

Suspended Animation

Political science as an independent discipline was abolished in China in 1952. Virtually no systematic study of politics was sustained for almost 30 years thereafter. While the reasons for the abolition of political science are understandable in the Chinese revolutionary context, the consequences are, nevertheless, enormous. The discipline—ranging from methodological techniques to theoretic breakthroughs—has in effect been frozen for nearly three decades. The unthawing of intellectual activity directed toward the study of politics must still be comprehended from the particularities of China today.

This issue of *PS* examines not only the reasons for the abrupt termination of political science in China but also the consequences for the discipline which has been under restoration since the fall of the Gang of Four. Chinese political scientist Zhao Baoxu discusses the causes of the abolition and the revival of political science in recent years. His subtheme, however, is the special intellectual problems posed by the existence of an explicit official ideology which permeates all inquiry and channels it in certain directions. Is political *science* possible under such conditions? Professor Zhao believes that it is and points to the kinds of problems amenable to both Marxism-Leninism and political science that Chinese scholars should address in their research.

David Shambaugh, an American graduate student currently at the International Politics Department at Peking University, and Wang Jisi, a Chinese scholar currently at the East Asian Institute at Berkeley, have teamed up to provide a fairly specific outline of the state of international studies in China as the field begins to assume a scholarly identity.

Paralleling Zhao, these observers emphasize the overriding importance of Marxist-Leninist theories of international relations. "Non-Marxist theories of [international relations] are rarely taught in universities or used to guide research," they report. Despite conceptual and other constraints, both see the opportunities for further development of international studies in China.

Finally, Seymour Martin Lipset of Stanford University candidly reports on his visit to China last spring and his observations cover aspects of Chinese society, the political and social attitudes he encountered, politics, Chinese perceptions of Marxism, the Cultural Revolution, and Chinese social science. Apropos to this symposium, Lipset believes there is a nascent move "away from conceiving of social science as the Marxist-Leninist study of the problems of socialism," a movement that he identifies with less senior Chinese social scientists.

Like Zhao, he notes the Chinese interest in empirical research that has practical implications for the society and recommends that U.S. and Chinese scholars engage in collaborative research that pursues this interest. If such collaboration is undertaken, not only Chinese political science but political science as a discipline that transcends national boundaries stands to benefit.

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