CONTEMPORARY CHINA AS A PROBLEM FOR POLITICAL SCIENCE

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PURPOSE

This paper attempts to set forth, in as nearly comprehensive and organized a manner as possible, a range of problems referring to the political development of Communist China, whose investigation would not only advance our understanding of contemporary Chinese politics but would also produce results of value for the general study of politics. Our focus is particularly, but not exclusively, on events since the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949. Our procedure is to move from the general to the specific: that is, to inquire, first what are the most general classes of political phenomena with which the Chinese political system has its

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affinities; second, what are the most general developmental trends which can be observed in the Chinese revolution; and third, what are the particular aspects of the dynamics of the Chinese political system which offer rewarding opportunities for research.

In this presentation, we wish to put special emphasis on those problems which are in fact researchable. In our conclusion we will deal briefly with the question of researchability—the extent and limits of data, the applicability of various research techniques, and the like. Ideally, this discussion should be accompanied by an evaluation of the state of the art. There is hardly any aspect of Chinese politics that has not been worked on where such work is feasible. The consensus of men active in the field is that there is no aspect of Chinese politics that does not badly need further study. In general I think it is reasonable to say that there has been produced so far the first generation of books on contemporary China, those that are broadly descriptive in rather an empirical way, plus a number of approaches to theoretically guided or controlled special studies of particular facets of Chinese politics. The indicated present need is for many more intensive monographic studies of the latter type, upon whose completion the second generation of books, which will contain the really significant contributions to political science, will become possible.

There is no need to insist on the practical value of understanding Chinese communism. We take it for granted that this value is amply understood by everybody; if there is a caution to be observed in this respect, there is perhaps more need to avoid overestimating China's real world importance than underestimating it. The practical value of Chinese studies serves in itself as a justification for research, and almost all writing on the subject reflects awareness of this factor, even though the student's original motive may not be to make a contribution to policy. But for political theory, size and actual or potential power do not alter the fact that China is but a single case. Our attention will be directed to the characteristics of this single case which are of interest for theory or for comparative studies.

CHINA AS A POLITICAL PHENOMENON

We note, to begin with, that the Communist revolution in China will very probably turn out to be one of the great histroic revolutions of man's post-Neolithic history. Apart from the number of people directly affected, the changes already brought about or envisaged in institutional structure, basic values, the nature and distribution of power, and the forms of political participation are extensive enough to justify the statement that a more drastic change in political type is taking place in China than has occurred in any human society for several centuries. The leaders of this revolution represent it

as having the character of historical inevitability and as foreshadowing a number of comparable developments elsewhere in the world, especially in the underdeveloped countries. For scientific purposes, the analysis of the pre-existing situation and of the revolutionary strategies and tactics employed is still insufficient to render a judgment concerning the predictive value of the Chinese case for other Oriental or African societies. As more historical evidence becomes available, the possibility of further study of this question improves.

Chinese Communist politics, both before and after achieving power, has been and continues to be a politics of transformation. Conflicting views are held as to how radical the break with the Chinese past has been, or as to how far it can go before encountering a cultural inertia beyond the capacity of political techniques to overcome. In the judgment of some scholars, the break is or is intended to be absolute, leading to nothing less than the dissolution of one and the re-creation of another political community. In this view, there is being inculcated in the Chinese public a wholly new system of beliefs, if not indeed of new modes of political perception. Others see in the Chinese revolution a persistence of social, economic and political problems which were already present in the pre-revolutionary period, with a change in the methods by which these problems

are attacked, but not necessarily in the nature of the solutions aimed at. In this view, the Chinese revolution tends to fall into a historical pattern of movement from integration to disintegration to reintegration, with perhaps a rather considerable persistence of "Chineseness" in the style of political behavior. We do not yet have intensive studies of particular facets of Chinese politics in which the interplay of the transformative drive with traditional values and behavior patterns can be analyzed so as to put the question in a scientifically testable form.

The Chinese revolution is totalitarian in two senses—in the sense of a drive toward the monopoly of power by a single institution and in the sense of the progressive politicization of areas of social life not previously under the proximate control of political authority. In the first sense, the revolution may be seen as falling into a historical pattern of movement from monolithism to pluralism to monolithism, and it can be argued that this movement is perhaps responsive to a profound Chinese cultural preference. In the second sense, Chinese developments are subject to comparison with other cases of development from traditional to modern social forms, whether the latter cases are comparably totalitarian or not.

Although we imply here that ideology and the political process can be separated for some analytical purposes, we by no means ignore the function of ideology in determining political choices. Given the special social and cultural characteristics from which Communist China has emerged, it is to be anticipated that China will provide an especially interesting case of the diffusion and restriction of revolutionary symbols. This expectation is perhaps confirmed by Chinese claims to be at the same time the defenders of Marxist—Leninist orthodoxy and to have produced significant innovations and adaptations in the practice of Marxist—Leninist revolution and in socialist construction. It appears that these developments have had special characteristics in China, owing to the special nature of the pre—Communist power situation and value system. These have been, if anything, obscured by the employment of symbols identical with those used in other Communist revolutions. It is, for instance, obvious that the so—called destruction of feudalism has not meant the same thing in detail in China that it did in Russia. It is not to be taken for granted that the process is as yet completed or that when completed it will result in a political structure only insignificantly different from that of other totalitarian systems. Given the pretensions of Communism to the status of a universal secular religion, it remains to be seen whether the deviations from the

theoretical norm will or will not be within the doctrinal limits of toleration.

The simple approach to a statement of the meaning of China for political theory is to list those characteristics of the Chinese revolution which establish its membership in one or another class of political phenomena. China is a case of totalitarianism, a case of consciously managed and directed political and social change, a case of political disorganization and reintegration, a case of forced economic development, a case of transformation from an agricultural to an industrial society, and the like. Its value to political theory would depend in each of these instances on whether it offers an especially attractive field for the testing of hypotheses regarding the political process under each of these conditions. Looked at in the opposite order there can be no question of the value of political science for the study of China. Whatever the defects of material and the problems of studying a closed society, any increase in the analytical sophistication applied to the study of Chinese politics is not only welcome but potentially productive of a multiplier effect.

In both the short and the long run, a much more refined understanding than we now possess of Communist China as a political organization is essential to the useful understanding of the worldwide distribution of

influence. Despite her own pretensions and the overeager acceptance of them in many new and some old nations, China is not a major world power. It is not even to be taken for granted that she will become one in the next decade. But China does not need to achieve the actuality of great power status in order to have a significant impact on world influence patterns. Two obvious facts are that the entire mode of functioning of the United Nations Organization and the possibility of arms control depend significantly on China's actions and world response to them. Similarly, even if all one can say with certainty at this point is that China helped precipitate the trend toward polycentrism, it is clear that the mode of functioning of the world Communist movement is affected by what the Chinese do, threaten to do, or are believed capable of doing. Besides the direct effects of Chinese actions and demands, the indirect effects on the internal politics and the international solidarity of other countries, especially the uncommitted, are neither wholly unanalyzable nor wholly predictable.

Looking forward to future developments, China's potential effect on world influence patterns will apparently depend first, on whether the distribution of power is consolidated in a bipolar pattern or moves towards an increasingly pluralistic one; and, second, in either of these cases, whether the structure of China's

external relations moves towards increased activity in the world community or reverts to a comparatively withdrawn or even parochial status. In terms of China's observable aspirations, a more active international role would be expected. In terms of foreseeable environmental changes, this trend is not altogether to be taken for granted.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CHINESE REVOLUTION

In an overall view of the restructuring of Chinese society and politics during the last twelve years, one can designate certain major reconstructive processes which provide a comprehensive, though not necessarily definitive, descriptive base. The adequacy of any such formulation depends on how satisfactorily we can describe and analyze the pre-existing structure which serves as the point of departure. While much remains obscure, and any increase in the depth of our knowledge of the republican period would be welcome, many of the political characteristics of pre-Communist China are fairly exactly describable. The reconstructive goals of the Chinese Communists have been stated verbally with considerable exactness, and for some of them concrete models exist in other countries.

We here provide a brief resume of processes under three heads: transfer of power, transformation of beliefs, and technological development.

Transfer of power has taken place by the elimination or transformation of formerly existing groups of power-holders and the creation of new groups. Broadly speaking, this process has been conducted in three areas—the rural, the urban, and the power elite. The process was carried on with a high degree of consciousness on the part of those directing change and with a continuous review of whether it was going according to expectations. We lack a coherent theory of the present nature of the sources of power and of the distribution of these sources of power among the various newly constructed institutions developed for the purpose of using it. There is very suggestive evidence that resistance has taken place at almost all points in this revolutionary process but we have no coherent theory concerning the nature of this resistance.

In the rural area the transfer has been from the gentry to the lower and middle peasantry to the organized congregate under state control. Theories exist concerning the sources of power of the gentry in the pre-Communist period. What we lack is an analysis of the methods by which the various sources of power were isolated from one another and either eliminated or transferred to new social segments or institutions. In the urban area the transfer of power has been from the commercial classes to the state or to state-controlled institutions with

limited autonomy, such as the labor union. It is clear that the structure has been changed from one in which control was highly dispersed and exercised on an individual basis, while at the same time the individual in his own interest formed more or less voluntary alliances both up and down in the social structure, to one in which individuals coordinate their activities through designated channels, under the control of the state, in relation to which they all occupy separate but equivalent status. The power elite has in practice become the party leadership. This apparently means two things. First, there is a trend toward the monopoly of power by a single institution. Second, the area of recruitment of the power elite has been expanded while the number and nature of the routes to membership in the power elite has become restricted. The first of these observations may require qualification. The party itself has pursued a declared policy of maintaining a united front. Events of 1957 and again of 1962 have indicated that either the monopoly has not been total, or that it has not been a fully effective instrument for achieving the goals of the regime, or that there are sectors of society, whether remnants or newly emerged, in which the hope was retained that the monopoly need not necessarily become complete.

The second aspect in the revolutionary process has been the deliberate transformation of beliefs. The

precise mixture of Chinese Communist ambivalent feelings about the past is hard to define. On the one hand, there is an evident attachment to the concept of China's greatness which now manifests itself in the intensity with which the regime insists on maintenance of the country's territorial integrity, recognition of its world power status, and the like. As in other underdeveloped countries, the national interest is placed above the interests of any lesser components of the nation, and in China perhaps with greater emphasis and consistency than in other underdeveloped countries. It can be plausibly suggested that in fact, and not just in Communist Chinese theory, China and the former colonial countries have reacted in similar ways to similar restrictions of national aspirations in the pre-independence period. If the supremacy of the national interest is at present taken more seriously in China than in some underdeveloped countries, this may in part be accounted for by reality factors, i.e., China's superior potentialities for achieving in reality the standing she desires.

On the other hand, there has been throughout the history of the Chinese Communist movement a consistent strain of hostility to the so-called "bourgeois" values which historically constitute the central values of the Chinese tradition. Again one can plausibly suggest that both this hostility and the intensity of the

attachment of the Chinese Communist leadership to its countercode are a reflection of decades of political disintegration and consequent impotence. Since taking power, the regime has attempted a redefinition of pre-existing values in many significant areas--the state (collective) vs. the individual, the worker-peasant vs. the bourgeoisie, women and children vs. men, the citizen of China vs. the Chinese, soldier vs. civilian, and many others. It is easy enough to draw up a list enumerating such areas of transformation of morale but this does not in itself provide either an account of the system, an account of the dynamics by which the revolutionary values have been imposed, or an estimate of the extent to which they have been effectively adopted. The transformation of morale has involved the formulation of many new images of the worthy man as against the unworthy. Over time the specifications and emphasis given to such images has varied, presumably in accordance with the variations in the nature of immediate real world problems.

There may be a significant difference in Russian and Chinese emphases on the characteristics of the rejected tradition which the revolution strives to eliminate or to transform. One feature that appears possibly to be of importance in this contrast is that whereas the early Russian revolutionaries believed themselves to have the mission of liberation of all

Western civilization (which in the evolutionary sense really meant all of civilization) from the shackles of a capitalism which has outlived its creative period, the Chinese rejection of the bourgeois tradition seems to have been conceived largely in Chinese cultural terms and only incidentally as contributing to the progress of human civilization as a whole. It is not that there is any lack of consciousness on the part of the Chinese Communists of belonging to a world movement. But the stated goals of the Chinese revolutionary process seem to be formulated in terms of immediately preceding Chinese history and of the transformation of specifically twentieth century Chinese political and social relationships.

For a certain period of time after the take-over of power the works of Mao Tse-tung impressed many Asian progressives as offering an effective critique of the social injustices in their own national culture or in Asian culture as a whole. In a twelve-year perspective, however, the Chinese version of the significance of their revolution for others is remarkably lacking in emphasis on moral and cultural values capable of being generalized. There has been a revival and transvaluation of traditional Chinese arts, but no great upsurge of aesthetic or philosophical creativity comparable to what the Russians thought they were achieving in the twenties and the thirties. The emphasis has been on the improvement of the standard of living and on the tactics of

attack and alliance which lead to the destruction of existing political power. Seen from the outside then, the Chinese revolutionary model impresses one as devoid of human warmth and as extraordinarily preoccupied with the techniques of political-economic action.

There is probably no existing political community more completely committed than Communist China to technological development as a social and political goal. From this commitment derive several characteristic features of the political system. It is this that determines, to the exclusion of other, traditional values, the relative priorities assigned to the needs of the rural and urban populations. Demands made on the population for the acquisition and employment of skills and for participation in new organizations acquire a deeply political character. The nature of aspirations must be seriously modified, and new patterns of loyalty must be developed. From the individual's standpoint, the sacrifices demanded and the rewards offered by society are structurally and qualitatively new and must result in a new concept of society.

At the same time, success in achieving announced economic goals becomes a major measure of the political validity of the system in the eyes of all participants. The regime's claim on the basic confidence of the masses becomes unusually closely linked to its prospects of performance in this one area. So long as belief is maintained in the regime's determination and probable

ability to succeed, mass cooperation appears to be obtainable even at the cost of substantial personal sacrifice. But to the extent that such belief is compromised, disaffection, apathy, or resistance in various forms may take place, and the legitimacy of the regime in all areas of political action may come into question.

DYNAMICS OF THE SYSTEM

In this section we present briefly a series of problems or problem areas in which research can be done. These are grouped under a set of rubrics designed to be in principle comprehensive and applicable both to the entirety of the Chinese Communist political system or to distinguishable subsystems within the total system. With reference both to the total system and to subsystems, we should take note here that within the brief history of the present mainland regime, there have been several important changes of phase corresponding to estimates on the part of the leadership regarding the attainment of stated goals of social—political transformation. The student of Chinese politics thus finds himself of necessity analyzing trends through time and dynamic processes. To every statement of a research problem below should be appended the phrase: "and to determine how this has varied through time."

Six major rubrics are used: participation, perspectives, organization, control, strategies, and outcomes. It is suggested here that these rubrics provide the basis for a comprehensive political analysis: that is, that we would in principle have a complete analysis of the Chinese Communist political system if we could accurately determine who participates, with what perspectives, through what organizational forms, exercising what extent of control, in accordance with what strategies, and with what outcomes (how effectively). Under each rubric below, we attempt to designate research problems in terms of observable features which appear to be specific to the Chinese political system. Each such problem should be capable of study and worthwhile in itself. The whole framework supplies a way of relating individual studies to one another. The same, or a not very different, set of rubrics should be applicable to other political systems, so that the whole framework can help locate problems for comparative study.

1. Participation. The Chinese Communists think of participation in politics ideally as nearly universal, subject only to the exclusion of those who are regarded as not admissible to the ranks of the "people." Theoretically, then, political action is expected of members of non-Han minority groups and of the Overseas Chinese. This attempted universalization of political participation

throughout the area to which the regime's authority extends, coupled with the provision of organizational forms within which such participation can take place is, in fact, a feature of the contrast between the present and preceding Chinese regimes.

Within this ideal pattern of universal political participation, there are categories of people who occupy roles which are characteristically and consistently, not temporarily or secondarily, the roles of political actors. Formally defined roles are, for example, those of members of the Communist Party, the so-called "cadres" (Kanpu), government officials, and the responsible representatives of minor parties or semiofficial organizations. There is some evidence of significant participation by actors outside the formal role-system.

The indicated research problem is the determination of what the actor roles are, who occupies them, and what kinds and degrees of influence the actors have over what resources.

2. Perspectives. The discussion above of Chinese Communist ambivalence about the Chinese past would lead one to expect that the Chinese should have a problem of self-identification. This expectation can be validated by reference to empirical data. The potential extremes are total identification with the Communist bloc and denial of any other identity or total identification as an autonomous national Communist country and denial of

other identity. Within this range there is the possibility of identification as a sector of an Asian Communist movement. In practice, there has been no exclusive option for any of these possibilities, but an oscillation between the extremes. The indicated research problem is the analysis of this oscillation and of the interplay between this and various constellations of policy choice.

There appears also to be a more or less regular opposition in the post—revolutionary process of government between "radical" (or "ideological") and "pragmatic" perspectives. In some cases the comparative desirability of given alternatives is so discrepant that in practice the choice is predetermined. In other cases, at times involving fundamental problems of state policy, the choice is not so clear. As evidence that such choice situations have been characteristic of the development of Communist China, there has been one open deviation, that of Kao Kang, which resulted in the elimination of the deviating faction, and rather frequently repeated strictures in the official Chinese press concerning both rightist and leftist trends in disagreement with the official line.

Especially in the absence of real information about policy differences, the major avenue of approach for the analysis of such differences has to be the study of Chinese ideological writings. These, one can assume, are not merely philosophical exercises but the reflection of

competing preferences with regard to the course of practical political action. Ideological writings help locate the axes of political conflict—within the party, between the party and the state apparatus, between the regime and the remnant bourgeoisie, and so on—at given points in time. One can at least hope that these writings embody one (possibly more than one) detailed code of behavior which tacitly or openly conditions the policy choices of the Chinese leadership and thus has real world consequences.

The indicated research problem is the analysis of variations in the relative dominance of "radical" vs. "pragmatic" perspectives and of optimistic vs. pessimistic expectations as contained in authoritative communications and the relation of these to images of the desired outcomes of alternative recommended policies.

3. Organization. In the sense of the description of institutions, research on contemporary China is possibly further advanced in regard to this category than is the case for any of the other categories used here. In respect to the mode of functioning of these institutions, there is a need for much more analysis.

To begin with, it appears probable that the concrete models for Communist Chinese organizations are to be found in Soviet Russian practice or in the experience of the Chinese Communist Party prior to the achievement of

power rather than in Chinese institutions of the republican period. There is thus the possibility of discrepancy between the two sources of guidance in organizational matters, as well as that of modification or innovation in response to emergent problems, environmental changes, and resultant redefinitions of political goals.

Second, there has been an observable oscillation, not yet well analyzed, between trends toward decentralized forms of organization and centralized forms of organization. Furthermore, at either pole of this oscillation, there are varying degrees of concentration or deconcentration, so that organizational functions are sometimes exercised by parallel forms, such as the party and the state, sometimes concentrated in one form which dominates the other. This suggests that a key observation concerning organization in Communist China may be that it is not yet routinized, and that research might be directed at the factors favoring or inhibiting routinization. Among organizational subsystems, the army, in view of its pre-revolutionary role and of the impact on it of strategic demands arising from the expansion of China's post-revolutionary horizons, may be a particularly interesting focus of study. There are in addition interesting comparative implications, which will emerge as the political role of the military in underdeveloped countries is further analyzed.

4. Control. In an earlier section we have treated the transfer of power as one of the major characteristics of the Chinese revolutionary process and have stressed

the drive toward monopoly of power by the party leadership. We here suggest that the process involved continues to be a dynamic one. United front policy continues in the post-revolutionary period to preoccupy China's communist leadership. While the tolerance of pluralism to the point of permitting independent power centers is contrary to Communist doctrine and practice, the bargaining potential of non-Communist elements in China, especially of the so-called intellectuals, is apparently greater than zero. This appears to be an important, though obscure, aspect of the power structure.

5. Strategies. Under this heading we consider the degree to which participants have an effective impact in terms of control over power or other values, and we find it necessary to refer back to points raised in earlier paragraphs of this section.

The factors that determine policy choices in China clearly go beyond real world practicality. They seem to involve varying predispositions on the part of elements within the leadership concerning the relative importance of moral and material factors, the choice of practical revolutionary tasks, and the relative effectiveness of coercive or persuasive methods of operation. A possible approach in this area would be through the study of decision-making personnel. In actuality this study has so far produced very little of direct relevance. It is possible that the preferred method of study, which

emphasizes social characteristics, has been inappropriate to the real problems. The real problems may lie in the personality and life experiences of particular individuals and in the pattern of their interpersonal relationships as this pattern has developed over a period of time equal to that of the normal adult span of life. But this is exactly an area where concealment or distortion of the facts is a serious obstacle. However much we may doubt the facade of unanimity the Chinese regime presents to the world, we have no reliable way of knowing what power conflicts take place within the regime. As far as the outside world is concerned, China's leaders are supposed to have public, but no private, lives and personalities. Given the depth and the length of the commitment of leadership figures to the party, we must even take into account the possibility that they are in a very real sense public men, and that their private selves are in fact only partial reflections of their public selves. The interplay of private and public motives in the selection of strategies may have in China an almost unique dynamic.

This may also be a good place to mention China's relations with the Communist bloc. The selection of strategies within China is clearly a matter of concern to the whole communist movement and a matter on which the communist movement has ways of exerting influence. At the same time, the determination of strategy in bloc

relations and in relation to the world communist movement is a major area of Chinese policy. In this area, we are close to the point of having productive competing theories, and clearly a continuation of studies on an expanded scale is indicated.

6. Outcomes. Under this head we consider studies oriented toward estimating the stability of the regime's authority and its effectiveness both within its territory and vis-à-vis other countries. We can anticipate real difficulties here. Especially in regard to internal politics, lack of access for direct observation is an obvious difficulty. A somewhat less obvious difficulty is that of establishing measures of success or failure. In a politics of self-conscious transformation, the goals are repeatedly stated and, since such statements are intended as action guides for participants, they may also legitimately be taken as criteria of performance. But there remains the problem of determining how many proximate successes equal ultimate stability, or how many proximate failures result in nonviability. We have suggested above that overall economic performance is a key measure, since failure may lead to a loss of legitimacy.

In foreign relations, access to observation is less of a problem, since access to countries which are important targets of China's foreign policy is possible and the impact of her activities can be more or less accurately

measured through the responses of the target countries. China's external politics, like her internal politics, is directed toward transformative goals. The criteria of performance are not too different from what one would apply to other countries. The research possibilities are many.

THE PROBLEM OF RESEARCHABILITY

It is well known that China does not offer a field for the application of many of the field techniques that have become characteristic of political research in the last decade or two. It is not so well known that the documentary material produced by the Chinese is voluminous, and that a very large part of it is available in adequate English translation. In connection with many problems, the bulk and the refinement of the documents make it possible to arrive at more precise descriptive formulations than one can do in the relatively inarticulate underdeveloped countries. Major defects in the Chinese data are under-reporting of facts, systematic suppression through censorship, and slanting for propaganda purposes. More or less accurate discounting is sometimes possible. The regime's need to communicate sometimes compensates for its need to conceal.

Inability to use controlled field techniques means that one major method of confirming an hypothesis is inapplicable. But this does not mean that there are no

methods of confirming at all. Given the kind of data the Chinese sources provide there are essentially three approaches.

Intuition is in practice the most widely used. The researcher absorbs a great deal of available data, comes to a tentative conclusion, and applies to this conclusion the tests of internal consistency and of consistency with bodies of more or less known fact which were not employed in arriving at the conclusion. The researcher's frame of reference is often not explicit at the outset of his study and is likely to be importantly conditioned by the data, but it can be stated explicitly at some stage, if only the final one, of the study. It can be argued, however, that precisely because of the problems of partial and negative evidence and because of the relatively limited areas so far subjected to analysis, the intuitive approach may still be the most productive. Empathy and the historian's touch may for the present be highly desirable, at least as leading to formulations subject to further systematic testing.

Content analysis ideally is a considerably more rigorous method than intuition. It was developed in part for the analysis of events and situations in which direct access to people and their intentions and decisions could not be had. It would appear to be particularly appropriate to the Chinese situation. Complex rules of inference should

be adopted, and the results are not self—validating. In contrast to intuition, content analysis ideally begins with an overtly stated frame of reference not derived by an inspection of the data themselves.

The third approach is through the formulation of hypotheses which can then be tested and confirmed or refuted. Given the small number of area specialists and the exigencies of Sinological training, it is too much to expect that fruitful hypotheses will appear in adequate quantity from the work of existing personnel alone, especially in the field of politics. Contemporary social science provides many theoretical concepts capable of application to Chinese data. Presumably the two most promising sources are studies completed or in process dealing with the Soviet Union as a type of Communist totalitarian political system and studies of comparative politics.

The problem of Chinese politics, for all its refractory characteristics and despite the limits on knowledge systematically imposed by a leadership driven by large ambitions and deep apprehensions, can be approached for purposes of analysis from a number of angles. Communist China as a political system has its points of departure in the absolute rejection of a pre—existing system and the construction of a substitute system out of both used and new materials. The abandoned system,

whether as a historical fact or as a distorted image constructed in order to be destroyed, is sufficiently describable. The reconstructive goals pursued by the revolution can be identified by reference to existing prototypes or to verbal formulations. The revolutionary methods employed have been, broadly speaking, transformation of the material environment, transformation of the value system, and the deliberate disassembly and reallocation of the facilities for political control.

It would be sterile to argue whether this process is historically unique or whether it has sufficiently close analogues to other known phenomena so that a comparative analysis will provide adequate explanatory formulae. What has been lacking has not been the possibility of stating relevant problems in practicable terms, nor access to manipulable if not wholly adequate information, but a body of research workers equipped with the skills that modern political theory provides and sufficiently interested to attack the job. Deficiencies in the available information probably mean that in the short run useful contributions will depend on disciplinary maturity and sophistication—possibly even a touch of intellectual arrogance—rather than on Sinological background.

The first requirement, then, is manpower. The absence of centers committed to long-term programs of investigation of one or more major aspects of Chinese politics on an

ambitious scale means that the data will progressively exceed the capacity of the academic world to analyze it. Thus, instead of an increasingly effective understanding of Chinese politics and a more and more important contribution by students of China to political dynamics, to the understanding of totalitarian systems, to comparative politics, and to the measurement of world influence patterns, we are likely to get the opposite.

With regard to research priorities, we have given above a number of suggestions. What can in fact be accomplished depends in part on the relative adequacy of the available data, in part by the general or theoretical interests most favored in the institutions where research is centered. There is still an urgent requirement for compilations which will provide at least initial guidance to the researcher. Concurrently with this work, some of which is being done and some of which may become available from nonacademic sources, the next indicated step is toward intensive studies, rather sharply focused and guided by a sense of theoretical relevance, so that each such study is conducted with awareness of the total Chinese context and of its comparative context. Otherwise stated, the immediate need is on the descriptive-analytic level. This does not mean purely empirical studies, but studies guided by a concept of the dynamics of the whole revolutionary process in China and by a sense

of responsibility to the scientific understanding of man and politics.

If the task is approached in these terms, it does not seem to demand first of all a large-scale training program designed to produce higher-quality China specialists. Such a program has a priority status all its own, namely, that it is in the long run indispensable. Without an effective training program, an immediate research program will eventually be abortive. But an immediate research program requires both the more effective use of existing committed manpower in an improved system of mutual communication and a moderately extensive borrowing of nonspecialized personnel from the disciplines, especially from among intellectually adventurous scholars in the social science fields.