in turn would allow those authorities to have greater power in decision-making, particularly in

regard to economic operations and other undertakings. By doing so, China would be able to attain an economic democracy that would allow mass participation and mobilisation in economic activities at grass-root levels. In addition, the economic democracy would also protect the lawful rights of the workers, including those rights in election, management, and supervision.

Reforms within factories finally went ahead in 1984. Economic enterprises now had greater operational autonomy over "the production, pricing, and distribution of above quota or non-planned output; and over the hiring, promotion, remuneration, and dismissal of their workers". This led to "the smashing [of] the iron rice bowl", a popular term used during this period. The factory reform signified the end of an employment system that offered lifetime job tenure for workers and the beginning of a new system in which employment was mainly determined by market conditions and the criterion of economic efficiency. Moreover, these newly granted expanded powers would also limit any stringent interference from the superiors in the state bureaucracy, the Party committees, as well as the workers' committees of enterprises. This provided factory managers with greater opportunities and powers to dominate every practical issue of factory management as well as to determine any special interests that the enterprise had.

While the factory reforms looked good on paper, the reality was quite different, particularly for the working class. As the factory reforms deepened and the economic reforms at broader levels, seemed to have worked wonders, factory workers unfortunately were among those who benefited the least from both economic and political reforms. With expanded powers in their hands, factory managers now had developed new ways, apart from firing and laying off workers, "of punishing those who fail to perform, or who challenge their authority, by transferring them to lower-paying jobs inside and even outside the factory." Factory superiors might think of laying off or relocating less productive workers as the best way to increase labour productivity as well as to meet the targeted economic production.

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42 Deng Xiaoping, December 13, 1978, "Emancipate the Mind, Seek Truth From Facts and Unite as One in Looking to the Future".
43 ibid.
However, this “re-prioritizing the work force”, as one of workers was who actively involved in the 1989 protest, Zhao Hongliang, calls it, was clearly done at the expense of the workers’ interests. Except for workers who had guanxi networks with local authorities, they were severely deprived of job security and other economic safety nets that they had been enjoying for so long. As a consequence, problems related to job tenure and equity issues such as pay raises and the allocation of housing had turned into a new source of conflict and resentment between factory management and the workers themselves. Moreover, to add insult to the injury, a bankruptcy law was passed in 1987, which permitted any factory incapable of making considerable profits to lay off its workers. The passing of the law had made it much clearer to the workers that the state government had little consideration of their interests, let alone lending a hand to alleviate any of their economic grievances.

There were of course many other economic issues that contributed to the deterioration of the economic condition of Chinese workers by late 1980s such as the skyrocketing inflation, and widespread corruption. As inflation grew to a staggering rate of 18.5 percent in 1988, most workers clearly suffered, although there were still some people who took advantage of the economic condition and made huge profits at the expense of the workers’ misery. This, together with the changing politics within the factories, had clearly dislocated the working class into an even further disadvantageous economic position.

It was for all these political and economic reasons that Chinese workers, unlike students and other political activists, were so critical of Zhao Ziyang while showing their affection for Mao Zedong during the protest. In fact, the workers evidently had no faith in their entire leadership. One of the workers’ activists made this point very clear:

...we did not want Deng Xiaoping, and we did not want Zhao Ziyang either...There are people who divide the government up into factions: the reform faction, conservative faction, new authoritarian faction, moderate faction, etc. The way I see it, the Communist Party is all one faction, the ‘harm the people faction [hairen pai]...The reformers and Deng Xiaoping breathe out of the same nostril.

49 Guanxi, in everyday conversation among Chinese, means ‘relationships’ or ‘connections’. The term became popular among academic circles in the 1980s and 1990s when it was used to refer the personal relationship networks that the Chinese used to get benefit and advantages which otherwise cannot be acquired without utilising such networks. Norman Stockman, Understanding Chinese Society, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000), p. 85.
When you go to work do you ride a bicycle or ride in a car? What do you have in your refrigerator at home? Reform brought a crisis; the reformers know that even more clearly than Deng Xiaoping. You screwed up the reforms...\textsuperscript{52}

Such defiance against the reforms and the leadership might not only stem from the deleterious effects of the factory reforms but also from other economic issues mentioned above. Yet, it was an unmistakable sign that Chinese workers had little hope, or trust in most cases, of Deng’s political and economic reforms. Given the way that they were treated throughout the reform period, it became clearer to them that the factory reforms were merely empty promises of democracy. None of the so-called democratic reform measures implemented in factories could offer economic safeguards similar to those safety nets that came with the “iron rice bowl” system. None of those democratic measures was actually designed to promote the workers’ interests, let alone to resolve any of their grievances against the rigidities of bureaucracy. Those measures were only for authorities and managers to strengthen the control of their localities but not for workers to employ as practical means to demand “better workplace democracy, substantive rights, equality, union rights, and citizens control over economic policy”.\textsuperscript{53} Such failures of the factory reforms to meet the expectations that the workers had inevitably spawned popular resentment and widespread scepticism among themselves toward the reform.

Thus, responding to their deteriorating living conditions and the emergence of new uncertainties in life, as the result of the encroachment of factory reforms in 1984, the workers were becoming more forceful in safeguarding their interests. Han Dongfang, one of the workers who took a leadership role during the Tiananmen protest, admitted the fact that the workers were left unprotected and defenceless throughout the reform period:

The competition was savage, and there was no protection for the weak. In the quest for profits, there was a total disregard for the impact on the society and the environment... The reforms are necessary, but workers have to protect their own interests.\textsuperscript{54}

However, unlike the students, political groups, and intellectuals, whose scope of political interests was not only concerned those within their immediate circle, the workers were more inward-looking and “cared more about their livelihood and distributive

\textsuperscript{52} Andrew G. Walder and Gong Xiaoxia, “Workers In the Tiananmen Protests...”, pp. 21–22.


justice".\textsuperscript{55} Such a tendency was reflected in the workers’ political interests. Their demands including higher wages and the right to be allocated to workplaces of their choice were all very particularistic interests. Unlike the students, the workers made no mention of any demands for more civil liberties. Nor did the group make any recommendations or proposals of how political reform and democracy should be carried out in China. Instead, the workers were rather focussing on practical needs. The real difference between the students and workers during the political crisis in 1989, as one of the workers’ activists pointed out, was that, “we [the workers] talked about such practical questions as clothing, food, housing, farming and so forth...[while]...students wanted democracy, freedom, peace, reason, non-violence”\textsuperscript{56}

On the other hand however, it was from the students’ demands for democracy and freedom that the workers drew direct analogy of their own undemocratic factory lives.\textsuperscript{57} The workers did not grasp the issues of democracy and freedom in the way that students and intellectuals understood them. Yet, while cheering and watching thousands of university students marching to Tiananmen Square at the early stage of the demonstration in April 1989, it struck the workers how the ‘democracy’ and ‘freedom’ slogans were not only confined to important issues such as constitutional rights or freedom of speech and publication, but, more importantly, those democratic ideals could actually be turned into practical methods for changing their lives and bringing solutions to practical issues and concerns of ordinary people. It was those grounds on which the workers were fundamentally drawn to join other protesters for a democratic cause in 1989.

In sum, while it is perhaps difficult to tell the exact direction the workers were politically orientated, there is however no mistake that the workers had a different set of demands and interests from those of the students. Due to the changing politics within their workplaces, it forced the workers to take matters in their own hands and safeguard their immediate interests. Having said that, it is clearly more due to the fear of not being able to provide their families with basic necessities than the desire to see meaningful changes in the leadership that forced the workers to be politically active, even if it was only for a brief period of time. But, whatever the motivation was, it clearly had pushed the workers to respond to the students’ appeal of democracy in the spring 1989.

\textsuperscript{55} Shaoquang Wang, “From a Pillar of Continuity to A Force For Change...”, p. 179.
\textsuperscript{56} Andrew G. Walder and Gong Xiaoxia, “Workers In the Tiananmen Protests”, p. 27.
\textsuperscript{57} Andrew G. Walder, “Workers, Managers and the State...”, pp. 482–483.
4.4 Concluding Observation

This chapter focussed on the political interests of the two main groups of the Tiananmen demonstrators, the students and the workers. From the above discussion, there are three crucial points that need to be emphasised. First, the political interests and demands of the two groups were essentially different, although they were not necessarily in conflict with one another. The emergence of the “conference fever” in the Chinese universities from 1986 had considerably changed the state of the political mentality of the students and hence, defined the political interests of the group. As they were becoming more humane and aware of the emergence of new political values, partly due to their involvement in the democracy salons, the political interests of the students were focussed on finding practical solutions to the political ills suffered by the governing bodies for the betterment of society. This included demands for instituting a multi-party system, freedom of the press, and independent organisation. The workers, on the other hand, might not have the same kind of intellectual exposure, as was the case with the students. Yet, the changing politics within their workplaces and the accompanying adverse consequences on their interests had given them a fair idea of how political reform had practically failed to deliver their expectations. This partly defined the political interests of the group, which were more particularistic in nature than those of the students. Yet, those interests and demands of the workers, which mainly concerned practical livelihood issues, were equally significant in exerting real pressure on the national leadership during the political crisis.

Second, because of these differences in demands and interests, it is probably a misnomer to regard the Tiananmen protest as a “mass” protest. There was no actual united ideas, needs, or even leadership by any means that could possibly link the two groups in a concrete way. This is completely different from the Polish worker-intellectual alliance, which staged a nationwide protest against the country’s Communist Party in 1980. As has been mentioned in chapter three, the Polish workers and intellectuals developed a united opposition to the state leadership in order to stop the economic discrimination and to re-institute democratic rights at every level of the society. This is perhaps a reason why Polish protest in 1980 was successful in disintegrating the Polish leadership, and the Tiananmen demonstrators failed to attain any meaningful outcome. The survival of a protest is clearly dependent on the unity of the protesters themselves. But Chinese students and workers were unable to go the extra mile and find some common ground between them. Thus, looking from this viewpoint, there was nothing really “mass” about the Tiananmen protest. But it does help us to understand why the protest movement, despite being joined by thousands of
zealous protesters, rapidly fell apart once the movement was under the pressure of military action.

Third, while the interests of the two groups might not be at odds with one another, that however does not guarantee their conformity with those political interests of the top leadership. In the case of the students, like many other democracy advocates, they tended to view the political reforms as a priority in its own right. The scope of reforms should not only be confined to the Four Cardinal Principles that Deng had consistently insisted upon, as this would seriously prevent the exercise of the basic rights of the citizens. In fact, these students might have stepped a bit further from the circle of pro-reform CCP leaders in demanding broader democratic reforms. They openly advocated Western political values that they thought could offer a feasible kind of political system. Such political behaviour on the part of the students might be seen as inappropriately critical.

But, many did not realise that it actually represented the political reality. This was a clear sign of the students’ deteriorating confidence in the communist ideology, system, and authority. Similarly, those interests of the workers were also at variance with the political interests of the leadership. This group might not be interested in the factional struggle within the leadership. Nor did they want to topple Communist rule. But the fact that they were solely interested in pursuing their own political rights caused some uneasiness among the Party conservatives. If the workers succeeded in bringing their interests to fruition, it meant the Party had lost its control over the group. Again, it rekindled the ‘Polish fear’ and the possible united action of the workers against the state leadership.

It was very unfortunate that the groups discussed above and in the previous chapters failed to adjust their political behaviour in order to find some common ground between their differing political interests. Otherwise, it perhaps could have brought a rather peaceful end to the whole episode of the Tiananmen demonstration. But evidently, there was no place for a win-win game in Chinese politics. It is usually one side that wins all and the other side[s] lose[s] all. This was exactly what happened during the political crisis in 1989. The conflicting political interests supposedly could be resolved through dialogue (duihua). But instead, they generated the unnecessary grim political atmosphere, which evidently became increasingly beyond repair as more students and workers marched down the Beijing streets towards Tiananmen Square. However, it was not the demonstrators who won all. The brutal suppression of the protest, followed by the campaign of mass terror of the protesters
guaranteed a win for the Party’s side. It not only ended the demands for freedom and democracy, but also reinforced the powerful image of Deng Xiaoping and of a communist regime in general.
CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION:
FROM REFORM TO POLITICAL CONTENTION

Differing reactions and responses to state policies and reforms is perhaps an inevitable and universal feature of any political culture as human beings by nature have their own ways of seeing things. As these differences in opinion, and interests always provide reasons for disagreement, they become a universal source of potential conflict between the ruler and the ruled. Therefore, unless the political institution provides a framework within which the differing opinions could be channelled and reconciled, it will inevitably inflict a considerable degree of political damage to national politics.

This is what happened to China in the spring of 1989. Deng Xiaoping, the Party leaders, and the different power groups were evidently reluctant to concede any of their political interests and demands which otherwise would have made it possible for them to reach some middle ground and implement crucial decisions in regard to the reform. In addition, the CCP authoritarian tradition also does not sanction any segment of the society to be involved or have say in any decision-making processes made by the leadership. Nor had society any right to define Party principles or the style of leadership and political system. Thus, it would be quite impossible to establish the aforementioned framework that could accommodate those different political opinions and needs.

The previous chapters have shown that, as China progressed through reform, the political interests of different groups and individuals became much more contradictory to one another. In the case of Deng Xiaoping however, it was his own political interests that were contradictory. On one hand, he seemingly wanted political reform to take place. All his speeches analysed in chapter two show that he was keen to restructure and transform the political system so that it would be able to conduct its affairs with much more efficiency. Through his speeches, he appealed to different segments of the society that he thought could assist in his political venture. On the other hand however, Deng’s political reform was not a totally independent reform program. Deng’s desire to reform the political system did not grow from a real concern with the ill defects of the system. Rather, political reform was
subsidiary to reform in the economic sphere. Many of the political reform policies that Deng advocated, such as power devolution, were mainly implemented in the economic management system rather than within the political system itself. This partly explains the sporadic revival of political reform by Deng during the reform period. Deng advocated political reform in 1978 and 1980 in order to extend the scope of his economic reform to the grass roots level. After 1980, the economic reforms seemed to be progressing without major difficulties. It was not until 1986 that Deng revived the political reforms to exert some pressure on particular government organisations that were responsible for bringing the economic reform to a standstill.

This is why Deng was not very sympathetic to the political demands made by the democratic forces in and outside the Party who sought to carry out much more fundamental political reform. In Deng’s view, the reform that the democratic forces were seeking would not help China’s economic efficiency. Instead, such reform would only threaten the organisational integrity of the CCP and its monopoly of power. This is another reason why Deng never sought to spring-clean the Chinese leadership through extensive political reform. It was clearly in Deng’s best interest not to do so because he relied heavily on the political hegemony of the Party and its centralised leadership as the crucial source of his political authority and survival. If Deng was true to his word and went on to accommodate democratic practices and devolved much of the power of the leadership to lower levels, he would no longer have sufficient power to play his role as the country’s paramount leader. He would also put his own political survival under threat. This was one of Deng’s political interests that he never wanted to jeopardise merely for the sake of political reform.

It was also for the same fear of losing supremacy within the Party that Deng made sure to position himself in between the Party conservatives and reformers. As has been discussed in chapters one and two, Deng always avoided favouritism in regard to the two conflicting factions. Throughout the reform period, and prior to the Tiananmen incident, Deng was seen occasionally shifting himself to either side, depending on his needs and interests at the time. But he was careful not to push himself too far in one direction, as this would possibly force him to abandon his alliances in the other direction. If this happened, it could jeopardise the political equilibrium within the Party, not to mention the Party hegemony which Deng’s authority was heavily dependent upon. This act of political balancing, and the need to secure his political interests was clearly reflected in Deng’s speeches. He tended to be ambiguous and even contradictory at times. He was seemingly in
favour of political democratisation but also demonstrated some indications of his conservative side. It was only when the economic crisis escalated in 1988, partly as the repercussion of Zhao Ziyang’s futile price reform, and compounded by Hu Yaobang’s purge from the CCP a year before, that Deng shifted himself closer to the conservative direction.

For the contending factions, political compromise between them was beyond the bounds of possibility. Chapter three has shown us there was a basic continuity during the reform period in regard to the conduct of elite politics. Neither the conservative nor reformer factions would readily accept and implement any reform policy that could jeopardise the political interests and goals that they had been pursuing all along. Particularly in 1986, the conservatives, ignoring Deng’s call for power devolution, emphasised the need for tighter political controls instead, and began to take initiatives to regain control of the economic and political environment. The camp cautiously downplayed the immediate need for further political reform. Instead, they put greater emphasis on maintaining domestic stability and unity, and re-centralising the Party’s power and authority. They in many ways blamed the previous political directives of power decentralisation as the main contributing factor that led to the rapid decline of central power in lower levels as well as the larger society. Similar to Deng’s conservative argument, this rapid decline of central power could inevitably threaten the unity and stability of the Party, something that every Party conservative was very protective of. Thus, the cautious decision of returning to the traditional political value of power centralisation that was taken by the conservatives was seen as an appropriate response, if not a solution, to the fundamental economic and political problems.

In contrast, the pro-reform leaders and their supporters were convinced that the only solution to China’s deteriorating economic and political situation lay in further political as well as economic reform. Interestingly, this viewpoint sounded very similar to Deng’s, particularly when he attempted to convince his audience of the urgent need for reform. There were, of course, differences in the interests of Deng and the reformers. Deng sought limited political reform, but the reformers and political groups continuously fought for much more deeper political changes. As shown in chapter three, they interpreted Deng’s call for political reform according to their own political beliefs and interests. Even if this meant that their interpretations were completely beyond Deng’s political ideas. Although the interpretations might be different from one another, the political ambition of these reformers
and reform activists had not changed that much. They were still anticipating the prospects of democratising Chinese politics and thus, eliminating any defects of the political system.

However, as the struggles between the competing political lines intensified as China progressed through reform, it started to have significant repercussions on the Chinese leadership. The political division began to weaken the ability of the central leadership to reach an absolute consensus on crucial policy issues and to address political problems. But more importantly, the leadership also suffered some crisis of confidence. Evidently, political changes had been so minimal that the leadership encountered serious difficulties in responding adequately to various needs of the changing society. The leadership now faced a great challenge to convince the larger Chinese society that the Party was still an effective regulator in addressing the elite conflict and handling the widespread economic and political problem.

Consequently, the increasingly stagnant state of the Party leadership had a significant influence on the political orientation and interests of certain sectors of the population. By the mid 1980s, students and, to a lesser extent, factory workers, became more concerned about the state of their own and the country’s future prospects, leading to their growing engagement in political activities. As has been shown in chapter four, the political vision of the students was fundamentally similar to that of the reformers and political activists. They wanted to establish a proper democratic political system for China that would give new vigour both to the governing apparatus and to the larger society. The political interests of the workers, on the other hand, were more slightly particularistic than those of the students. They were more concerned with practical issues regarding their livelihood, and wanted to safeguard their immediate interests from being unfairly taken away by the reform.

Yet, no matter how particularistic or not the political interests of the two groups, and other political groups, it did not mean that the leadership would give in to their political demands. Instead, the governing authorities stubbornly clung to the hard-line policies, ignoring the fact that the political articulation of different and contradicting interests of the people began to gain ground. Thus, acting out of desperation and perhaps more of resentment, the increasingly political-conscious students and other groups began to seek means of effecting political change by acting outside the legitimate political channels and launched street demonstrations on several occasions towards the end of the reform period.
The biggest and the most noticeable street demonstration was, of course, the Tiananmen demonstration in the spring of 1989. The protesters joined hands in their attack on the Chinese leadership that escalated the political conflict between the protesters and the top leadership (i.e. the hardliners) to a point of no return. Even so, it did not even slightly budge the Party leaders or push them to react and respond in a way that the protesters wanted them to react and respond. Instead, the leaders answered the protesters' political demands with a tremendous amount of military force that unsurprisingly effectively suppressed the protest movement and cleared the Tiananmen Square within hours.

The reform period and the Tiananmen incident have shown us how the Chinese leadership never compromises the principle of state authority and the Party's power monopoly, even if this meant there is no room for a true political reform in China. This is the incontestable reality of Chinese political culture. Yet, one should not overlook the fact that the Chinese society is now notably progressing to become a civilised society. The Chinese leadership is now governing a society that is "much less dependent on the state and the party, more open to new values, and less susceptible to traditional ideological appeals". The Chinese now increasingly want to see Party policies that could actually bring a real improvement to their lives. They may also have different sets of political demands and pursuits to be fulfilled. Thus, given the authoritarian tradition of the ruling party, as opposed to the rapidly changing Chinese society, it cannot be said with certainty that new seeds of political contention would not be sown in the future. In that case, one can still be optimistic about the prospects for more political reform and democracy in China.

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1 Minxin Pei, "Is China Democratizing", in *Foreign Affairs*, January/February 1998, p. 79.
APPENDICES OF DENG XIAOPIING'S SPEECHES

APPENDIX I

EMANCIPATE THE MIND, SEEK TRUTH FROM FACTS AND UNITE AS ONE IN LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

December 13, 1978

Comrades,

This conference has lasted over a month and will soon end. The Central Committee has put forward the fundamental guiding principle of shifting the focus of all Party work to the four modernizations and has solved a host of important problems inherited from the past. This will surely strengthen the determination, confidence and unity of the Party, the army and the people of all of China's nationalities. Now we can be certain that under the correct leadership of the Central Committee, the Party, army and people will achieve victory after victory in our new Long March.

The present conference has been very successful and will have an important place in our Party's history. We have not held one like it for many years. There has been lively debate here and the Party's democratic tradition has been revived and carried forward. We should spread this style of work to the whole Party, army and people.

At this conference we have discussed and resolved many major issues concerning the destinies of our Party and state. The participants have spoken their minds freely and fully and have boldly aired their honest opinions. They have laid problems on the table and have felt free to criticize things, including the work of the Central Committee. Some comrades have criticized themselves to varying degrees. All this represents marked progress in our inner-Party life and will give a big impetus to the cause of our Party and people.

Today, I mainly want to discuss one question, namely, how to emancipate our minds, use our heads, seek truth from facts and unite as one in looking to the future.

I. EMANCIPATING THE MIND IS A VITAL POLITICAL TASK

When it comes to emancipating our minds, using our heads, seeking truth from facts and uniting as one in looking to the future, the primary task is to emancipate our minds. Only then can we, guided as we should be by Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought, find correct solutions to the emerging as well as inherited problems, fruitfully reform those aspects of the relations of production and of the superstructure that do not correspond with the rapid development of our productive forces, and chart the specific course and formulate the specific policies, methods and measures needed to achieve the four modernizations under our actual conditions.
The emancipation of minds has not been completely achieved among our cadres, particularly our leading cadres. Indeed, many comrades have not yet set their brains going; in other words, their ideas remain rigid or partly so. That isn't because they are not good comrades. It is a result of specific historical conditions.

First, it is because during the past dozen years Lin Biao and the Gang of Four set up ideological taboos or "forbidden zones" and preached blind faith to confine people's minds within the framework of their phoney Marxism. No one was allowed to go beyond the limits they prescribed; anyone who did was tracked down, stigmatized and attacked politically. In this situation, some people found it safer to stop using their heads and thinking questions over.

Second, it is because democratic centralism was undermined and the Party was afflicted with bureaucratism resulting from, among other things, over-concentration of power. This kind of bureaucratism often masquerades as "Party leadership", "Party directives", "Party interests" and "Party discipline", but actually it is designed to control people, hold them in check and oppress them. At that time many important issues were often decided by one or two persons. The others could only do what those few ordered. That being so, there wasn't much point in thinking things out for yourself.

Third, it is because no clear distinction was made between right and wrong or between merit and demerit, and because rewards and penalties were not meted out as deserved. No distinction was made between those who worked well and those who didn't. In some cases, even people who worked well were attacked while those who did nothing or just played it safe weathered every storm. Under those unwritten laws, people were naturally reluctant to use their brains.

Fourth, it is because people are still subject to the force of habit of the small producer, who sticks to old conventions, is content with the status quo and is unwilling to seek progress or accept anything new.

When people's minds aren't yet emancipated and their thinking remains rigid, curious phenomena emerge.

Once people's thinking becomes rigid, they will increasingly act according to fixed notions. To cite some examples, strengthening Party leadership is interpreted as the Party's monopolizing and interfering in everything. Exercising centralized leadership is interpreted as erasing distinctions between the Party and the government, so that the former replaces the latter. And maintaining unified leadership by the Central Committee is interpreted as "doing everything according to unified standards". We are opposed to "home-grown policies" that violate the fundamental principles of those laid down by the Central Committee, but there are also "home-grown policies" that are truly grounded in reality and supported by the masses. Yet such correct policies are still often denounced for their "not conforming to the unified standards".

People whose thinking has become rigid tend to veer with the wind. They are not guided by Party spirit and Party principles, but go along with whatever has the backing of the authorities and adjust their words and actions according to whichever way the wind is blowing. They think that they will thus avoid mistakes. In fact, however, veering with the wind is in itself a grave mistake, a contravention of the Party spirit which all Communists should cherish. It is true that people who think independently and dare to speak out and act
can't avoid making mistakes, but their mistakes are out in the open and are therefore more easily rectified.

Once people's thinking becomes rigid, book worship, divorced from reality, becomes a grave malady. Those who suffer from it dare not say a word or take a step that isn't mentioned in books, documents or the speeches of leaders: everything has to be copied. Thus responsibility to the higher authorities is set in opposition to responsibility to the people.

Our drive for the four modernizations will get nowhere unless rigid thinking is broken down and the minds of cadres and of the masses are completely emancipated.

In fact, the current debate about whether practice is the sole criterion for testing truth is also a debate about whether people's minds need to be emancipated. Everybody has recognized that this debate is highly important and necessary. Its importance is becoming clearer all the time. When everything has to be done by the book, when thinking turns rigid and blind faith is the fashion, it is impossible for a party or a nation to make progress. Its life will cease and that party or nation will perish. Comrade Mao Zedong said this time and again during the rectification movements. Only if we emancipate our minds, seek truth from facts, proceed from reality in everything and integrate theory with practice, can we carry out our socialist modernization programme smoothly, and only then can our Party further develop Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought. In this sense, the debate about the criterion for testing truth is really a debate about ideological line, about politics, about the future and the destiny of our Party and nation.

Seeking truth from facts is the basis of the proletarian world outlook as well as the ideological basis of Marxism. Just as in the past we achieved all the victories in our revolution by following this principle, so today we must rely on it in our effort to accomplish the four modernizations. Comrades in every factory, government office, school, shop and production team as well as comrades in Party committees at the central, provincial, prefectural, county and commune levels -- all should act on this principle, emancipate their minds and use their heads in thinking questions through and taking action on them.

The more Party members and other people there are who use their heads and think things through, the more our cause will benefit. To make revolution and build socialism we need large numbers of pathbreakers who dare to think, explore new ways and generate new ideas. Otherwise, we won't be able to rid our country of poverty and backwardness or to catch up with -- still less surpass -- the advanced countries. We hope every Party committee and every Party branch will encourage and support people both inside and outside the Party to dare to think, explore new paths and put forward new ideas, and that they will urge the masses to emancipate their minds and use their heads.

II. DEMOCRACY IS A MAJOR CONDITION FOR EMANCIPATING THE MIND

One important condition for getting people to emancipate their minds and use their heads is genuine practice of the proletarian system of democratic centralism. We need unified and
centralized leadership, but centralism can be correct only when there is a full measure of democracy.

At present, we must lay particular stress on democracy, because for quite a long time democratic centralism was not genuinely practised: centralism was divorced from democracy and there was too little democracy. Even today, only a few advanced people dare to speak up. There are a good many such people at this conference. But in the Party and the country as a whole, there are still many who hesitate to speak their minds. Even when they have worthwhile opinions, they hesitate to express them, and they are not bold enough in struggling against bad things and bad people. If this doesn't change, how can we persuade everyone to emancipate his mind and use his head? And how can we bring about the four modernizations?

We must create the conditions for the practice of democracy, and for this it is essential to reaffirm the principle of the "three don'ts": don't pick on others for their faults, don't put labels on people, and don't use a big stick. In political life within the Party and among the people we must use democratic means and not resort to coercion or attack. The rights of citizens, Party members and Party committee members are respectively stipulated by the Constitution of the People's Republic and the Constitution of the Communist Party. These rights must be resolutely defended and no infringement of them must be allowed.

The recent reversal of the verdict on the Tiananmen Incident has elated the people of all of China's nationalities and greatly stimulated mass enthusiasm for socialism. The masses should be encouraged to offer criticisms. There is nothing to worry about even if a few malcontents take advantage of democracy to make trouble. We should deal with such situations appropriately, having faith that the overwhelming majority of the people are able to use their own judgement. One thing a revolutionary party does need to worry about is its inability to hear the voice of the people. The thing to be feared most is silence. Today many rumours -- some true, some false -- circulate through the grapevine inside and outside the Party. This is a kind of punishment for the long-standing lack of political democracy. If we had a political situation with both centralism and democracy, both discipline and freedom, both unity of will and personal ease of mind and liveliness, there wouldn't be so many rumours and anarchism would be easier to overcome. We believe our people are mindful of the overall interests of the country and have a good sense of discipline. Our leading cadres at all levels, and especially those of high rank, should for their part take care to strictly observe Party discipline and keep Party secrets; they should refrain from spreading rumours, circulating handwritten copies of speeches and the like.

As it is only natural that some opinions expressed by the masses should be correct and others not, we should examine them analytically. The Party leadership should be good at synthesizing the correct opinions and explaining why the others are incorrect. In dealing with ideological problems we must never use coercion but should genuinely carry out the policy of "letting a hundred flowers bloom, a hundred schools of thought contend". We must firmly put a stop to bad practices such as attacking and trying to silence people who make critical comments -- especially sharp ones -- by ferreting out their political backgrounds, tracing political rumours to them and opening "special case" files on them. Comrade Mao Zedong used to say that such actions were really signs of weakness and lack of courage. No leading comrades at any level must ever place themselves in opposition to the masses. We must never abandon this principle. But of course we must not let down our guard against the handful of counter-revolutionaries who still exist in our country.
Now I want to speak at some length about economic democracy. Under our present system of economic management, power is over-concentrated, so it is necessary to devolve some of it to the lower levels without hesitation but in a planned way. Otherwise it will be difficult to give full scope to the initiative of local as well as national authorities and to the enterprises and workers, and difficult to practise modern economic management and raise the productivity of labour. The various localities, enterprises and production teams should be given greater powers of decision regarding both operation and management. There are many provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions in China, and some of our medium-sized provinces are as big as a large European country. They must be given greater powers of decision in economic planning, finance and foreign trade -- always within the framework of a nationwide unity of views, policies, planning, guidance and action.

At present the most pressing need is to expand the decision-making powers of mines, factories and other enterprises and of production teams, so as to give full scope to their initiative and creativity. Once a production team has been empowered to make decisions regarding its own operations, its members and cadres will lie awake at night so long as a single piece of land is left unplanted or a single pond unused for aquatic production, and they will find ways to remedy the situation. Just imagine the additional wealth that could be created if all the people in China's hundreds of thousands of enterprises and millions of production teams put their minds to work. As more wealth is created for the state, personal income and collective benefits should also be increased somewhat. As far as the relatively small number of advanced people is concerned, it won't matter too much if we neglect the principle of more pay for more work and fail to stress individual material benefits. But when it comes to the masses, that approach can only be used for a short time -- it won't work in the long run. Revolutionary spirit is a treasure beyond price. Without it there would be no revolutionary action. But revolution takes place on the basis of the need for material benefit. It would be idealism to emphasize the spirit of sacrifice to the neglect of material benefit.

It is also essential to ensure the democratic rights of the workers and peasants, including the rights of democratic election, management and supervision. We must create a situation in which not only every workshop director and production team leader but also every worker and peasant is aware of his responsibility for production and tries to find ways of solving related problems.

To ensure people's democracy, we must strengthen our legal system. Democracy has to be institutionalized and written into law, so as to make sure that institutions and laws do not change whenever the leadership changes, or whenever the leaders change their views or shift the focus of their attention. The trouble now is that our legal system is incomplete, with many laws yet to be enacted. Very often, what leaders say is taken as the law and anyone who disagrees is called a law-breaker. That kind of law changes whenever a leader's views change. So we must concentrate on enacting criminal and civil codes, procedural laws and other necessary laws concerning factories, people's communes, forests, grasslands and environmental protection, as well as labour laws and a law on investment by foreigners. These laws should be discussed and adopted through democratic procedures. Meanwhile, the procuratorial and judicial organs should be strengthened. All this will ensure that there are laws to go by, that they are observed and strictly enforced, and that violators are brought to book. The relations between one enterprise and another, between enterprises and the state, between enterprises and individuals, and so on should also be defined by law, and many of the contradictions between them should be resolved by law. There is a lot of legislative work to do, and we don't have enough trained people. Therefore, legal provisions will have to be less than perfect to start with, then be gradually improved upon. Some laws
and statutes can be tried out in particular localities and later enacted nationally after the experience has been evaluated and improvements have been made. Individual legal provisions can be revised or supplemented one at a time, as necessary; there is no need to wait for a comprehensive revision of an entire body of law. In short, it is better to have some laws than none, and better to have them sooner than later. Moreover, we should intensify our study of international law.

Just as the country must have laws, the Party must have rules and regulations. The fundamental ones are embodied in the Party Constitution. Without rules and regulations in the Party it would be hard to ensure that the laws of the state are enforced. The task of the Party's discipline inspection commissions and its organization departments at all levels is not only to deal with particular cases but, more important, to uphold the Party's rules and regulations and make earnest efforts to improve its style of work. Disciplinary measures should be taken against all persons who violate Party discipline, no matter who they are, so that clear differentiation is made between merits and demerits, rewards and penalties are meted out as deserved, and rectitude prevails and bad tendencies are stemmed.

III. SOLVING OLD PROBLEMS WILL HELP

PEOPLE LOOK TO THE FUTURE

This conference has solved some problems left over from the past and distinguished clearly between the merits and demerits of some persons, and remedies have been made for a number of major cases in which the charges were false or which were unjustly or incorrectly dealt with. This is essential for emancipating minds and for ensuring political stability and unity. Its purpose is to help us turn our thoughts to the future and smoothly shift the focus of the Party's work.

Our principle is that every wrong should be righted. All wrongs done in the past should be corrected. Some questions that cannot be settled right now should be settled after this conference. But settlement must be prompt and effective, without leaving any loose ends and on the basis of facts. We must solve these problems left over from the past thoroughly. It is not good for them to be left unsolved or for comrades who have made mistakes to refuse to make self-criticisms, or for us to fail to deal with their cases properly. However, we cannot possibly achieve -- and should not expect -- a perfect settlement of every case. We should have the major aspect of each problem in mind and solve it in broad outline; to go into every detail is neither possible nor necessary.

Stability and unity are of prime importance. To strengthen the unity of people of whatever nationality, we must first strengthen unity throughout the Party, and especially within the central leadership. Our Party's unity is based on Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought. Inside the Party we should distinguish right from wrong in terms of theory and of the Party line, conduct criticism and self-criticism and help and supervise each other in correcting wrong ideas.

Comrades who have made mistakes should be urged to sum up their experience and draw the necessary lessons, so that they can recognize those mistakes and correct them. We should give them time to think. Once they improve their understanding of cardinal issues of right and wrong and conduct self-criticism, we should make them welcome again. In dealing with people who have made mistakes, we must weigh each case very carefully.
Where there is a choice, it is better to err on the side of leniency, but we should be more severe if the problems recur. We should be somewhat lenient with rank-and-file Party members, but more severe with leading cadres, especially those of high rank.

From now on we must be very careful in the selection of cadres. We must never assign important posts to persons who have engaged in beating, smashing and looting, who have been obsessed by factionalist ideas, who have sold their souls by framing innocent comrades, or who disregard the Party's vital interests. Nor can we lightly trust persons who sail with the wind, curry favour with those in power and ignore the Party's principles. We should be wary of such people and at the same time educate them and urge them to change their world outlook.

People both at home and abroad have been greatly concerned recently about how we would evaluate Comrade Mao Zedong and the "cultural revolution". The great contributions of Comrade Mao in the course of long revolutionary struggles will never fade. If we look back at the years following the failure of the revolution in 1927, it appears very likely that without his outstanding leadership the Chinese revolution would still not have triumphed even today. In that case, the people of all our nationalities would still be suffering under the reactionary rule of imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat-capitalism, and our Party would still be engaged in bitter struggle in the dark. Therefore, it is no exaggeration to say that were it not for Chairman Mao there would be no New China. Mao Zedong Thought has nurtured our whole generation. All comrades present here may be said to have been nourished by Mao Zedong Thought. Without Mao Zedong Thought, the Communist Party of China would not exist today, and that is no exaggeration either. Mao Zedong Thought will forever remain the greatest intellectual treasure of our Party, our army and our people. We must understand the scientific tenets of Mao Zedong Thought correctly and as an integral whole and develop them under the new historical conditions. Of course Comrade Mao was not infallible or free from shortcomings. To demand that of any revolutionary leader would be inconsistent with Marxism. We must guide and educate the Party members, the army officers and men and the people of all of China's nationalities and help them to see the great services of Comrade Mao Zedong scientifically and in historical perspective.

The "cultural revolution" should also be viewed scientifically and in historical perspective. In initiating it Comrade Mao Zedong was actuated mainly by the desire to oppose and prevent revisionism. As for the shortcomings that appeared during the course of the "cultural revolution" and the mistakes that were made then, at an appropriate time they should be summed up and lessons should be drawn from them -- that is essential for achieving unity of understanding throughout the Party. The "cultural revolution" has become a stage in the course of China's socialist development, hence we must evaluate it. However, there is no need to do so hastily. Serious research must be done before we can make a scientific appraisal of this historical stage. It may take a rather long time to fully understand and assess some of the particular issues involved. We will probably be able to make a more correct analysis of this period in history after some time has passed than we can right now.

IV. STUDY THE NEW SITUATION AND TACKLE

THE NEW PROBLEMS
In order to look forward, we must study the new situation and tackle the new problems in good time; otherwise, there can be no smooth progress. In three fields especially, the new situation and new problems demand attention: methods of management, structure of management and economic policy.

So far as methods of management are concerned, we should lay particular stress on overcoming bureaucratism.

Our bureaucracy, which is a result of small-scale production, is utterly incompatible with large-scale production. To achieve the four modernizations and shift the technological basis of our entire socialist economy to that of large-scale production, it is essential to overcome the evils of bureaucracy. Our present economic management is marked by overstaffing, organizational overlapping, complicated procedures and extremely low efficiency. Everything is often drowned in empty political talk. This is not the fault of any group of comrades. The fault lies in the fact that we haven't made reforms in time. Our modernization programme and socialist cause will be doomed if we don't make them now.

We must learn to manage the economy by economic means. If we ourselves don't know about advanced methods of management, we should learn from those who do, either at home or abroad. These methods should be applied not only in the operation of enterprises with newly imported technology and equipment, but also in the technical transformation of existing enterprises. Pending the introduction of a unified national programme of modern management, we can begin with limited spheres, say, a particular region or a given trade, and then spread the methods gradually to others. The central government departments concerned should encourage such experiments. Contradictions of all kinds will crop up in the process and we should discover and overcome them in good time. That will speed up our progress.

Henceforth, now that the question of political line has been settled, the quality of leadership given by the Party committee in an economic unit should be judged mainly by the unit's adoption of advanced methods of management, by the progress of its technical innovation, and by the margins of increase of its productivity of labour, its profits, the personal income of its workers and the collective benefits it provides. The quality of leadership by Party committees in all fields should be judged by similar criteria. This will be of major political importance in the years to come. Without these criteria as its key elements, our politics would be empty and divorced from the highest interests of both the Party and the people.

So far as the structure of management is concerned, the most important task at present is to strengthen the work responsibility system.

Right now a big problem in enterprises and institutions across the country and in Party and government organs at various levels is that nobody takes responsibility. In theory, there is collective responsibility. In fact, this means that no one is responsible. When a task is assigned, nobody sees that it is properly fulfilled or cares whether the result is satisfactory. So there is an urgent need to establish a strict responsibility system. Lenin said, "To refer to collegiate methods as an excuse for irresponsibility is a most dangerous evil." He called it "an evil which must be halted at all costs as quickly as possible and by whatever the means".

For every job or construction project it is necessary to specify the work to be done, the personnel required to do it, work quotas, standards of quality, and a time schedule. For example, in introducing foreign technology and equipment we should specify what items
are to be imported from where, where they are going, and who is to take charge of the work. Whether it is a question of importing foreign equipment or of operating an existing enterprise, similar specifications should be made. When problems arise, it doesn't help just to blame the planning commissions and Party committees concerned, as we do now -- the particular persons responsible must feel the heat. By the same token, rewards also should go to specific collectives and persons. In implementing the system according to which the factory directors assume overall responsibility under the leadership of the Party committees, we must state explicitly who is responsible for each aspect of the work.

To make the best use of the responsibility system, the following measures are essential.

First, we must extend the authority of the managerial personnel. Whoever is given responsibility should be given authority as well. Whoever it is -- a factory director, engineer, technician, accountant or cashier -- he should have his own area not only of responsibility but of authority, which must not be infringed upon by others. The responsibility system is bound to fail if there is only responsibility without authority.

Second, we must select personnel wisely and assign duties according to ability. We should seek out existing specialists and train new ones, put them in important positions, raise their political status and increase their material benefits. What are the political requirements in selecting someone for a job? The major criterion is whether the person chosen can work for the good of the people and contribute to the development of the productive forces and to the socialist cause as a whole.

Third, we must have a strict system of evaluation and distinguish clearly between a performance that should be rewarded and one that should be penalized. All enterprises, schools, research institutes and government offices should set up systems for evaluating work and conferring academic, technical and honorary titles. Rewards and penalties, promotions and demotions should be based on work performance. And they should be linked to increases or reductions in material benefits.

In short, through strengthening the responsibility system and allotting rewards and penalties fairly, we should create an atmosphere of friendly emulation in which people vie with one another to become advanced elements, working hard and aiming high.

In economic policy, I think we should allow some regions and enterprises and some workers and peasants to earn more and enjoy more benefits sooner than others, in accordance with their hard work and greater contributions to society. If the standard of living of some people is raised first, this will inevitably be an impressive example to their "neighbours", and people in other regions and units will want to learn from them. This will help the whole national economy to advance wave upon wave and help the people of all our nationalities to become prosperous in a comparatively short period.

Of course, there are still difficulties in production in the Northwest, Southwest and some other regions, and the life of the people there is hard. The state should give these places many kinds of help, and in particular strong material support.

These are major policies which can have an effect on the whole national economy and push it forward. I suggest that you study them carefully.

During the drive to realize the four modernizations, we are bound to encounter many new and unexpected situations and problems with which we are unfamiliar. In particular, the
reforms in the relations of production and in the superstructure will not be easy to introduce. They touch on a wide range of issues and concern the immediate interests of large numbers of people, so they are bound to give rise to complications and problems and to meet with numerous obstacles. In the reorganization of enterprises, for example, there will be the problem of deciding who will stay on and who will leave, while in that of government departments, a good many people will be transferred to other jobs, and some may complain. And so on. Since we will have to confront such problems soon, we must be mentally prepared for them. We must teach Party members and the masses to give top priority to the overall situation and the overall interests of the Party and the state. We should be full of confidence. We will be able to solve any problem and surmount any obstacle so long as we have faith in the masses, follow the mass line and explain the situation and problems to them. There can be no doubt that as the economy grows, more and more possibilities will open up and each person will be able to make his contribution to society.

The four modernizations represent a great and profound revolution in which we are moving forward by resolving one new contradiction after another. Therefore, all Party comrades must learn well and always keep on learning.

On the eve of nationwide victory in the Chinese revolution, Comrade Mao Zedong called on the whole Party to start learning afresh. We did that pretty well and consequently, after entering the cities, we were able to rehabilitate the economy very quickly and then to accomplish the socialist transformation. But we must admit that we have not learned well enough in the subsequent years. Expending our main efforts on political campaigns, we did not master the skills needed to build our country. Our socialist construction failed to progress satisfactorily and we experienced grave setbacks politically. Now that our task is to achieve modernization, our lack of the necessary knowledge is even more obvious. So the whole Party must start learning again.

What shall we learn? Basically, we should study Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought and try to integrate the universal principles of Marxism with the concrete practice of our modernization drive. At present most of our cadres need also to apply themselves to three subjects: economics, science and technology, and management. Only if we study these well will we be able to carry out socialist modernization rapidly and efficiently. We should learn in different ways -- through practice, from books and from the experience, both positive and negative, of others as well as our own. Conservatism and book worship should be overcome. The several hundred members and alternate members of the Central Committee and the thousands of senior cadres at the central and local levels should take the lead in making an in-depth study of modern economic development.

So long as we unite as one, work in concert, emancipate our minds, use our heads and try to learn what we did not know before, there is no doubt that we will be able to quicken the pace of our new Long March. Under the leadership of the Central Committee and the State Council, let us advance courageously to change the backward condition of our country and turn it into a modern and powerful socialist state.
APPENDIX II

ON THE REFORM OF THE SYSTEM OF PARTY AND STATE LEADERSHIP

August 18, 1980

Comrades,

The main task of this enlarged meeting is to discuss the reform of the system of Party and state leadership and some related questions.

I

Changing the leadership of the State Council will be a major item on the agenda of the forthcoming Third Session of the Fifth National People's Congress. The proposed changes will include the following: Comrade Hua Guofeng will no longer hold the concurrent post of Premier, which will be assumed by Comrade Zhao Ziyang; Comrades Li Xiannian, Chen Yun, Xu Xiangqian, Wang Zhen and I will cease to serve concurrently as Vice-Premiers so that more energetic comrades can take over; Comrade Wang Renzhong will cease to serve concurrently as Vice-Premier, so that he can concentrate on his important job in the Party; and Comrade Chen Yonggui has asked to be relieved of his post of Vice-Premier and the Central Committee of the Party has decided to endorse his request. Moreover, following consultations with the organizations concerned, we are proposing some personnel changes for the posts of Vice-Chairmen of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress and Vice-Chairmen of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference. These changes have been repeatedly discussed by the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee, and they will be incorporated into formal proposals which the Central Committee will submit to the forthcoming sessions of the NPC and the CPPCC for discussion and decision.

Why is the Central Committee proposing the above changes in the leadership of the State Council?

First of all, it is not good to have an over-concentration of power. It hinders the practice of socialist democracy and of the Party's democratic centralism, impedes the progress of socialist construction and prevents us from taking full advantage of collective wisdom. Over-concentration of power is liable to give rise to arbitrary rule by individuals at the expense of collective leadership, and it is an important cause of bureaucracy under the present circumstances.

Second, it is not good to have too many people holding two or more posts concurrently or to have too many deputy posts. There is a limit to anyone's knowledge, experience and energy. If a person holds too many posts at the same time, he will find it difficult to come to grips with the problems in his work and, more important, he will block the way for other more suitable comrades to take up leading posts. Having too many deputy posts leads to low efficiency and contributes to bureaucracy and formalism.

Third, it is time for us to distinguish between the responsibilities of the Party and those of the government and to stop substituting the former for the latter. Those principal leading comrades of the Central Committee who are to be relieved of their concurrent government
posts can concentrate their energies on our Party work, on matters concerning the Party's line, guiding principles and policies. This will help strengthen and improve the unified leadership of the Central Committee, facilitate the establishment of an effective work system at the various levels of government from top to bottom, and promote a better exercise of government functions and powers.

Fourth, we must take the long-term interest into account and solve the problem of the succession in leadership. As precious assets of the Party and state, the older comrades shoulder heavy responsibilities. Their primary task now is to help the Party organizations find worthy successors to work for our cause. This is a solemn duty. It is of great strategic importance for us to ensure the continuity and stability of the correct leadership of our Party and state by having younger comrades take the "front-line" posts while the older comrades give them the necessary advice and support.

These considerations are put forth by the Central Committee with a view to carrying out the necessary reform of the system of Party and state leadership. The Central Committee has already taken the first step so far as Party leadership is concerned by deciding at its Fifth Plenary Session [in February 1980] to re-establish the Secretariat. This Secretariat has done a remarkable job ever since its re-establishment. Now the proposed changes in the leadership of the State Council represent a first step in improving the system of government leadership. In order to meet the requirements of socialist modernization and of the democratization of the political life of the Party and state, to promote what is beneficial and eliminate what is harmful, many aspects of our system of Party and state leadership and of our other systems need to be reformed. We should regularly sum up historical experience, carry out intensive surveys and studies and synthesize the correct views so as to continue the reform vigorously and systematically, step by step from the central level on down.

II

The purpose of reforming the system of Party and state leadership and other systems is to take full advantage of the superiority of socialism and speed up China's modernization.

To take full advantage of the superiority of socialism, we should work hard, now and for some time to come, to achieve the following three major objectives: (1) In the economic sphere, to rapidly develop the productive forces and gradually improve the people's material and cultural life. (2) In the political sphere, to practise people's democracy to the full, ensuring that through various effective forms, all the people truly enjoy the right to manage state affairs and particularly state organs at the grass-roots level and to run enterprises and institutions, and that they truly enjoy all the other rights of citizens; to perfect the revolutionary legal system; to handle contradictions among the people correctly; to crack down on all hostile forces and criminal activities; and to arouse the enthusiasm of the people and consolidate and develop a political situation marked by stability, unity and liveliness. (3) In the organizational sphere, if we are to achieve these objectives, there is an urgent need to discover, train, employ and promote a large number of younger cadres for socialist modernization, cadres who adhere to the Four Cardinal Principles and have professional knowledge.

In the drive for socialist modernization, our objectives are: economically, to catch up with the developed capitalist countries; and politically, to create a higher level of democracy with more substance than that of capitalist countries. We also aim to produce more and better-trained professionals than they do. It may take us different lengths of time to attain these three objectives. But as a vast socialist country, we can and must attain them. The merits of
our Party and state institutions should be judged on the basis of whether or not they help us advance towards our objectives.

I would now like to discuss at some length the question of making the best use organizationally of the superiority of socialism and of consciously renewing the leadership in Party and government organs at the different levels so as to bring increasing numbers of younger and professionally more competent persons into leading positions.

We should have freely promoted and used younger comrades with both professional knowledge and practical experience, on the condition that we bore in mind the four cardinal principles. For years, however, we failed to do so. Then, during the "cultural revolution", a great many of our cadres were persecuted by Lin Biao and the Gang of Four, and our cadre work suffered seriously. That's one of the reasons why most of our present leaders at various levels are too old. The question of qualified personnel is mainly one of organizational line. We need to turn out large numbers of trained people, and our major task at present is to discover and promote fine young and middle-aged cadres, even if we have to bypass certain regulations. This is not just the whim of a few veteran comrades: it is an objective and pressing need of our modernization drive.

Some comrades worry that in promoting young and middle-aged cadres we might select some factionalists or even some individuals who engaged in beating, smashing and looting during the "cultural revolution". Their concern is not entirely groundless, because the leading bodies in some localities and departments have yet to be well consolidated and factionalists might seize upon the promotion of young and middle-aged cadres as an opportunity to upgrade their own followers. As I said in my speech of January 6 this year, we must not underestimate the residual influence of the Gang of Four in the organizational and ideological fields, and we must be clear-headed on this point. Those who rose to prominence by following Lin Biao, Jiang Qing and their like in "rebellion", those who are strongly factionalist in their ideas and those who engaged in beating, smashing and looting must never be promoted -- not a single one of them. And any who are already in leading posts must be removed without the slightest hesitation. They could do untold harm if, relaxing our vigilance, we allowed even a few to occupy leading posts, engage in further double-dealing, gang up with each other and conceal themselves in our ranks.

Some comrades argue that it is better to promote cadres one step at a time. In fact, I said so too in 1975 when expressing my disapproval of the erroneous practices during the "cultural revolution". We shall never repeat the mistake of elevating cadres so quickly that they soar like a rocket or a helicopter. Generally speaking, promoting cadres step by step means that they should go through the process of learning their profession, tempering themselves, working among the masses, and accumulating experience. But we can't stick to the old concept of a "staircase" forever. In promoting cadres we can't limit ourselves to having them step up from the district to the county level, then to the prefectural and provincial levels, as the present system in the Party and government requires. All trades and professions should have their own "staircases" as well as their own job categories and professional titles. With the advance of our socialist construction, we shall work out new requirements and new methods for the promotion of cadres and the use of trained personnel in the trades and professions. In future, many positions will be filled and titles granted solely on the basis of examinations. Only by doing away with the outdated concept of the "staircase", or by creating new staircases suited to the new situation and tasks, can we boldly break through the conventions in promoting cadres. But whether the staircases are new or old, we must not just pay lip-service to the necessity of promoting young and middle-aged cadres. We must see to it that the really outstanding ones are indeed promoted,
and promoted in good time. We must not be too hasty in this matter, but if we are too slow we will retard our modernization programme. Hasn't it already been delayed long enough? Exceptional candidates should be provided with a sort of light ladder so they can come up more quickly, skipping some rungs. It is to make room for the young and middle-aged cadres that we have proposed reducing concurrent posts and eliminating over-concentration of power. How can they come up the staircase if all the steps are occupied, or if they aren't allowed to occupy the empty ones?

Some comrades worry that the young people may be too inexperienced and not equal to the tasks. As I see it, there's no need for worry. When we say a person is experienced or inexperienced, we are only talking in relative terms. To be frank, isn't it true that even old cadres may lack experience in dealing with the new problems in our modernization drive and may make mistakes on that account? Yes, younger people generally have less experience. But if you think back, many of us were in our twenties or thirties when we became higher cadres and were given rather important tasks. We should admit that some of the young and middle-aged comrades of today are no less knowledgeable than we were then. It is owing to objective conditions that they have not been adequately tested in struggle and have not gained sufficient experience as leaders. After all, if it's not your job, you don't worry about it. Give young and middle-aged comrades the job and they will gradually become competent. Most of the seven to eight million people graduated from universities, colleges and vocational secondary schools since Liberation are of worker or peasant origin and have gone through more than 10 years of tempering. Despite their lack of college or vocational secondary education, some young and middle-aged cadres do have practical experience. Their level of general knowledge is relatively low, but surely many of them can become "red and expert", provided they are given systematic training and education. Furthermore, there are many young and middle-aged people who have become qualified through diligent independent study. And among the educated youth who have settled in the rural areas, quite a few have acquired special skills by sharing the life of the masses and studying hard on their own. As a matter of fact, many young and middle-aged cadres have already become the mainstay in various fields of work. They understand the masses and the actual situation better than those cadres who are far removed from the grass roots. In much of our work, it is mainly these young and middle-aged cadres that we rely on. However, they have no power to make decisions, because they have not been duly promoted. So they have no choice but to keep asking for instructions from above. This has become a major cause of our bureaucratism. To sum up, we must never underestimate this large contingent of young and middle-aged cadres. Many of them are politically sound and are not involved in factionalism; their thinking is on the right track and they possess a fair amount of professional knowledge. So why shouldn't we select and use them, bypassing the conventional rules? In some enterprises and other units, cadres who volunteered for leading posts or were elected to them by the masses have achieved much in little time and proved more capable than cadres appointed from above. Doesn't that give us food for thought? Qualified young and middle-aged cadres are to be found everywhere. For years they disapproved of the evil-doings of Lin Biao, Jiang Qing and their ilk in the "cultural revolution" and carried on active or passive resistance. They have conducted themselves well politically and are professionally competent and willing to work hard. Such people can be found in all trades, professions and units. The problem is that we have failed to discover and promote them. As for those people who are well trained but who, for a time, were misled by Lin Biao, Jiang Qing and the like and so made some mistakes, we should not discard them if they have really become conscious of their mistakes and changed their attitude. More than a few of our comrades limit their vision to the people around them and invariably pick for promotion people they happen to know, instead of selecting the best by going deep among the masses. This, too, is bureaucracy of a sort.
We must draw lessons from the "cultural revolution". At the same time, we must be soberly aware of the enormous task of modernization confronting our country and of the fact that a great many of our cadres are not up to its requirements. We must endeavour to overcome short-sightedness and to take the long-term view. Now that we are equipped with correct ideological, political and organizational lines, we can certainly promote to leading positions a large number of fine young and middle-aged people so that our cause will be assured of successors who are, if possible, better than their predecessors. We can do so provided we work boldly yet carefully, conduct thorough investigation and study, and ask as many people as possible for their opinions.

Comrade Chen Yun said that in selecting cadres we should stress political integrity and professional competence. By political integrity he meant principally keeping to the socialist road and upholding leadership by the Party. With this as a prerequisite, he added, we should see to it that our cadres are younger on the average, better educated and better qualified professionally. Comrade Chen Yun said, moreover, that the employment and promotion of such cadres should be institutionalized. These ideas of his are very good. Many comrades pay scant attention not only to the problem of lowering the average age level of our cadres, but also to the problem of their becoming better educated and acquiring professional knowledge. This is yet another evil result of the long period of "Left" thinking about the question of intellectuals.

The problem facing us is that, in addition to the way of thinking of quite a few cadres, the existing organizational system also works against the selection and use of the trained persons who are so badly needed for China's four modernizations. We hope that Party committees and organizational departments at all levels will make major changes in this area, resolutely emancipate their minds, overcome all obstacles, break with old conventions and have the courage to reform outmoded organizational and personnel systems. We also hope that they will try hard to discover, train and employ excellent, qualified persons by bypassing the conventional rules and that they will firmly oppose any move to keep such people down or to waste their talent. After the many tests of the past dozen years the political attitudes of our young and middle-aged comrades are basically clear to both the leadership and the rank and file. With veteran comrades still around, we should be able to select the right cadres if we combine the efforts of the leaders and the masses. We should, of course, proceed with this work methodically but not too slowly. If we fail to seize the present opportunity and leave the solution of this problem until the veterans are all gone, we'll have waited too long and it will be much more difficult. We old comrades will have made a major historical mistake.

III

Some of our current systems and institutions in the Party and state are plagued by problems which seriously impede the full realization of the superiority of socialism. Unless they are conscientiously reformed, we can hardly expect to meet the urgent needs of modernization and we are liable to become seriously alienated from the masses.

As far as the leadership and cadre systems of our Party and state are concerned, the major problems are bureaucracy, over-concentration of power, patriarchal methods, life tenure in leading posts and privileges of various kinds.

Bureaucracy remains a major and widespread problem in the political life of our Party and state. Its harmful manifestations include the following: standing high above the masses; abusing power; divorcing oneself from reality and the masses; spending a lot of time and
effort to put up an impressive front; indulging in empty talk; sticking to a rigid way of thinking; being hidebound by convention; overstaffing administrative organs; being dilatory, inefficient and irresponsible; failing to keep one's word; circulating documents endlessly without solving problems; shifting responsibility to others; and even assuming the airs of a mandarin, reprimanding other people at every turn, vindictively attacking others, suppressing democracy, deceiving superiors and subordinates, being arbitrary and despotic, practising favouritism, offering bribes, participating in corrupt practices in violation of the law, and so on. Such things have reached intolerable dimensions both in our domestic affairs and in our contacts with other countries.

Bureaucracy is an age-old and complex historical phenomenon. In addition to sharing some common characteristics with past types of bureaucracy, Chinese bureaucracy in its present form has characteristics of its own. That is, it differs from both the bureaucracy of old China and that prevailing in the capitalist countries. It is closely connected with our highly centralized management in the economic, political, cultural and social fields, which we have long regarded as essential for the socialist system and for planning. Our leading organs at various levels have taken charge of many matters which they should not and cannot handle, or cannot handle efficiently. These matters could have been easily handled by the enterprises, institutions and communities at the grass-roots level, provided we had proper rules and regulations and they acted according to the principles of democratic centralism. Difficulties have arisen from the custom of referring all these things to the leading organs and central departments of the Party and government: no one is so versatile that he can take on any number of complex and unfamiliar jobs. This can be said to be one of the main causes of the bureaucracy peculiar to us today. Another cause of our bureaucracy is that for a long time we have had no strict administrative rules and regulations and no system of personal responsibility from top to bottom in the leading bodies of our Party and government organizations and of our enterprises and institutions. We also lack strict and explicit terms of reference for each organization and post so that there are no rules to go by and most people are often unable to handle independently and responsibly the matters, big or small, which they should handle. They can only keep busy all day long making reports to higher levels, seeking instructions from them, writing comments on documents and passing them around. Some people are seriously afflicted with selfish departmentalism: they are always ducking responsibility, jockeying for power and wrangling with others, thinking only of the interests of their own unit. What is more, we have no regular methods for recruiting, rewarding and punishing cadres or for their retirement, resignation or removal. Whether they do their work well or poorly, they have "iron rice bowls". They can be employed but not dismissed, promoted but not demoted. These things inevitably result in overstaffing and in too many administrative levels and deputy and nominal posts, all of which, in turn, foster the proliferation of bureaucracy. Hence the necessity for radical reform of these systems. Of course, bureaucracy is also connected with ways of thinking, but these cannot be changed without first reforming the relevant systems. That is why we have made so little headway in our repeated attempts to reduce bureaucracy. Much work, including education and ideological struggle, has to be done to solve the problems I have mentioned in the various systems. But it must be done, or it will be impossible for us to make substantial progress in our economic and other work.

Over-concentration of power means inappropriate and indiscriminate concentration of all power in Party committees in the name of strengthening centralized Party leadership. Moreover, the power of the Party committees themselves is often in the hands of a few secretaries, especially the first secretaries, who direct and decide everything. Thus "centralized Party leadership" often turns into leadership by individuals. This problem exists, in varying degrees, in leading bodies at all levels throughout the country. Over-
concentration of power in the hands of an individual or of a few people means that most functionaries have no decision-making power at all, while the few who do are overburdened. This inevitably leads to bureaucratism and various mistakes, and it inevitably impairs the democratic life, collective leadership, democratic centralism and division of labour with individual responsibility in the Party and government organizations at all levels. This phenomenon is connected to the influence of feudal autocracy in China's own history and also to the tradition of a high degree of concentration of power in the hands of individual leaders of the Communist Parties of various countries at the time of the Communist International. Historically, we ourselves have repeatedly placed too much emphasis on ensuring centralism and unification by the Party, and on combating decentralism and any assertion of independence. And we have placed too little emphasis on ensuring the necessary degree of decentralization, delegating necessary decision-making power to the lower organizations and opposing the over-concentration of power in the hands of individuals. We have tried several times to divide power between the central and local authorities, but we never defined the scope of the functions and powers of the Party organizations as distinct from those of the government and of economic and mass organizations. I don't mean that there is no need to emphasize centralism and unification by the Party, or that it is wrong to emphasize them under any circumstances, or that there is never any need to oppose decentralism or the assertion of independence. The problem is that we have gone too far in these respects, and we have even failed to clarify what we mean by decentralism and assertion of independence in the first place. Now that ours has become the ruling party in the whole country, and especially since we have basically completed the socialist transformation of the ownership of the means of production, the Party's central task is different from what it was in the past. Now that we are engaged in the extremely difficult and complicated task of socialist construction, over-concentration of power is becoming more and more incompatible with the development of our socialist cause. The long-standing failure to understand this adequately was one important cause of the "Cultural Revolution", and we paid a heavy price for it. There should be no further delay in finding a solution to this problem.

Besides leading to over-concentration of power in the hands of individuals, patriarchal ways within the revolutionary ranks place individuals above the organization, which then becomes a tool in their hands. Patriarchal ways are an antiquated social phenomenon which has existed from time immemorial and has had a very damaging influence on the Party. Chen Duxiu, Wang Ming and Zhang Guotao were all patriarchal in their ways. During the period from the Zunyi Meeting of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee [in 1935] to the socialist transformation [in the mid-50s], the Central Committee and Comrade Mao Zedong invariably paid due attention to collective leadership and democratic centralism, so that democratic life within our Party was quite normal. Unfortunately, this fine tradition has not been upheld, nor has it been incorporated into a strict and perfected system. For example, when major issues are discussed inside the Party, very often there is insufficient democratic deliberation. Hasty decisions are made by one or a few individuals and votes are seldom taken, as they should be under the principle of majority rule. This shows that democratic centralism has not yet become a strictly applied system. After the criticism of the opposition to rash advance in 1958 and the campaign against "Right deviation" in 1959, democratic life in the Party and state gradually ceased to function normally. There was a constant growth of such patriarchal ways as letting only one person have the say and make important decisions, practising the cult of personality and placing individuals above the organization. Lin Biao propagated the "peak theory", saying that Chairman Mao's words were supreme instructions. This theory was widespread throughout the Party, army and country. After the smashing of the Gang of Four, the personality cult continued for a period of time. Commemorative activities in honour of some other leaders also sometimes smacked
of the cult of personality. Recently, the Central Committee issued a directive insisting that there should be less publicity for individuals. It pointed out, among other things, that improper commemorative methods not only mean extravagance and waste and lead to divorce from the masses, but also imply that history is made by a few individuals -- a notion which is detrimental to education in Marxism inside and outside the Party and to the elimination of feudal and bourgeois ideological influences. This directive, which contained some regulations designed to correct undesirable practices, is a very significant document. Here I must also mention that after 1958 residential quarters were built in many places for Comrade Mao Zedong and some other comrades on the Central Committee, and that after the downfall of the Gang of Four work still continued on some such building projects in Zhongnanhai. All this had a very bad influence and entailed much waste. Furthermore, to this day a few high-ranking cadres are still given welcoming and farewell banquets, and traffic is held up and great publicity made wherever they go. This is most improper. All the practices I have mentioned, which seriously alienate us from the masses, must be banned at all levels from the top down.

Many places and units have their patriarchal personages with unlimited power. Everyone else has to be absolutely obedient and even personally attached to them. One of our organizational principles is subordination of the lower Party organizations to the higher, which means that a lower organization must implement the decisions and instructions from the higher one. This does not, however, preclude relations of equality among Party comrades. All Party members, those who take on leadership work as well as the rank and file, should treat each other as equals, equally enjoy all rights to which they are entitled and fulfil all the duties they are expected to perform. Comrades at the higher levels should not imperiously order about those at lower levels, and they certainly must not make them do anything in violation of the Party Constitution or the country's laws. No one should fawn on his superiors or be obedient and "loyal" to them in an unprincipled way. The relationship between a superior and a subordinate must not be the one repeatedly criticized by Comrade Mao Zedong, the relationship between cat and mouse. Nor should it be like the relations in the old society between monarch and subject, or father and son, or the leader of a faction and his followers. The patriarchal ways I have described are partly responsible for the grave mistakes some comrades make. Even the formation of the counter-revolutionary cliques of Lin Biao and Jiang Qing was inseparable from the patriarchal ways surviving inside the Party. In a word, unless such ways are eliminated once for all, the practice of inner-Party democracy in particular and of socialist democracy in general is out of the question.

Tenure for life in leading posts is linked both to feudal influences and to the continued absence of proper regulations in the Party for the retirement and dismissal of cadres. The question of retirement did not arise during the period of revolutionary wars when we were all still young, nor in the fifties when we were all in the prime of life, but it was unwise of us not to have solved the problem later. Still, it should be acknowledged that it could not have been solved, or at least not completely, under the conditions then prevailing. In the draft of the revised Party Constitution discussed at the Fifth Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee, it was proposed that life tenure in leading posts be abolished. As we see it now, this provision needs to be further revised and supplemented. What is essential is to improve the systems of election, recruitment, appointment, removal, assessment, impeachment and rotation of cadres and, in the light of specific conditions, to work out appropriate and explicit regulations for the terms of office and retirement of leading cadres of all categories and at all levels (including those elected, appointed or invited). No leading cadre should hold any office indefinitely.
During the "Cultural Revolution", Lin Biao and the Gang of Four did everything to procure a privileged life style for themselves and inflicted great suffering upon the masses. At present there are still some cadres who, regarding themselves as masters rather than servants of the people, use their positions to seek personal privileges. This practice has aroused strong mass resentment and tarnished the Party's prestige. Unless it is firmly corrected, it is bound to corrupt our cadres. The privileges we are opposed to today are political and economic prerogatives not provided for by law or the existing regulations. The appetite for personal privilege shows that there are still lingering feudal influences. From old China we inherited a strong tradition of feudal autocracy and a weak tradition of democratic legality. Moreover, in the post-Liberation years we did not consciously draw up systematic rules and regulations to safeguard the people's democratic rights. Our legal system is far from perfect and has not received anywhere near the attention it deserves. Privileges are sometimes restricted, criticized and attacked, but at other times they are allowed to proliferate again. To eradicate privilege, we must solve both the ideological problems involved and problems relating to rules and regulations. All citizens are equal before the law and the existing rules and regulations, and all Party members are equal before the Party Constitution and regulations on Party discipline. Everyone has equal rights and duties prescribed by law, and no one may gain advantages at others' expense or violate the law. Whoever does violate the law must be subjected to investigation by the public security organs and brought to justice by the judicial organs according to law. No one is allowed to interfere with law enforcement, and no one who breaks the law should go unpunished. No one may violate the Party Constitution or discipline, and anyone who does must be subjected to disciplinary action. No one is allowed to interfere with the enforcement of Party discipline, and no one who does should be allowed to escape disciplinary sanctions. Only when these principles are implemented resolutely can such problems as the pursuit of privilege and the violation of law and discipline be eliminated for good. There must be a system of mass supervision so that the masses at large and the Party rank and file can supervise the cadres, especially the leading cadres. The people have the right to expose, accuse, impeach, replace and recall, according to law, all those who seek personal privileges and refuse to change their ways despite criticism and education. The people have the right to demand that these persons pay for what they have unlawfully taken and that they be punished according to law or through disciplinary measures. Regulations must be worked out governing the scope of powers attached to particular posts and the political seniority and material benefits of cadres at all levels. Here, the most important thing is to have definite organizations to exercise impartial supervision.

It is true that the errors we made in the past were partly attributable to the way of thinking and style of work of some leaders. But they were even more attributable to the problems in our organizational and working systems. If these systems are sound, they can place restraints on the actions of bad people; if they are unsound, they may hamper the efforts of good people or indeed, in certain cases, may push them in the wrong direction. Even so great a man as Comrade Mao Zedong was influenced to a serious degree by certain unsound systems and institutions, which resulted in grave misfortunes for the Party, the state and himself. If even now we still don't improve the way our socialist system functions, people will ask why it cannot solve some problems which the capitalist system can. Such comparisons may be one-sided, but we must not just dismiss them on that account. Stalin gravely damaged socialist legality, doing things which Comrade Mao Zedong once said would have been impossible in Western countries like Britain, France and the United States. Yet although Comrade Mao was aware of this, he did not in practice solve the problems in our system of leadership. Together with other factors, this led to the decade of catastrophe known as the "Cultural Revolution". There is a most profound lesson to be learned from this. I do not mean that the individuals concerned should not bear their share of
responsibility, but rather that the problems in the leadership and organizational systems are more fundamental, widespread and long-lasting, and that they have a greater effect on the overall interests of our country. This is a question that has a close bearing on whether our Party and state will change political colour and should therefore command the attention of the entire Party.

Some serious problems which appeared in the past may arise again if the defects in our present systems are not eliminated. Only when these defects are resolutely removed through planned, systematic, and thorough reforms will the people trust our leadership, our Party and socialism. Then our cause will truly have a future of boundless promise.

We cannot discuss the defects in our system of Party and state leadership without touching upon Comrade Mao Zedong's mistakes in his later years. The resolution on certain questions in the history of our Party since the founding of the People's Republic of China, a document now being drafted, will include a systematic exposition of Mao Zedong Thought and a reasonably comprehensive assessment of Comrade Mao's own merits and demerits, including criticism of his mistakes during the "Cultural Revolution". As thoroughgoing materialists, we Communists cannot but accept what should be accepted and reject what should be rejected, basing our judgement strictly on facts. Comrade Mao rendered immortal service to our Party, our country and our people throughout his life. His contributions are primary and his mistakes secondary. But to avoid mentioning his mistakes because of his contributions would not be a materialist approach. Neither is it a materialist approach to deny his contributions because of his mistakes. The "Cultural Revolution" was a blunder and a failure because it ran completely counter to the scientific tenets of Mao Zedong Thought. These tenets, which have been tested and proved correct through long years of practice, not only guided us to victory in the past but will remain our guiding ideology in the years of struggle ahead. It is incorrect and against the fundamental interests of the Chinese people to have any doubt or to waver to any degree on this important principle of our Party.

IV

Now I come to the question of eliminating the influence of feudalism and of bourgeois thinking.

All the defects I have just described bear the stamp of feudalism to one degree or another. Of course, surviving feudal influences are not manifested only in such defects. They are also to be seen in, for example, a lingering clan mentality and hierarchy in social relations, in certain instances of assumed inequality of status in the relations between leading comrades and their subordinates and between cadres and the masses, in a weak sense of the rights and duties of citizens, and in certain "mandarin" systems and high-handed work styles in industry, commerce and agriculture. In addition, there is excessive emphasis on regional and departmental jurisdictions in the management of economic work, which has led to compartmentalization and the tendency to profit at the expense of others. This has sometimes created unnecessary difficulties between two socialist enterprises or regions. The surviving influences of feudalism are also manifest in the autocratic style of work of some persons in the cultural sphere, in the failure to recognize how vital science and education are to socialism and how impossible it is to build socialism without them, in a closed-door policy and ignorant chauvinism in foreign relations, and so on and so forth. And let's look at clannish practices. During the "cultural revolution", when someone got to the top, even his dogs and chickens got there too; likewise, when someone got into trouble, even his distant relatives were dragged down with him. This situation became very serious. Even now, the
abominable practice of appointing people through favouritism and factionalism continues unchecked in some regions, departments and units. There are quite a few instances where cadres abuse their power so as to enable their friends and relations to move to the cities or to obtain jobs or promotions. It is thus clear that the residual influences of clannishness must not be underestimated. We need to exert ourselves if these problems are to be solved.

Through 28 years of new-democratic revolution we succeeded in overthrowing once for all the reactionary feudal regime and the feudal system of landownership. However, we did not complete the task of eliminating the surviving feudal influences in the ideological and political fields, because we underestimated their importance and because we quickly proceeded to the socialist revolution. Now it is essential to state clearly that we must continue to labour at this task and that we must carry out a series of effective reforms in our institutions. Otherwise, our country and people will suffer further losses.

To accomplish this task we must adopt the scientific approach of seeking truth from facts and apply Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought in making a concrete and accurate analysis of the manifestations of the lingering influences of feudalism. First and foremost, we must draw a clear line of demarcation between socialism and feudalism and never allow anyone to oppose socialism under the pretext of opposing feudalism or to use the kind of phoney socialism advocated by the Gang of Four to promote feudalism. Second, we must carefully distinguish between the democratic values in our cultural heritage and the feudal dross, and between the lingering feudal influences and certain unscientific methods and unsound procedures in our work resulting from lack of experience. We should guard against raising yet another storm and indiscriminately labelling everything "feudal".

For most of the cadres and the masses, the process of eliminating surviving feudal influences is a kind of self-education and self-remoulding, which will enable them to face themselves from such influences, emancipate their minds, raise their political awareness, adapt themselves to the needs of our modernization programme and thus make contributions to the people, society and mankind. In endeavouring to eliminate these influences, we must stress the need to effectively restructure and improve the systems of the Party and state in such a way as to ensure institutionally the practice of democracy in political life, in economic management and in all other aspects of social activity and thus to promote the smooth progress of modernization. To this end we must conduct conscientious investigations and studies, compare the experience of other countries and work out realistic plans and measures by drawing on collective wisdom. We should not think that we have only to "put destruction first" and construction will follow automatically. It must be made very clear that no anti-feudal political movement or propaganda campaign should be launched. There should be no political criticism of the kind that has been directed at some individuals in the past, and still less should there be struggles directed against either the cadres or the masses. Historical experience has shown that no problem of mass ideological education was ever solved by launching a mass movement instead of organizing exhaustive persuasion and calm discussion, and that no currently functioning systems were ever reformed or new ones established by substituting a mass movement for solid, systematic measures. This is true because solving the ideological problems of the masses and concrete problems in the organizational and work systems in a socialist society is, in principle, fundamentally different from cracking down on counter-revolutionaries and destroying the reactionary system in the period of revolution.

While working to eliminate feudal influence in the political and ideological fields, we must not in the least neglect or slacken criticism of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois ideologies, of ultra-individualism and anarchism. Which of the two influences -- feudal or bourgeois -- is
more serious? There can never be one answer to this question, because the extent of the influence may vary greatly, depending on the geographical region or the sector of work involved, the particular issue under consideration, and the ages, personal experience and cultural backgrounds of the persons affected. Furthermore, in our society, which was a semi-feudal and semi-colonial one for more than a century, feudal ideology is in some cases intermingled with bourgeois ideology and the slavish colonial mentality, and the three are sometimes inseparable. With the increasing international contacts of recent years, instances of worshipping things foreign, or fawning on foreigners have begun to appear, owing to the influence of the decadent ideology, work style and way of life of the bourgeoisie abroad. And such phenomena may increase in the future. This is a by no means trivial problem, and we must take it seriously and solve it.

China may be backward in economic and cultural development, but it is not necessarily backward in everything. Some foreign countries may be advanced in technology and management, but they are not necessarily advanced in everything. Our Party and people established a socialist system after long years of bloody struggle. After all, although our socialist system is still imperfect and has suffered disruption, it is much better than the capitalist system based on the law of the jungle and the principle of "getting ahead" at the expense of others. Our system will improve more and more with the passage of time. By absorbing the progressive elements of other countries, it will become the best in the world. Capitalism can never achieve this. It is absolutely wrong to lose faith in socialism and think that it is inferior to capitalism just because we have made mistakes in our practice of socialist revolution and construction. It is also absolutely wrong to think that in trying to eliminate surviving feudal influences we may spread capitalist ideology. We must firmly repudiate these wrong ideas and check their spread. By upholding the principle "to each according to his work" and by recognizing material interests we intend to increase the material well-being of the entire people. Everyone is bound to have material interests, but this in no sense means that we encourage people to work solely for their personal material interests without regard for the interests of the state, the collective and other people, or that we encourage people to put money above all else. If we did that, what would be the difference between socialism and capitalism? We have maintained all along that in a socialist society there is a basic community of interests between the state, the collective and the individual. If they clash, it is the individual interests which should be subordinated to those of the state and the collective. Where necessary, all people with a high level of revolutionary consciousness should sacrifice their personal interests for those of the state, the collective and the people. We should make more efforts to disseminate this noble outlook among our people, especially the young people.

We have some young people now, including children of cadres, and even some cadres themselves, who have violated the law and regulations, accepted bribes and engaged in smuggling, speculation and profiteering so as to make money or to find a way to go abroad - at the expense of their own moral integrity, the dignity of our state and national self-respect. This is despicable. In the last couple of years, some pornographic, obscene, filthy and repulsive photographs, films, publications and the like have been smuggled into our country through different channels. These things have tended to debase the standards of social conduct and corrupt some young people and cadres. If we allow this plague to spread unchecked, it will affect many weak-willed persons and bring about their moral and mental degradation. Organizations at all levels should pay earnest attention to this problem and take firm and effective measures to ban and destroy this decadent rubbish and make sure that no more of it is allowed to enter China. Furthermore, in our domestic economic work, increasing numbers of individuals, groups and even enterprises and other units are engaging in illegal practices by distorting our economic policies and taking advantage of loopholes in
our system of economic management. We must be constantly on guard against such illegal, anti-socialist activities and struggle against people who engage in them.

To sum up, elimination of surviving feudal influences must be combined with the criticism of decadent bourgeois ideas, such as the notion of putting profit above everything else and trying to "get ahead" at the expense of others.

Naturally, we should adopt a scientific approach towards capitalism and towards bourgeois ideas. Not long ago, in order to educate people in the revolutionary outlook, some localities again raised the slogan, "Foster proletarian ideology and eliminate bourgeois ideology". I read the relevant documents and didn't find anything wrong at the time. As I see it now, however, this old slogan is neither comprehensive nor precise enough. For lack of sufficient investigation and analysis, certain comrades have criticized as "capitalism" some of our current reforms, which are useful to the development of production and the socialist cause as a whole. They are wrong in this. We need to make further studies and correctly specify just what are the bourgeois ideas that should be sternly criticized and prevented from spreading, what are the capitalist tendencies in our economic life that should be firmly resisted and overcome, and what is the correct method of criticism. We must do this if we don't want to repeat past mistakes.

V

The Central Committee of the Party has repeatedly examined the question of reforming our system of Party and state leadership. Some reform measures were initiated following the Fifth Plenary Session of the Central Committee, others will be put forward at the Third Session of the Fifth National People's Congress, and still others will be adopted when conditions are ripe. In addition to the reforms I have already referred to, we are planning to gradually introduce the following major changes:

First, the Central Committee will submit proposals for revising the Constitution of the People's Republic of China to the Third Session of the Fifth National People's Congress. Our Constitution should be made more complete and precise so as to really ensure the people's right to manage the state organs at all levels as well as the various enterprises and institutions, to guarantee to our people the full enjoyment of their rights as citizens, to enable the areas inhabited by minority nationalities to exercise genuine regional autonomy, to improve the system of people's congresses, and so on. The principle of preventing the over-concentration of power will also be reflected in the revised Constitution.

Second, the Central Committee has already set up its Commission for Discipline Inspection, and is now considering the establishment of an advisory commission (which may be given a different name). Together with the Central Committee itself, these commissions are to be elected by the National Congress of the Party, and their respective functions and powers are to be specified. In this way, a great many veteran comrades who have been working in the Central Committee and the State Council will be able to put their experience to full use by giving guidance, advice and supervision. At the same time, the regular executive bodies of the Central Committee and the State Council will become more compact and efficient and the average age of their personnel will gradually go down.

Third, a truly effective work system will be set up for the State Council and the various levels of local government. From now on, all matters within the competence of the government will be discussed and decided upon, and the relevant documents issued, by the State Council and the local governments concerned. The Central Committee and local
committees of the Party will no longer issue directives or take decisions on such matters. Of course, the work of the government will continue to be carried out under the political leadership of the Party. Strengthening government work means strengthening the Party's leadership.

Fourth, step by step and in a planned manner we should reform the system under which the factory director or manager assumes responsibility under the leadership of the Party committee. We should first experiment with this reform in selected units, then gradually introduce it into more units, instituting a system under which factory directors and managers assume responsibility under the leadership and supervision of the factory management committee, the board of directors of the company, and the joint committee of united economic entities. We should also consider reforming the system under which university and college presidents and heads of research institutes assume responsibility under the leadership of the Party committee. Through our experience over a long period of time, the old system of factory management has proven unfavourable to the modernization of both factory management and the industrial management system, and also to improvement of Party's work in factories. These reforms are designed to free the Party committees of routine matters, enabling them to concentrate on conducting ideological and political work and to take charge of organization and supervision. This does not weaken but improves and strengthens the leadership of the Party. The administrators of various units should conscientiously study the relevant managerial and technical skills, but they should not be engrossed in meetings for too long a period of time, remaining always laymen. If this were the case, we could never accomplish the goal of modernization. Most of these administrators are Party members. When the management system is reformed, the directors and managers should accept the leadership of higher-level administrative departments, the political leadership of higher-level Party organizations, and supervision by Party organizations at the same levels. The responsibilities of Party organizations at the same levels will not be diminished, rather, Party work will truly be strengthened. The Party organizations in factories, companies, colleges, schools and research institutes should educate all Party members well, do solid mass work and encourage Party members to play exemplary vanguard roles at their posts. The Party organizations should truly become the backbone of all enterprises and institutions and educate and supervise all Party members, so as to ensure the implementation of the Party's political line and the accomplishment of all tasks. Considering that this reform has a great impact on a large number of primary Party organizations throughout the country, we should continue to solicit opinions from all walks of life before making the decision to introduce this reform when conditions are ripe.

Fifth, congresses or conferences of representatives of workers and office staff will be introduced in all enterprises and institutions. That was decided long ago. The question now is how to popularize and perfect the system. These congresses or conferences have the right to discuss and take decisions on major questions of concern to their respective units, to propose to the higher organizations the recall of incompetent administrators, and to introduce -- gradually and within appropriate limits -- the practice of electing their leaders.

Sixth, Party committees at all levels are genuinely to apply the principle of combining collective leadership and division of labour with individual responsibility. It should be made clear which matters call for collective discussion and which fall within the competence of individuals. Major issues must certainly be discussed and decided upon by the collective. In the process of taking decisions, it is essential to observe strictly the principle of majority rule and the principle of one-man-one-vote, a Party secretary being entitled only to his single vote. That is, the first secretary must not take decisions by himself. Once a collective decision is taken, it should be carried out by all members, each taking his own share of
responsibility. No buck-passing should be allowed on any account, and those who neglect their duties should be penalized. As the top person in the collective leadership, the first secretary of a Party committee must assume chief responsibility for its day-to-day work, while among its other members the stress should be on individual responsibility according to the division of labour. We should encourage leading cadres to shoulder responsibility boldly, but this is totally different from making arbitrary personal decisions. The two should never be confused.

I ask the comrades to study and discuss these six points carefully and to freely express their opinions, including divergent ones. With regard to some matters, after the central authorities have decided on general principles, experiments will have to be carried out in order to gain experience and pool collective wisdom. We will try to solve one specific problem after another when the necessary conditions are ripe. The central authorities will make a formal decision on each of them and then draw up realistic, well-thought-out, practicable and lasting rules and regulations which should be systematically applied. Until such time as these are formulated and promulgated by the central authorities, work in various fields should continue to be carried out under the regulations now in force.

The purpose of reforming the system of Party and state leadership is precisely to maintain and further strengthen Party leadership and discipline, and not to weaken or relax them. In a big country like ours, it is inconceivable that unity of thinking could be achieved among our several hundred million people or that their efforts could be pooled to build socialism in the absence of a Party whose members have a spirit of sacrifice and a high level of political awareness and discipline, a Party that truly represents and unites the masses of people and exercises unified leadership. Without such a Party, our country would split up and accomplish nothing. The people of all our nationalities have come to a deep understanding of this truth through long years of struggle. The unity of the people, social stability, the promotion of democracy and the reunification of our country all depend on Party leadership. The core of the Four Cardinal Principles is to uphold leadership by the Party. The point is that the Party must provide good leadership; only through constant improvement can its leadership be strengthened.

We have before us the extremely arduous and complex task of socialist modernization. While many old problems still remain to be solved, many new ones are emerging. Only by consistently relying on the masses, maintaining close ties with them, listening to what they have to say, understanding their feelings and always representing their interests can the Party become a powerful force capable of smoothly accomplishing its tasks. At present, there are many ideological problems, both among the masses and in the Party, that call for solution. We must give priority to ideological and political work and earnestly endeavour to do it well, never slackening our efforts. This work should be performed by Party committees and leading cadres at all levels, as well as by all other Party members. It should be done painstakingly and thoroughly, with a clear objective in mind and in a way acceptable to the masses. Here the decisive condition for success is that all Party members, especially those in leading positions, be the first to do what they expect the masses to do. Thus, for our ideological and political work to be successful, it is necessary to improve the leadership provided by the Party and to improve its leadership system.

Comrades! The reform and improvement of the various Party and state systems is a long-term and difficult task, and the key to its accomplishment is the reform and improvement of the system of Party and state leadership. We must thoroughly understand this. Comrade Mao Zedong and the other veteran revolutionaries who have already passed away left us without being able to complete this task, so it has fallen on our shoulders. All Party
members, especially veteran comrades, should devote their efforts to it. We have done a
good deal, solved many problems and accomplished much that reflects credit on us since the
Third Plenary Session of the Party's Eleventh Central Committee. So we have a solid
position from which to proceed further. The time and conditions are now ripe for us to
undertake the task of reforming and improving the system of Party and state leadership so as
to meet the needs of our modernization drive. While our generation may not be able to
finish this work, at least we have the responsibility of laying a firm foundation and
establishing a correct orientation for its accomplishment. This much, I believe, we can do.
APPENDIX III

ON REFORM OF THE POLITICAL STRUCTURE

September 3, 1986

Our reform of the economic structure is going smoothly on the whole. Nevertheless, as it proceeds we shall inevitably encounter obstacles. It is true that there are people, both inside and outside our Party, who are not in favour of the reform, but there are not many who strongly oppose it. The important thing is that our political structure does not meet the needs of the economic reform.

When we first raised the question of reform we had in mind, among other things, reform of the political structure. Whenever we move a step forward in economic reform, we are made keenly aware of the need to change the political structure. If we fail to do that, we shall be unable to preserve the gains we have made in the economic reform and to build on them, the growth of the productive forces will be stunted and our drive for modernization will be impeded.

The content of the political reform is still under discussion, because this is a very difficult question. Since every reform measure will involve a wide range of people, have profound repercussions in many areas and affect the interests of countless individuals, we are bound to run into obstacles, so it is important for us to proceed with caution. First of all we have to determine the scope of the political restructuring and decide where to begin. We shall start with one or two reforms and not try to do everything at once, because we don't want to make a mess of things. In a country as vast and complex as ours, reform is no easy task. So we must be very cautious about setting policies and make no decision until we are quite sure it is the right one.

In essence, the purpose of political restructuring is to overcome bureaucratism, develop socialist democracy and stimulate the initiative of the people and of the grass-roots units. Through the reform, we intend to straighten out the relationship between the rule of law and the rule of man and between the Party and the government. We should be firm about leadership by the Party. The Party should lead well, but its functions must be separated from those of the government. This question should be put on the agenda.
APPENDIX IV

ON REFORM OF THE POLITICAL STRUCTURE

September 13, 1986

If we do not institute a reform of our political structure, it will be difficult to carry out the reform of our economic structure. Separation of the functions of the Party and the government comes under the heading of political reform, and that raises the question of how a Party committee should exercise leadership. The answer is that it should deal only with major issues and not with minor ones. Local Party committees should not establish departments to take charge of economic affairs; those affairs should be the responsibility of local governments. However, that's not the way it is at present.

We have to discuss what the content of political reform should be and work out the details. In my opinion, its purposes are to bring the initiative of the masses into play, to increase efficiency and to overcome bureaucratism. Its content should be as follows. First, we should separate the Party and the government and decide how the Party can exercise leadership most effectively. This is the key and should be given top priority. Second, we should transfer some of the powers of the central authorities to local authorities in order to straighten out relations between the two. At the same time, local authorities should likewise transfer some of their powers to lower levels. Third, we should streamline the administrative structure, and this is related to the devolution of powers.

We must set a starting date -- one that is not too far off. At the National Party Congress next year we shall draw up a plan. However, in reforming our political structure we must not imitate the West, and no liberalization should be allowed. Of course our present structure of leadership has certain advantages. For example, it enables us to make quick decisions, while if we place too much emphasis on a need for checks and balances, problems may arise.
ON REFORM OF THE POLITICAL STRUCTURE

November 9, 1986

We feel the need to reform our political structure is growing more and more urgent, but we haven't sorted everything out yet. Lately I've been thinking the reform should have three objectives.

The first objective is to ensure the continuing vitality of the Party and the state. This chiefly means that our leading cadres must be young. A few years ago we set forth four requirements for cadres: that they should be more revolutionary, younger, better educated and more competent professionally. We have made some progress in this respect over the last few years, but that's just a beginning. The objective of having younger leading cadres is not something that can be achieved within three years or five. We shall be doing well if we achieve it in fifteen. By the time of the Party's Thirteenth National Congress next year, we shall have taken a first step towards our goal, but that's all. By the Fourteenth National Congress [1992], we expect to have taken another step, and by the Fifteenth to have reached our objective. This is not something people of our age can accomplish, but it is vitally important for us to set the goal. It would be wonderful if someday China had a contingent of fine 30-to-40-year-old statesmen, economists, military strategists and diplomats. Similarly, we hope there will be a contingent of fine 30-to-40-year-old scientists, educationists, writers and specialists in other fields. It is essential to introduce measures in various areas, including education and the management of cadres, to encourage young people. Strictly speaking, we are only taking our first steps in this regard. There are many problems to be studied and many measures to be taken, but we must act carefully.

The second objective of political structural reform is to eliminate bureaucratism and increase efficiency. One reason for low efficiency is that organizations are overstaffed, and their work proceeds at a snail's pace. But the main reason is that we have not separated the functions of the Party from those of the government, so that the Party often takes over the work of the government, and the two have many overlapping organs. We must uphold leadership by the Party and never abandon it, but the Party should exercise its leadership effectively. It's several years already since we first raised this problem of efficiency, but we still have no clear idea as to how to solve it. Unless we increase efficiency, we shall not succeed in our drive for modernization. In the world today, mankind is progressing at a tremendous pace. Especially in science and technology, if we lag only one year behind, it will be very hard to catch up. So we have to increase our efficiency. Of course this is not just a question of separating the Party from the government; there are many other problems to be solved too.

The third objective of political reform is to stimulate the initiative of grass-roots units and of workers, peasants and intellectuals. One thing we have learned from our experience in economic reform over the last few years is that the first step is to release the peasants' initiative by delegating to them powers of decision in production. That is what we did in the countryside. We should do the same in the cities, delegating powers to the enterprises and grass-roots units and thereby motivating workers and intellectuals and democratizing management by letting them participate in it. The same applies to every other field of endeavour. Only with a vigorous leadership that has eliminated bureaucratism, raised efficiency and mobilized the grass-roots units and the rank and file can we have real hope of success in our modernization drive.
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