

Twentieth-Century Chinese Politics and Western Political Science

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Today Peking University confers on me the title of honorary professor, and various leaders and senior scholars have encouraged me with undeserved praises. This is indeed a great honor.

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More importantly, the decision of Peking University and the Education Commission continues the tradition of "the principle of freedom of thought" and "the doctrine of accommodating different schools" advocated by Mr. Cai Yuanpei (Ts'ai Yuan-p'ei), the late President of this university. This is a glorious tradition of Peking University. It has a special significance today because this tradition is a most important prerequisite of what has been advocated since the Third Plenum: practice is the sole criterion for testing truth; the achievement of a high level of socialist democracy; the development of spiritual civilization. Today's richly symbolic ceremony will definitely encourage scholars abroad, both Western and Chinese, to look more closely at China's historic reforms and more accurately assess the future of reform.

Today I especially want to point out that my attitudes toward scholarly research were inculcated at Southwest Associated University. [During the war the Japanese occupied the major cities of eastern China and thereby the campuses of the best universities. Personnel from Peking University, Qinghua University and Nankai University retreated to Yunnan Province and established Southwest Associated University in Kunming.] My basic political viewpoint cannot be separated from the historical background of the Sino-Japanese War.

At that time Southwest Associated gathered in Kunming the nation's most accomplished scholars and distilled the essence of the excellent traditions of three schools. Neighboring Yunnan University also produced many lively new scholars. The faculty's serious scholarly style, innovative attitudes, and bold proposals for reform still serve as my guide.

I was just an ordinary student at Southwest Associated University, far inferior to classmates like Chen Tiqiang. But afterwards I had the opportunity to continue my research in political science [in the United States]. After its founding, new China mechanically copied the Soviet educational system and abolished political science as a discipline. After the expansion of the Anti-Rightist Campaign of 1957 even the discussion of politics had many defined and undefined forbidden zones and of course exploration of basic political theory was out of the question. In recent years Peking University has been actively and systematically restoring political science, and I am very happy to join in the task. But here, in front of my old teachers and schoolmates from Southwest Associated University, I feel on the one hand that I am showing off my proficiency with the ax before Lu Ban [the master carpenter], but on the other hand I am seeking a historical lesson at once from a feeling of my own fortune and a sense of perplexity and stricken conscience.

Within certain limits and for certain periods social revolutions and totalistic politics can have positive effects.

Another aspect of the Southwest Associated University's academic spirit was that it reflected a *Zeitgeist* in the hearts of countless people. At a critical juncture, when internal trouble and foreign menace converged on China and the country was in mortal danger, the teachers and students of Southwest Associated University discerned that China had a new vital force, believed in China's bright future and maintained an optimistic attitude in

their determined effort to make the country strong. Since the founding of the People's Republic of China, it has been her fate to suffer from many setbacks. One man's mistakes have brought serious losses. But even during the ten catastrophic years of the Cultural Revolution, I steadfastly maintained a cautiously optimistic attitude towards China's future. Moreover, I continued my endeavor to combine the academic spirit of Southwest Associated University and the *Zeitgeist* of that period in analyzing the achievements and setbacks of the Chinese revolution and national reconstruction, and on this basis I sought to develop various new conceptualizations in political science and to refine some existing theoretical frameworks.

It is possible to avoid individual dictatorship, personality cult and extreme concentration of power at the same time that politics penetrates and controls every sphere of society.

In order to undertake this task, we must selectively apply Western social sciences, including political science, to the study of twentieth-century Chinese politics and to the evolution of Chinese politics through successive dynasties and regimes. But we must also use the practice and history of Chinese politics to re-examine some of the specific generalizations and theoretical frameworks of Western social sciences. Then we should combine the practice and experience of Chinese politics with Western social sciences, including those principles of Marxism that have been proven viable by history, in order to propose new generalizations and more complete theoretical frameworks. In this way we can achieve a breakthrough in some of the specific concepts and paradigms of Western social sciences and also create a Chinese political science, thereby making a great contribution to the development of a world political science.

Now let me discuss briefly how to com-

bine the twentieth-century Chinese political experience with Western social sciences; in other words, while using the principles of Western social sciences, how to effect a breakthrough in some of them in order to create a Chinese political science and develop a world political science.

Twentieth-century Chinese history could make it easier for Western scholars who study political theory to see the common historical origins and internal relations between social revolution and totalistic politics, and it provides rich materials for testing their historical origins and internal relations. The concept of social revolution is well known to everyone present, but the term "totalism" [quan neng zhuyi] needs some explanation. The concept of "totalism" differs from the concept of "totalitarianism" [ji quan zhuyi] as used by Chinese scholars in the 1930s and by contemporary Western scholars. I use the term "totalistic politics" to denote a particular form of relationship between politics and society; it leaves open the question of the nature of political institutions or organizational structures within society. "Totalism" simply indicates a guiding doctrine that the power of political organizations may penetrate into and control every level and every sphere of society at any time and without any limitation. "Totalistic politics" refers to a political society based on this guiding doctrine. "Totalistic politics" can be clearly distinguished from what I call "authoritarian politics" [quanwei zhuyi zhengzhi], for instance, politics under absolute monarchy in traditional China, and also from the theory and practice of totalitarian politics and individual dictatorship as seen in Germany and Italy in the 1930s and early 1940s. I will elaborate on this later.

The common origin of social revolution and totalistic politics in China was the total crisis that China faced in the early twentieth century. Social revolution was a program for overcoming total crisis, and totalistic politics was a means of coping with total crisis. Indeed, any social revolution must use totalistic politics as a means. In the early twentieth century, the Chinese state disintegrated amidst the tangled fighting of the war-

lords. Traditional institutions in various spheres of society were collapsing. Numerous problems emerged in daily life that could not be solved with traditional thinking or with ordinary methods. At that time when the existence of China seemed in mortal peril, some brave souls with lofty ideals believed that only a social revolution could solve in a fundamental way the crisis that pervaded the entire state, society as a whole, and the various spheres of society. They saw that it was necessary to establish a strong political structure or political party and then use its political strength and organizational methods to penetrate and control every level and every sphere in order to reform or reconstruct the organization and institutions of society, the state and each social sphere. Only in this manner could the new problems be solved and the situation of total crisis be overcome. Therefore from its very beginning social revolution contained an element of totalistic politics. However, the actual scope of totalistic politics was determined by the form of the social revolution, by the differing goals of the revolutionary stages, by the relative strength of the revolutionaries vis-a-vis their enemies, and by the vicissitudes of conflicts among the people and within the revolutionary political groupings themselves.

If we compare Chinese totalistic politics to German and Italian totalitarianism we will immediately perceive yet another important point. Whereas the undertaking of social revolution necessarily requires totalistic politics as a method, the utilization of *totalitarian* politics by political groups is not necessarily in the service of social revolution. In fact the purpose of totalitarian politics is to prevent or destroy social revolution. Precisely because social revolutionary movements must penetrate every level and sphere of society, the political power of groups aiming to prevent or destroy social revolution must also penetrate every level and sphere. Germany and Italy in the 1930s and 1940s were the most obvious examples. We can say, therefore, that totalistic politics and totalitarian politics are two radically different types of totalism. A clear distinction can be made in re-

searching their different purposes, methods, leadership styles and social foundations, thereby leading to a different evaluation.

China's political history in the twentieth century can provide Western social sciences with both positive and critical generalizations concerning social revolution and totalistic politics. Western social scientists often confine their discussion of social revolution and especially totalistic politics to their negative effects and outcomes. They often overlook the fact that within certain limits and for certain periods social revolution and totalistic politics can have positive effects and outcomes. Chinese social revolution adopted class struggle as its guiding paradigm, and from the concept of classes it developed its concept of the masses. The Chinese Communist Party used its strict organizational structure and growing organizational capability to mobilize and organize the masses and guided them to participate in politics. Thus during the process of revolution the form of political participation of the Chinese people underwent its first fundamental change in several thousand years. Peasants, poor people, and the lower classes all became important actors in political life. Many of them rose to be cadres. Leaders at the highest levels also recognized them as the "reference group." This was the most fundamental reason why the Communist Party defeated the Guomindang [Kuomintang]. Even more importantly, this change in the form of popular participation in politics is the indispensable foundation for a high level of socialist democracy.

The fundamental characteristic of totalistic politics is that there is not a single sphere of society which political power may not encroach upon.

However, if social revolution and totalistic politics cannot be kept within certain limits, they can have contrary effects and negative outcomes. From the Yuan Wenzai-Wang Zuo Incident of the

Jinggangshan period to the "rescue movement" of the later phase of the Yan'an Rectification Campaign there were instances of mistakes and unwarranted expansions of the scope of purges. A few more cases would be the ultra-leftist lines on land reform adopted in the early Jiangxi period and again in 1947, and the slogan that literature must be subordinated to politics which was used from the Yan'an period until 1981 and which violated the natural course of literary development.

New China takes the concept of the "masses" rather than the concept of the citizen as the leitmotif of its foundation. The concept of the masses emphasizes the social and economic rights of some social strata but ignores the freedoms and rights of the individual.

More fundamental is that, from the perspective of basic principles of Marxism, relations of production should correspond to the forces of production. Therefore the depth of social revolution and the reform of relations of production should take into account the degree of socio-economic development and other objective conditions; they should be appropriate to the circumstances. Now we all acknowledge that the organizational form of agricultural cooperatization exceeded the level of development of productive forces and that the people's communes were divorced from reality.

There is another matter of equal importance. In 1949 the Chinese Communist Party obtained political power, and China stood up. State and society began to be organized afresh, and the situation of total crisis passed. Totalistic politics lost thereby its historic functions and tasks. Its scope of application should have been reduced, and gradually it should have evolved into a high level of socialist democracy. However, beginning with the

reorganization of universities and their departments, and continuing with the expansion of the Anti-Rightist Campaign and later the Socialist Education Campaign, progressive escalation of totalistic politics accompanied the achievement of political power, the decline of political forces outside the party, the imperceptible loss of the effectiveness of the mass line, and the weakening of inner-party democracy. In the Cultural Revolution the "Gang of Four" once again wanted to stage another social revolution and totalistic politics reached its zenith, leading to ten years of disaster. The facts and generalizations cited above pose to Western social science theoretical issues that demand deep study and resolution.

Yet another series of theoretical questions can be posed to Western political science by twentieth-century Chinese politics, enabling us to see a fundamental weakness in Western theories of "totalitarianism" that has existed for decades. This fundamental weakness is the failure to distinguish the theoretical dimension of the relationship between politics and society from the dimension of the political institutions themselves, and to use this distinction as the theoretical basis and method to analyze the actual political phenomena of specific societies at specific times. Western political scientists would often raise definite political forms to the highest level of analysis, for instance, individual dictatorship, personality cult or extreme concentration of power, and subject the negative effects, serious consequences and extremely evil outcomes of these forms to sharp and incisive evaluation. This part of the theory still merits our attention, but it is onesided. It assumes that individual dictatorship, personality cult and extreme concentration of power necessarily accompany and develop simultaneously with political penetration and control of society. Because it concentrates its attention on the ill effects of political forms, it fails to note the positive functions and results—and even the necessity—of the penetration and control of society by politics at certain times and under certain circumstances in order to resolve concrete problems. Moreover, it is possible to avoid individual dictator-

ship, personality cult and extreme concentration of power at the same time that politics penetrates and controls every sphere of society.

Twentieth-century Chinese politics demonstrates that without the penetration of politics into every level and sphere of society China could not have changed a mode of popular participation several millennia old in the short time of just twenty-odd years, and today it would not be possible to establish the foundation of a high level of socialist democracy. Furthermore, the growth or reduction of totalistic politics does not necessarily correspond to changes in individual dictatorship, cult of personality or high levels of centralization. During the Yan'an period power was gradually concentrated in Mr. Mao Zedong's hands, but for the whole Yan'an and Xibopo period totalistic politics actually shrank. The base areas of this period had an even higher level of democracy than some phases of Chinese politics after liberation. However, we must point out that at other times changes in totalistic politics corresponded and were interdependent with dictatorship, personality cult and extreme concentration of power. The best example is the ten calamitous years of the Cultural Revolution. These historical realities indicate that there is not necessarily a covariance between the one dimension of institutions of political power or organizational forms and the other dimension of totalistic politics. Therefore concrete investigations should distinguish between these two dimensions and study in real life their interrelationship and change.

Nevertheless, at the deepest level totalistic politics and the political institutions and forms that it utilizes are internally linked. Moreover, totalistic politics shares a common element with totalitarian politics and is fundamentally at variance with democratic political institutions (including both Western democratic political institutions and socialist democratic institutions). The fundamental characteristic of totalistic politics and totalistic political institutions is that there is not a single sphere of society which political power may not encroach upon. In other words, in such a society the free-

dom and rights of individuals and groups are not protected by morality, positive laws and a constitution. The extent and content of their realm of free activity is determined by organs of political power. The area beyond the direct or indirect control of the state in totalistic society can be divided into three zones. The first zone includes rights of autonomy granted by political organs to state units, mass organizations, social groups or individual citizens according to the requirements of societal development. The second zone includes certain social activities that the political organs decide not to control at the present time for strategic or tactical reasons. For instance, during the Yan'an period the confiscation of landlord's land was suspended. The third zone includes matters towards which the political organs are indifferent. For example, playing mah-jongg [in the last few years]. None of these three zones is protected by the constitution, public opinion, or morality. By contrast, similar activities and behaviors in Western democracies are based on the freedoms and rights of individuals and groups. These freedoms and rights are protected in turn by constitutions, public opinion, and morality. Organs of political power cannot encroach upon them. Because the starting points for determining the scope of activity of state political power are different, political, economic and social life in these two systems is completely different.

At the present moment, our historical task is to implement strictly the constitutional provisions concerning the protection of individual freedoms and rights.

In Western democracies the zone of immunity from political encroachment is the basis of democratic politics and of socio-economic life. The establishment of the contemporary Western democracies began from the concept of the "citizen." As early as the eighteenth century the concept of individuals having rights from birth was already established

in England and it was already guaranteed institutionally. In the nineteenth century England fashioned institutions for political participation by citizens on the basis of human rights. Finally in the twentieth century the concept of citizen was broadened to include various social and economic rights, the foundation of the welfare state. The historical experience of the West and the development of democratic systems as well as the theories utilized deserve our serious study.

In reality [that is, in contrast to the written constitution], New China takes the concept of the "masses" rather than the concept of the citizen as the leitmotif of its foundation. The concept of the masses emphasizes the social and economic rights of some social strata but ignores the freedoms and rights of the individual. At present China is in the process of establishing a high level of socialist democracy. Perhaps the course of China's democratic development would be just the opposite of that of England, Europe and America in that China would first establish economic and social rights and then go back to the tasks of establishing individual liberties and true rights of participation in political decisionmaking and rights of electing leadership. The possible reversal of the Western pattern suggests that, in the process of establishing socialist democracy at a high level, China cannot and should not reject the guiding principles and institutions of Western societies according to which citizens should enjoy certain inviolable freedoms and rights. China should move forward to guarantee that citizens can really exercise their freedoms and rights in society and the economy and perfect these rights and freedoms, giving them new content and deeper significance. I think that this is the fundamental spirit of China's new constitution. At the present moment, our historical task is to implement strictly the constitutional provisions concerning the protection of individual freedoms and rights, beginning with guarantees of freedom to engage in creative writing, academic freedom and freedom of thought. The course of such a development would certainly pose to Western political

science a new issue for theoretical exploration.

Currently China is in the midst of a discussion on how to uphold and develop the basic principles of Marxism while making a breakthrough in specific [outdated] doctrines. The development of Western social sciences offers two relevant points of interest. Marx changed the orientation of historical research, requiring more serious consideration of "real life," "productive activity," and person-to-person daily relationships, and also directing attention toward the lower classes and the misery of the people. This contribution of Marx has been recognized by most Western social scientists. Secondly, some neo-Marxists point out that the most fundamental concept of value of Marx's communism was that individuals fully actualize their abilities through creative work. Marx did not abandon this concept of value in his later works. Most Western scholars who oppose Marxism deny or minimize the importance of the concept of value in Marx's works. They juxtapose the early works of Marx with his later ones, using the scientific character of his later works to negate the concept of value clearly specified earlier. They then use the historical experience of the West in the last hundred years and the results of social science to question the scientific character of the theories in Marx's later works. In so doing they totally negate the thoughts of Marx. This mode of explaining the thoughts of Marx and of arguing against any bond between the earlier and later works of Marx should serve as a negative example to Chinese scholars. Presently China is striving to elevate its spiritual civilization, and the most fundamental element of spiritual civilization is the concept of value. China should forever insist on the fundamental concept of value in Marxist communism. It should use this concept of value as the basis of policies for promoting the talented, for perfecting the planned commodity economy, and for establishing a high degree of socialist democracy.

After more than seventy years of revolution and reconstruction China's political

structure has undergone a fundamental change. China's political structure and its unique form of socialism contains elements from outside China as well as from its tradition. The old categories of "substance" [ti] and "function" [yong] no longer can express the relationship between these elements. Perhaps we could use five pairs of categories to describe the relationship, progressing from the more abstract to the more concrete: (1) whole and part; (2) content and form; (3) concepts of value and actual mode of life; (4) goal and method; (5) explicit policies, programmatic orientations, and guiding ideas and implicit conditions of objective interest determining support or resistance. Using these five pairs of categories, we can say of the current Chinese political structure that the whole, the content, the concept of value, the goal, and the explicit policies and their rationales are derived from abroad, while some parts of the whole, the form, actual mode of life, methods, and implicit conditions of interest are derived from traditional culture and social habit. The relationship of these structural elements cannot and should not be reversed. Certain beneficial parts of Chinese traditional culture, for example, the Confucian doctrine of humanity as the essence [renben zhuyi] and humanism [rendao zhuyi], can be used to supplement the whole. At the same time some important traditional parts, such as patriarchalism and bureaucratism, should be discarded. Finally, in order to perfect this new whole, and in particular to develop a planned commodity economy, to consolidate socialist legality, and to establish a high degree of socialist democracy and spiritual civilization we must use Western social sciences as our reference, including various schools of Marxism, and selectively introduce and apply them.

In summary, Chinese political experience in the twentieth century can pose many challenging issues to Western political science, and it can also serve as the basis for a Chinese political science with a distinctive world role. At the same time, Western political science offers China many research findings and theories that can contribute to the establishment of socialism with Chinese characteristics

and be used to develop Chinese political science. Let us uphold the traditional spirit of Peking University and Southwest Associated University and strive together. □

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The theme of the Congress will be "Towards a Global Political Science." There will be a plenary session, eight mini-plenary sections (each with approximately two sessions), and ten subfield sections (each with approximately five sessions) that will specifically explore the issues raised by the theme.

Mini-Plenary Sections

The eight mini-plenary sections, their convenors and co-convenors are as follows:

1. Political Science Methodology and Epistemology: Pierre Allan (Universite de Geneve); Adam Przeworski (South University-Chicago).
2. The Pluralization of Political Science: Asher Arian (Tel Aviv University); Claude Ake (Port Harcourt University).
3. The Synchronic and Diachronic Approaches: Ergun Ozbudun (Ankara University); Guillermo O'Donnell (CEBRAP).
4. A Global Political Theory?: Carol Pateman (Sydney University); Bhikhu Parekh (Hull University).
5. Communications and Political Science: Itzhak Galnoor (Hebrew University).
6. Policy Sciences and Beyond: to be decided.
7. Globalization and Gender: Caroline Andrew (Ottawa University).
8. The Institutionalization of Comparative Research: to be decided.

Subfield Sections

The ten subfield sections will have a substantive focus, but will also explicitly