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CHINA HAS WITNESSED MASSIVE SUFFERING in her modern transformation. Without exaggeration or a stretch of the imagination, an examination of the frequency and magnitude of destructiveness in China since the mid-nineteenth century may reveal it to have been one of the most violent countries in human history. A chronology of China's man-made disasters, generated by domestic conflicts as well as outside aggression, in the last 150 years makes it blatantly clear that a defining characteristic of modern Chinese history is the destruction of lives, property, institutions, and values. The poignant question, "Why does a culture that condemns violence, that plays down the glory of military exploits, that awards its highest prestige to literary rather than martial figures, and seeks harmony over all other values, in fact display such frequency and variety of violent behavior, that is of the use of physical force against persons?"¹ needs to be addressed. By examining the political, moral, and cultural nexus that has generated so much human misery, we can understand both the social sources of that suffering and the historical shape that much of the collective experience of brutal trauma has taken on the contemporary Chinese social landscape.

It is convenient to single out imperialism as the major cause of China's disorder in modern times. After all, the Taiping Rebellion, which displaced more than ten million people, the unequal treaties that significantly undermined the political authority of the Chinese

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state and carved China into foreign spheres of influence, the disintegration of the Manchu empire, Japanese aggression, the internecine warfare among the warlords, and the showdown between the Nationalists and the Communists, which contributed to an inestimable loss of lives, property, institutions, and values, are all easily attributable to the coming of the West as an engine of destruction.

Yet, the most devastating period of social suffering in China has occurred during the last forty years, after Mao Zedong proudly announced at the founding of the People's Republic the removal of feudalism and imperialism, the two great mountains blocking China's modernization. Imperialism was historically responsible for initiating a process of fundamental restructuring of society that eventually led to the establishment of the Communist leadership in China. But the style of political control that was instrumental in inflicting unprecedented suffering among the Chinese people was a mixture of several factors that are largely independent of the damage caused by the imperialists. Indigenous Maoist ideological assaults must be held accountable for much of the collective suffering in socialist China. To be sure, Marxist-Leninist and Stalinist policies were inseparable from the imperialist discourse. China's domestic policies were often responses to geopolitical conditions abroad, shaped predominantly by the Americans and the Russians. From the Chinese perspective, the Korean War and the war in Vietnam incited much of the anti-American sentiment that, in turn, profoundly influenced the *modus operandi* of China's economy and polity. Nevertheless, it was Mao's destructive political-moral will and the ensuing radical ideology that created the havoc of China's peculiarly violent twentieth-century society.

The peculiarity of this modern Chinese version of social violence and its traumatic aftermath in prolonged social suffering is complex and elusive. Not only the available methods of analysis but also the familiar conceptual apparatuses are inadequate to come to terms with this historical complex. A new orientation is needed. Ordinarily, violence can be portioned into victims and victimizers; even though victims may be implicated sometimes as active contributors or instigators of violent acts and thus partly responsible for their suffering, the victimizers are held accountable as the agents who have inflicted physical injury or psychological pain. In the Chinese case, millions suffered, including those who occupied

the most powerful and influential positions, yet the victimizers could not be easily identified, and the victims, by and large, felt profoundly guilty without being able to specify the causes for their suffering. The pervasive destruction affected millions, yet the real culprit behind the scenes of death and desperation was unnamed. Such was the sinister force of this ideological holocaust!

However, it is important to resist the temptation to present the history of Chinese communism in purely negative terms. China emerged from a semicolonial country, a mere geographic expression, to become a unified, independent, modern civilization-state: production and services increased at a steady rate for more than four decades; the infrastructure of the country (e.g., irrigation, sanitation, transportation, and communication) improved significantly; the quality and spread of public health virtually doubled the average peasant life expectancy; and Chinese workers, farmers, and soldiers have maintained a respectable living standard among developing nations. All of these improvements happened during the Communist rule. It is also important not to blame Mao as solely responsible for the ideological holocaust. We learn from historians, such as R. MacFarquhar, that Mao was not particularly active in the infamous Anti-Rightist Campaign (Deng Xiaoping was much more involved in destroying the livelihood of the liberal-minded intellectuals) and from journalists, such as E. Snow, that Mao deeply regretted the violence and the destruction of precious artifacts during the Cultural Revolution. Yet, Maoism² as a revolutionary creed of a newly established moral community was instrumental in creating an ethos in which collective violence was not only tacitly condoned but openly, explicitly, and vigorously encouraged.

MAOISM: MORAL COMMUNITY AND COLLECTIVE VIOLENCE

Despite a spate of books on Maoism, few attempts have been made to link its socio-logic to the tragic events that wove a complex and dreadful texture into the history of communism in China: the Anti-Rightist Campaign that brutally destroyed the intelligentsia by sending millions to the countryside, rendering the majority of the intellectuals *déclassé* for two decades; the “three hardship years” following the disastrous policy of the Great Leap Forward,

which claimed as many as forty-three million lives, mainly due to starvation;³ and the Cultural Revolution, which not only severely damaged the body politic but destroyed inestimable national cultural treasures in art, literature, and religion.⁴ Among scholars of contemporary China, there is consensus that Mao himself was the single most important motivating force behind these events. The historical record (even the official account of the Chinese Communist Party) clearly shows that Mao personally initiated the “freedom of speech” campaign under the slogan “let one hundred schools bloom” in 1956, that he tenaciously mobilized the national effort to industrialize through the rapid increase of steel production in 1958, and that, against overwhelming odds, he incited the Red Guards to rebel against all authority. However, there is no serious effort to suggest that Mao’s ability to exercise seemingly unlimited dictatorial power might have been, in a significant way, rooted in the persuasive power of the ideology itself.

David Apter and Tony Saich recently studied the Yan’an legacy by employing social theory constructs of discourse community, exegetical bonding, symbolic capital, and inversionary ideology. In their cultural critique, Mao is a master storyteller who ingeniously transforms himself from the narrator to the pivotal figure in modern China’s collective narrative and thus defines the rules of the discourse, the terms for the exegesis, the parameters of the symbolic resources, and the main thrust of the ideology. They identified the critical period for the formation of Maoism to be from 1937 to 1942.⁵ The story of Mao’s rise to prominence in the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is well known. Party historians have generally singled out the Zunyi Conference (1935) during the Long March as the critical event in Mao’s emergence as the indisputable leader of the CCP, but it was in the loess caves of Yan’an that Mao built a stronghold where he could transform political leadership into ideological authority. How this nexus of political, moral, and cultural authority became a demonic force of destruction demands further explanation.

The well-documented and careful archival works by a coterie of conscientious scholars and journalists, notably Benjamin Schwartz, Liao Gailong, Stuart Schram, Li Rui, and Edgar Snow, have convincingly demonstrated that Mao’s leadership was established by his ingenuity as a military strategist, fearlessness as a revolution-

ary, vision as a theoretician, persuasion as an ideologist, rapport with the peasant community, and charisma. His ability to win the support of an experienced general like Zhu De, outmaneuver a shrewd competitor like Zhang Guotao, and gain the loyalty of a seasoned intellectual like Zhou Enlai clearly indicates that Mao's ascendancy in the Chinese Communist movement was the result of many factors. This manifold assessment of Mao's strength provides a necessary background for an in-depth analysis of the sources of his authority, specifically his appeal to and manipulation of the intellectual community. Never in Chinese history have we observed such a combination of the ingenious use of symbolic power and outright anti-intellectualism. Mao's obsession with and contempt for the literati made him a nihilist with literary flair. The task of understanding his destructive power lies not only in a depiction of who he was and why he behaved as he did but also in an appreciation of what he symbolized, the people to whom he appealed for support, and the way he was able to have such a damaging effect.

It is difficult to ascertain how self-conscious Mao was that he was building a discourse community as the basis for his authority. His conscientious effort to make his own writings the core curriculum for the revolutionary movement seems to indicate that he had a great appreciation of the power of the pen. The essays "On Protracted War," "On Practice," and "On Contradiction" not only constituted the basic texts for the CCP, around which a host of exegetical readings derived their inspiration, but also justified the CCP's role as the embodiment of a sacred mission to "save the nation" (*jiuguo*). On the surface, the narrative was simple. The CCP, rather than the Nationalist government, had a comprehensive and practical strategy to deal with the Japanese aggression. By arousing the patriotic sentiments of the peasantry, who constituted 80 percent of the Chinese population, and organizing the Red Army into effective guerrilla fighters, Mao would render China militarily prepared to endure the protracted warfare necessitated by Japan's invasion.

The Long Marchers, having survived the most trying ordeal, were ready to save the nation. Underlying the narrative, the theme of violence looms large. Those who had endured the most devastating ordeal embodied the will to face up to the demonic force

from abroad. Those who could mobilize the property-less peasantry in a fierce struggle against the landlord class, furthermore, would reinvigorate the revolutionary power of the seemingly enfeebled Communists, enabling them eventually to prevail over the Nationalists. In Mao's mind, this message of violent struggle was encoded in nature as well:

Mountains!
Like great waves surging in a crashing sea,
Like a thousand stallions
In full gallop in the heat of battle.

Mountains!
Piercing the blue of heaven, your barbs unblunted!
The skies would fall
But for your strength supporting.⁶

Mao's appeal to the will of the Chinese people to overcome foreign belligerence and domestic incompetence resonated with the concern of intellectuals throughout China, including those in the base areas of the Nationalists. For the Nationalists in 1945, who had been besieged by Japanese forces and demoralized by protracted warfare for eight long years, the euphoria of victory was soon overshadowed by anxiety over inflation and military confrontation with the Communists. Mao's poem, a sort of self-identity, caused a stir in Chongqing literary circles when it was unofficially published upon completion of his negotiations with Chiang Kai-shek and after his departure from the Nationalist wartime capital:

But alas! Qin Shihuang and Han Wudi
Were lacking in literary grace,
And Tang Taizhong and Song Taizu
Had little poetry in their soul;
And Genghis Khan,
Proud Son of Heaven for a day,
Knew only shooting eagles, bow outstretched.
All are past and gone!
For truly great men
Look to this age alone.⁷

Mao's panoramic view of the four esteemed emperors and the terrifying Mongolian ruler in the imperial era evoked sensations of

China's greatness and revealed a grandiose self-image, verging on megalomania, but the poem's distinct message was not merely personal ambition but the embodiment of China's destiny. To the literati, the key meaning inscribed in the poem was the reference to literary grace and poetic soul, a quality that Mao obviously claimed for himself but denied the founding fathers of great dynasties. For all that, there was more battle cry than aesthetic elegance in Mao's assertive voice.

Mao's deliberate attempt to establish himself as a member of the literati is well documented, but his ability to strike a sense of awe in sophisticated intellectuals through face-to-face communication and personal correspondence is yet to be fully studied. We have only begun to understand how his idiosyncratic self-assertion became deeply ingrained in the collective experience of the CCP and how it profoundly shaped the communal awareness of the Chinese intelligentsia as a whole. Mao characterized himself as beyond any belief in the evil spirits. This fearlessness must have appealed to many intellectuals who had already abandoned the life of the mind for political activism. It took decades for some of the most self-reflective of them to realize that their attraction to, if not genuine admiration for, Mao's unbridled recklessness may have significantly contributed to his charismatic power. An analysis of Mao's genre (*Mao wenti*), as an integral part of a long-term project to study Party culture (*dang wenhua*), was initiated by a group of dissident intellectuals after the Tiananmen tragedy of 1989. It is extremely difficult, especially for those who have been victimized, to think through the process by which a single individual assumed such demonic force and created such devastation; even with considerable hindsight it remains perplexing and mystifying.⁸

Paradoxically, Mao's demonic potency lay precisely in the deceptively simple vision—one person's wishful thinking disguised as the collective's prophetic insight—reflected by an ever-extending circle of Chinese:

To Kunlun now I say,
Neither all your height
Nor all your snow is needed.
Could I but draw my sword o'ertopping heaven,
I'd cleave you in three:

One piece for Europe,
 One for America,
 One to keep in the East.
 Peace would then reign over the world,
 The same warmth and cold throughout the globe.⁹

Especially noteworthy is the fact that this poem was composed toward the end of the Long March, literally “on horseback,” when “Mao had crossed twenty-four rivers and eighteen mountain ranges, in weather now tropical and now frigid. He had arrived in the loess country of the northwest with only 10 percent of the troops [his First Front Army, which made up about one-quarter of the Long Marchers, dwindled from thirty thousand to three thousand] who had left Jiangxi one year before.”¹⁰ What Mao envisioned then was China’s rightful place in his perception of a just world.

It is remarkable that a man with limited formal education from remote Shaoshanchong in Hunan, who learned about Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao’s reformism in his teens, and who first saw a map of the world at nineteen, felt ready to embark on a journey to save China. It is equally remarkable that this fiercely competitive and blatantly presumptuous youth, with the social experience of “struggle” and hatred, revenge and contempt, became the embodiment of a master narrative: the liberation of the Chinese people from poverty and ignorance. It is even more remarkable that this dreamer of destructive visions, imbued with a strong dose of revolutionary romanticism, has been regarded by his millions of followers, including sophisticated intellectuals trained in Western Europe and North America, as China’s savior for half a century.

Referring to “the official founding of the CCP [that] occurred in late July and early August of 1921” as a “dramatic episode,” David Apter, with his focus on Yan’an as Mao’s “simulacrum,” comments on the rise of Mao:

This episode, the spy, the water, the dangerous terrain, the trials, and tasks are conditions for Mao’s own story of coming to power. It is a tale of overcoming in which not only does he defeat his enemies despite serious setbacks, he overcomes his ignorance of Marxism to triumph over those Russian-trained adepts who represented themselves as the real Marxist intellectuals. His story is also about the evolution of his thoughts.¹¹

Mao's ability to condense the stories of the decline and fall of China, the conflict of the CCP with the Nationalists, and his own struggle within the Party into an "epic, drama, and passion play" helped him "to deposit much mystique in a common fund." As Apter notes,

Each [of the three stories] offers a different resonance adding layers of symbolic intensity to Yan'an as a simulacrum. Each is received in speeches, used to illustrate texts. Running through them is a common theme, embodied and embellished by "political yearning."¹²

The emergence of Maoism as the radical ideology, the rise of Mao as the revolutionary leader, the establishment of the CCP as the institutional vanguard for the struggle, and the triumph of Marxism-Leninism as the guiding principle in China's quest for a modernizing strategy are integral parts of a master narrative that forged a discourse community. The network of moral and affective relations began with a tiny minority of peasant warriors and idealist youth in the caves of Yan'an and, in less than a decade, wore its way into the collective imagination of the Chinese people, who affirmed it as the bearer of the Mandate of Heaven leading China toward the brave new world. Official CCP historians insist that the Marxist-Leninist dialectic of historical inevitability, the Party's indigenization of the anti-imperialist struggle through the experience of the Long March, Mao's leadership by exemplary teaching, and the wisdom of Maoism as a source of inspiration are essential factors in this incredible historical transformation. Mao himself believed that the Communists' ability to concentrate on the war with the Japanese as the overriding task of the Yan'an decade earned them the right to govern China. In his view, the Long March was the authenticating cultural event for the inevitable confrontation:

The sky is high, the clouds are pale.
We watch the wild geese flying south till they vanish;
If we reach not the Great Wall, we are no true men!
Already we have come two thousand leagues.

High on the crest of Liu Pan Mountains
Our banners idly wave in the west wind.
Today we hold the long cord in our hands;
When shall we bind fast the gray dragon?¹³

A critical examination of China's modern transformation may reveal that Marxism-Leninism was but one of the modernizing strategies and a highly ineffective choice at that; that the Long March was a desperate escape from Chiang Kai-shek's encirclements; that the bulk of the pressures of Japanese aggression (symbolized by the "gray dragon" in Mao's poem) was borne by the Nationalists; that Mao's leadership was only a contributory factor in the success of the CCP as the challenger of the Nationalist mandate; and that Maoism was not a coherent doctrine guiding the praxis of the revolution. The confrontation between the CCP and the Nationalists (1945–1949), involving massive military maneuvers, moreover, was decided on the battlefields rather than on the ideological front. No matter. On October 1, 1949, when Mao declared the founding of the People's Republic, proclaiming that "the Chinese people have stood up," liberal-democratic intellectuals as well as his CCP colleagues perceived him as the actualization of a national dream. The dreamer had become the embodiment of China's destiny; the past had authenticated the vision for the future. Individual experience became collective experience; idiosyncratic expression became cultural representation. Now the symbolic stuff of local illusion would be catalyzed into the collective emotions of traumatic social reality.

FROM CULTURAL MOVEMENT THROUGH INVERSIONARY IDEOLOGY TO SOCIAL TERROR

In September 1989, three American centers for Chinese studies (Berkeley, Harvard, and Michigan) sponsored a conference to mark four anniversaries: the French Revolution (1789), the Opium War (1939), the May Fourth Movement (1919), and the founding of the People's Republic (1949). Although the Tiananmen massacre on June 4 of that year loomed large in the minds of the participants, the evocation of memories of the four previous events helped to put China's tragic history of modern transformation in perspective. Indeed, it was the Enlightenment mentality exemplified by the revolutionary spirit of the French, as contrasted with the skepticism and empiricism of the English Enlightenment, that dominated the intellectual discourse of the May Fourth generation. It was, however, the vortex generated by the seemingly con-

tradictory forces of an iconoclastic attack on the Confucian tradition and an impassioned commitment to the revitalization of China as a race, a civilization, and a unified polity that overwhelmed the hearts and minds of the May Fourth Chinese intelligentsia. Virtually every youth of “blood and vital energy” was sucked into this vortex: anxiety, impatience, rebelliousness, and engagement characterized the ethos. Mao, like the “enlightened” youth of his generation, was exposed to the writings of Adam Smith, Herbert Spencer, John Stuart Mill, and Darwin through Yan Fu’s masterly translations, but it was in Rousseau’s critique of culture, advocacy of an intimate community, and idea of the “general will” that Mao found a kindred spirit.

The acute awareness that, in less than half a century, the proud Middle Kingdom had been brought to its knees, as a semicolonial country humiliated by unequal treaties and carved up by the spheres of influence, made all educated Chinese “nationalist” in ethnicity, culture, and polity. The sense of crisis prompted by Japan’s miraculous ascendancy as a full-fledged imperialist power in less than one generation and, as a result, her grave threat to China’s existence compelled intellectual forces of all persuasions to take “save the nation” as the common denominator. Understandably, the overriding concern of the May Fourth generation was the preservation of the Chinese nation and the Chinese race (*baoguo baozhong*). The extreme conservatives and the radical revolutionaries shared the same burning desire to make China stand on her own feet. There was a compelling reason why Marxism-Leninism, rather than American pragmatism, German idealism, British empiricism, or French rationalism, emerged as the ideology for China’s modernization: the success of the Russian revolution in 1917 and the attraction of the subsequent China policies of the USSR. The CCP’s propaganda machinery played a critical role in this ideological turn. Nevertheless, we must not underestimate the vortex mentioned above that attuned the Chinese ear to the Marxist-Leninist message: it was Western to the core, and, at the same time, it was thoroughly anti-Western imperialism. In other words, it had the potential of smashing the two mountains blocking China’s path toward modernity: feudalism and imperialism.

Underlying this rhetoric was the famous slogan of May Fourth that only Mr. Sai (Science) and Mr. De (Democracy) could save China. The advocacy of science and democracy as true manifestations of the Enlightenment symbolized a broad consensus of the Chinese intelligentsia.¹⁴ With a few notable exceptions, they strongly believed that the mobilization of all the energies of the Chinese people, based on a comprehensive vision of social reconstruction, was the necessary and most economical way to save China. The absence of other Enlightenment values, such as liberty, the dignity of the individual, private property, privacy, human rights, and due process of law, occasionally stirred the more refined scholarly minds, but most intellectuals were satisfied with the simplicity and neatness of the agenda. For eighty years, the sanctity of science and democracy has never been questioned. Neither the CCP nor its most severe critics ever raised any doubts about it. It was not an accident that the likeness of the Statue of Liberty that appeared in Tiananmen Square was rechristened the Goddess of Democracy. Party ideologists have condemned liberalization as a form of spiritual pollution and human rights as alien to Chinese tradition, but they have never criticized democracy. Understandably, Mao's doctrine of "New Democracy" had thousands of patriotic intellectuals mesmerized.

Lurking behind the scenes, however, was neither science nor democracy but scientism and populism. Strictly speaking, instrumental rationality and Jacobin-like collectivism fundamentally restructured the Chinese intellectual world in the post-May Fourth period. The rich diversity of symbolic resources, characteristic of the cultural scene at the turn of the century, was gradually stylized into a dichotomous mode of thinking: progressive/regressive, revolutionary/reactionary, proletarian/bourgeois, true/false, beautiful/ugly, and good/evil. These intellectual debates continued in the Nationalist period (1927–1949). Issues pertaining to China's modernization, centering on cultural identity, Westernization, capitalism, socialism, industrialization, and a host of other problem areas, were widely debated in academic circles. Intellectual sophistication was high and many presented thoughtful recommendations for optimizing resources available to China in her modern transformation. On the whole, however, it was revolutionary praxis,

the concrete procedure by which ideas were translated into institutionalized action, that claimed the most attention.

While Hu Shi and other Western-trained scholars, under the sponsorship of the Nationalist government, turned their attention to academic pursuits in the name of “sorting out and sifting our national heritage” (*zhengli guogu*), the “progressive” intellectuals, obsessed with the belief that orthodoxy naturally leads to orthopraxy, were fully engaged in determining the nature of Chinese society, expanding the cultural capital for socialist reconstruction, appropriating symbolic resources for the revolutionary cause, and empowering an increasing number to actively participate to save the nation. By the end of 1937, specifically after the Xian incident (1936) when the CCP and the Nationalists ostensibly combined forces in a holy war against Japan, the leftist turn of the Chinese intelligentsia seemed inevitable. This significantly enhanced Mao’s prestige not only as a military strategist but also as a revolutionary theorist.

Mao’s contempt for Western-trained scholars and his genuine affection for the peasants made him a distinguished populist who, especially in the eyes of the intellectuals, seemed to have gained privileged access to the peasant mentality. The youthful Mao chose to stay home because he did not believe that the key to China’s future lay in the West or, for that matter, in Russia. His nativism, carefully cultivated by his focused investigations into peasant conditions, served him well as a nationalist. Yet, although he harbored strong anti-imperialist sentiments, he does not seem to have been xenophobic. His admiration for Lu Xun and his companionship with the literatus Guo Moruo, both returned students from Japan, his association with Zhou Enlai and Deng Xiaoping, who had both spent considerable time in France, and his friendship with the American journalist Edgar Snow indicated that he could choose not to function in an enclosed, nativistic, symbolic universe. Although he preferred to read dynastic history, traditional novels, and classical poetry, he studied Marxism-Leninism with utter seriousness and taught himself to read English documents with the aid of a dictionary. He led a deceptively simple life; he seems to have deliberately cultivated an image of rusticity. Recent stories about his sexual appetite may have seriously tarnished his integrity as an incorruptible revolutionary, but those

who were intimately familiar with his life-style saw him neither as majestic nor luxurious but down-to-earth. This, of course, does not mean that he was not excessive in squandering national resources. The maintenance of his several resorts was extremely costly and his unpredictable and frequent inspection tours by train, with a huge entourage, are only a sample of his many extravagances. Nevertheless, as a ferocious reader, a captivating poet, and an idiosyncratic calligrapher, his stature as a literatus has never been seriously questioned. How could this seemingly innocuous poet, strategist, theorist, and dreamer become an engine of destruction and the source of the most heinous atrocities in Chinese history?

According to the memoirs of several victims of the Anti-Rightist Campaign, few ever challenged the verdicts of the Party, nor did anyone voice doubts about the supreme wisdom of Mao, the Helmsman. We may easily condemn this passivity and acquiescence as political blindness or outright cowardice, but case after case suggests that guilt, self-criticism, and sacrifice were such powerful mitigating sentiments that even hatred and a sense of injustice were not allowed to surface. Are the brainwashing techniques or the mechanics of psychological totalitarianism mainly responsible for this incredible art of silencing? The absence of a well-coordinated state machinery as a disciplinary agency, the highly decentralized method of coercion, and the pervasive voluntarism of the victims as well as the victimizers suggest that the terror that the Helmsman inflicted upon millions of intellectuals was, in Lu Xun's terminology, caused by an invisible "soft knife" that cuts so deeply that society as a whole, rather than any individual, bleeds. To put it differently, no matter how many cases we can identify, the cumulative experience of individual suffering pales by comparison with the damage done to the "collective consciousness." This was the deepest layer of social suffering. Since the primacy of the "general will" demands that, at a critical juncture in China's development, any vicious attacks on the Party, irresponsible criticisms of the government, subversive remarks about the leadership, or simply idle talk will be extremely harmful to the well-being of the people, the silencing of a tiny minority is not only justifiable but necessary.

The treatment of a tiny minority, let us say 5 percent, was a large enough quota to silence the entire Chinese intelligentsia. Mao's theory of contradiction, conveniently adapted to the contingency, turned those who, in other political contexts, could be easily accommodated as members of the loyal opposition into enemies of the people. The contradictions within the people and between the people and their enemies were interpreted as radically different forms of social tension; the former was healthy and reconcilable but the latter was destructive and irreconcilable. Mao's strategy to save the Party, its leadership, and, above all, his authority worked at the expense of an entire generation of liberal-minded (including quite a few Communist) intellectuals. There was physical coercion, public humiliation, and emotional torture. Many "rightists" survived the ordeal and were "rehabilitated" in the post-Cultural Revolution period; some of them even assumed leadership positions in the Party, government, mass media, academia, and the arts.

The institutional mechanism that enabled such a massive campaign to take place at all levels of society was the work unit system (*danwei*). Scientism and populism were clearly the rationale behind the implementation of such a system. The most efficient way for China to mobilize all of her energy for socialist construction was a comprehensively planned and fully integrated structure, significantly departing from the existing organizations. Or, alternatively, in order to ensure that the newly established infrastructure would enhance rather than impede the inevitable historical process of actualizing the Communist ideas of equality and distributive justice, all existing institutions must be thoroughly modified. Lurking behind this apparent effort at social engineering was the totalistic will to control and an intense fear that charisma, the impulse to change, to deconstruct, and to reorganize, could become routinized.

Guided by instrumental rationality, at least on the surface, although the morally authenticating experiences of the Long March and of Yan'an never ceased to animate the new style of control, Mao, as a strategist, urged his colleagues to put aside the things they knew well and to learn the institutional imperatives of running a modern bureaucracy from experienced leaders in urban centers (i.e., Beijing, Tianjin, and Shanghai). Yet, Mao time and

again deliberately and ostensibly ignored the institutional imperatives and ruthlessly undermined the rules of the game in running a modern bureaucracy. Furthermore, the leadership of the CCP, not to mention the authority of its core members and, by implication, of Mao himself, was to be protected and defended at all costs. The demand for populism, however, compelled Mao to accept, implicitly if not publicly, that performance criteria, a sort of accountability if not transparency of governance, would have to be applied to evaluate all cadres, himself included. The very fact that each of the members of the CCP, including the leadership core, was incorporated in the unit system, with a permanent file that included his or her class background, education, information about personal matters such as marital status, conduct, attitudes, beliefs, and so forth, indicates that a process of atomization was superimposed upon the entire society. Actually, a grave consequence of this arrangement was that, in theory and practice, every member of the society was susceptible to the disciplinary mechanism of the regime. This level of vulnerability and the deep fear it evoked bound the society and its various subgroups, including the cadres, together.

What Mao created, as an ingenious response to the post-1949 situation, was more a cultural “process” than a social “structure” of control, with the specific purpose of mass mobilization for socialist construction. It was not a Stalinist totalitarianism because the dynamism, though initiated by directives from above, was often fueled by enthusiastic voluntarism from below. Without the overwhelming consensus of the “general will,” the major campaigns launched in the 1950s could not have exerted such devastation over the existing social structure. China’s stunning performance in the Korean War (December 1950), using over seven hundred thousand “volunteers,” including Mao’s son, who died in the conflict, barely a year after the bloody struggle with the Nationalists, testified to Mao’s charismatic manipulation of the patriotic sentiments of the Chinese people. They seemed more eager than ever to commit China on a march toward the brave new world.

The willingness, indeed commitment, to discord, conflict, contradiction, struggle, and destruction engendered a mentality evoking, most of all, the Hegelian “negative will,” a will determined to destroy systematically and thoroughly, if only as a precondition

for reconstruction. In the perspective of the Confucian discourse, characterized by the ethos of harmony, reconciliation, negotiation, shareability, and consensus, which, in theory and practice, has been the cultural tradition of the Chinese intelligentsia, the Maoists must answer the following questions: “How much bloodshed and physical violence are they ready to accept as a price to be paid for social ‘progress’ and the pursuit of self-assertion (by individuals and groups)? Where does one draw the line between useful discord and destructive violence—and how can one insure that favoring the former does not inevitably entail privileging the latter?”¹⁵ As Maoist China was continuously rent by bloody conflicts between divergent ideological groups, with profoundly devastating consequences for “organic solidarity” at all levels of society, Maoists seem to contend that there is no limit to bloodshed and, as far as destructive violence is concerned, there is no need to draw the line. As forged by a rebellious peasantry, the Marxist theory of “class struggle,” and the conviction that “political power grows out of the barrel of the gun,”¹⁶ inherent in Maoism is a fundamental propensity toward deconstruction.

Mao, in an oblique reference to Kang Youwei’s failure to bring about the “Great Harmony” (*datong*) through reform, expressed confidently that the Communist utopia was attainable by his revolution led by the working class.¹⁷ A clear demonstration of Mao’s revolutionary romanticism was his “land reform” (1951–1953) program. The brutal simplicity with which a whole class of landlords was indiscriminately humiliated, coerced, and destroyed made Mao a hero, indeed a savior, among numerous newly possessed families. A similar leveling process, effectively put into practice with the cathartic “struggle sessions” in the countryside, was carried out in the urban areas, with less theatrics but no less brutality, against the capitalists and the petty bourgeoisie. By the time Mao launched the Hundred Flowers campaign, an obvious response to the liberal-democratic movements in Eastern Europe, notably Hungary, the intellectuals who voiced discontent strongly believed that they were involved in a style of internal criticism for the sake of the CCP. Given the long, bitter fate that many of them endured as a consequence, their actions might appear to be naive. But Mao’s punishment was extreme, and the seeming irrationality of

the violence was rooted in a sharp conflict between Mao's utopian vision and the intellectuals' liberal-democratic aspirations.

The discourse community that Mao thought he had already forged was based on his experiential understanding of protracted war, practice, and contradiction. With the end of the Korean War, which considerably enhanced his prestige in the Communist bloc, and the "success" of land reform, which made him a godlike provider, he felt totally confident in allowing the intellectuals to openly and freely express their opinions on the state of the nation. To his astonishment, their frank criticism undermined the achievements of the CCP and challenged the legitimacy of his own authority. The intellectuals, in fact, subscribed to a radically different vision of society (for instance, a multiparty democratic polity with regular elections and guarantees of rights and liberties). Their underlying value orientation, liberal-democratic in nature, stressed gradualism, negotiation, coordination, compromise, and harmony. While many of Mao's colleagues were astonished by the outburst of intellectual dynamism, the Helmsman decided to steer the state into the turbulent waters of class struggle. Fearing that his utopian vision was seriously blurred by what he would, with complete vindictiveness, call the poisonous ideas of the intellectuals, he enjoined the country to refocus its attention on the socialist path.

A logical consequence of this reorientation was the marginalization of the intelligentsia, from the status of active participants or sympathetic observers to that of spoilers, indeed "enemies of the people." Those who were labeled "rightists" were immediately marginalized, alienated not only from the masses, but from other intellectuals and from their own immediate families as well. Family members were urged, often under great pressure from relatives and friends, to draw a clear line of demarcation between themselves and the targets. Furthermore, as the campaign gathered momentum, those, including spouses and children, who showed even the slightest sympathy toward such enemies of the people would suffer severe punishment for their inability to commit themselves to the right path. Once the Rightists were condemned as the "radical other," a process of "pseudospeciation," to use Erik Erikson's term, was underway. The psychopathological condemnation of the Rightists as nonpeople not only denied them any status in society but also robbed them of any dignity or decency as

fellow human beings. As a result, they were reduced to subhumans and no longer existed as members of the same species. Thus, the inversionary “speciation” that made them less (“pseudo”) human justified any maltreatment of them.

Millions were victimized by this kind of “soft knife” procedure, which was perceived by the victimizers as a necessary sacrifice for maintaining the purity of the socialist spirit. Mao’s own exemplary teaching was a necessary precondition for this procedure to function with the kind of voluntarism it engendered. While Confucian teaching takes, as a point of departure, the bonding affection between parent and child for moral development, Maoists purposefully drove a wedge into the sacred relationships (i.e., parent-child, husband-wife, siblings, and friends) as a litmus test for loyalty to the socialist cause. The bellicose nature of Maoist thinking lies in its determination to bear the unbearable in such a way that sympathy, defined in Confucian terms as “the inability to bear the suffering of others,” was condemned as the weakness of the will. The inversion of Confucian values would simultaneously defeat individualism and undermine the moral resources available to make despair meaningful. Once basic human feelings, such as loving and caring for the closest kin, were strongly criticized as petty bourgeois sentimentalism and publicly denounced as incongruous with the revolutionary spirit, they lost their legitimacy in the court of appeal of the newly constituted discourse community. It created cultural suffering by inverting the symbolic capital of the individual experience of suffering.

Especially noteworthy is the total asymmetry between the confession of guilt by the victims and the self-righteousness of the victimizers. Not only did the intellectuals who had undeservedly suffered the most demeaning maltreatment acknowledge a sense of guilt for their failure to live up to the communal standards set up by the CCP because of their class background, socialization, education, or lack of commitment, they also willingly forgave those who were the disciplining agents of the state. By contrast, no prominent victimizer was ever brought to trial even for the slightest misdemeanor. The Party, which finally decided to “rehabilitate” the victims more than twenty years later, after Mao had died and his Red Guards had deconstructed the Party leadership, made almost no attempt to bring charges against the victimizers, with

the notable exception of the so-called “Gang of Four,” who can hardly be classified, by any stretch of the imagination, as victims. Mao of course never acknowledged any wrongdoing in this regard.

Is it conceivable that an important reason for the massive social suffering was the consensus of the discourse community, by choice and by default, that Maoism was self-evidently true and inherently practicable? In retrospect, it is preposterous and uncanny to retrace the steps, whether real or imagined, that eventually led to the holocaust of the Cultural Revolution in which even the victimizers were pitiful mockeries of their professed idealism and heroism. For a decade (1966–1976), intra-party conflict aside, the entire society was embroiled in a struggle crudely defined in terms of the two lines: socialist/capitalist, progressive/reactionary, leftist/rightist, native/foreign, new/old, selfless/selfish, and good/bad. While in any concrete situation neat categories are inevitably mixed, what Maoism initially symbolized to the Red Guards was, however, a clear message: the socialist path, progressive polity, leftist ideology, native method, new vision, selfless leadership, and good people; a clear break from the feudal past, bureaucratism, elitism, privilege, and corruption as practiced by the capitalist-roaders.

The special shape of social suffering as forged by Maoism is inconceivable without reference to the persuasive power of the rhetoric of the discourse community. There was no alternative intelligence anywhere to compete with the Maoist claims. There was no autonomous intelligentsia, critical mass media, or independent business community; in short, there was no civil society. Nor was there any “public discussion” similar to that conducted by the powerful and influential scholar-officials in traditional China. As the common sense of civility practiced in interpersonal relationships, so characteristic of premodern Chinese society, was gradually eroded by the new cultural movements and frontally assaulted by the revolutionary spirit, there was no defense against the linguistic violence of reducing the richly textured ritual of human interaction into a black/white struggle for survival. Despite the folk belief in human decency, which is rooted in the Mencian teaching of humanity as commiseration, the base instincts of self-preservation, aggression, jealousy, and domination overwhelmed the emotional life of the Chinese for years. The Red Guards were

instinct with life and destruction; Maoism provided the rationale. It took the discourse community several decades to incubate the monster that seemed to provide the only solution to China's grave problems.

The assumptive reasons behind this are deceptively simple: 1) At this particular juncture in Chinese history, with imperialist threats without and enemies of the people within, mass mobilization is necessary for socialist reconstruction. 2) The Long March, the Yan'an experiment, the bitter struggle with the Japanese, and the bloody confrontation with the Nationalists may have helped China to become unified, and the Korean War may have demonstrated China's resolve as an independent nation, but China is still "poor and blank." Personal sacrifice is required for China truly to stand up to Russia, Europe, and America. 3) The CCP, as the agency for carrying out the "general will" of the people, is always the party of the peasant, worker, and soldier. There is no presumption that the CCP can ever be incorruptible. In fact, it is openly acknowledged that routinized bureaucracy and built-in elitism have already undermined its effectiveness. The CCP has to continuously renew itself to deserve the support of the masses. 4) The intelligentsia could become an integral part of this joint venture to bring about a truly socialist China if it were determined to free itself from the corrosive habits that make it vulnerable to the pull of feudalism and the push of capitalism. 5) Since only through praxis do we learn to align ourselves with the objective social forces generated by the dynamism of the masses, we must take "class struggle" seriously, not only in behavior, but also in attitude and belief. 6) We must have faith in the transformative potential of the people. Since human determination will prevail over Heaven (*rendingshengtian*), we can rely upon the activism of the masses for socialist reconstruction. 7) Maoism, as embodied in the revolutionary experience of the Party and the supreme ideological insight of Mao himself, serves as the best guide for China's socialist transformation.

Surprisingly, the disastrous Great Leap Forward and the even more devastating Cultural Revolution followed the same deceptively simple logic: contradiction, social practice, mass line, class struggle, and continuous revolution.¹⁸ To be sure, it was not in its abstract universalism but in its lived concreteness that Maoism

exercised its sinister power. Whether or not a sophisticated intellectual could bring himself or herself to appreciate fully its philosophical elegance (there was little of this in Mao's word or deed), the force of the Maoist persuasion to conquer and subdue, if not to convince, was irresistible. Formidable minds may have tried to resist—in the case of Liang Shuming by direct confrontation and in the case of Feng Youlan by accommodation—but they were either silenced or co-opted when Mao, the thinker, assumed the role of teacher and leader. Willingness to abandon one's own philosophical stance in the face of a Maoist challenge may seem to have been an inevitable consequence of the social dynamics of a culture of terror, but, time and again, we witness a dramatic turnabout, reminiscent of religious conversion, continuously reenacted by some of the most brilliant (and betrayed) professional intellectuals. The truthfulness of the Maoist vision was complemented and supplemented by numerous acts of "exegetical bonding," a kind of hermeneutic investment in a fund of knowledge, which enhanced its persuasive power through reenacting the ritual of coordinated reading and repeating the rhetoric of assent; as a result, the story became so deeply ingrained in the communal self-awareness of the Chinese intelligentsia that to deviate from it caused a profound reflexive anxiety, moral panic.

The recent attempt to characterize Mao's nativism as no more than a reflection of his cherished dream to become an imperial Chinese emperor seriously misreads the record. However, it is undeniable that Mao jealously guarded his "imperialist" power against any competing authority and that he resisted all efforts to routinize his charisma, for fear that his infallibility would be compromised as a result. Most intimate accounts of Mao's private life convey an image of deceptive simplicity and fabricated rusticity. Mao's life as the leader of the People's Republic seems devoid of any elaborate ritual or even of any modest ceremony: he seems to have been attached to his old pajamas and worn-out blanket with a sort of infantile possessiveness; he ate plainly and led a style of life that was, by imperial standards, devoid of elegance and nicety. He was immersed in books and often conducted official business in his study, bedroom, or even in bed. He suffered from chronic insomnia and preferred to stay up late and sleep in the morning. He seemed to have had an insatiable sexual appetite, but

his indulgence was neither elaborate nor debauched. He does not seem to have acquired expensive tastes. His fondness of fatty pork, his addiction to sleeping pills, his fascination with the art of the “inner chamber” (Taoist sexual practices), his aversion to bathing, and his refusal to brush his teeth (claiming that tigers do not brush their teeth either) made him special but not necessarily perverse. Even his physician, who was the source of the stories of such indulgences, describes him as a simple and rustic “peasant.”¹⁹

THE THREE SOURCES OF MAOIST VIOLENCE

What was neither simple nor rustic was his power to terrorize, to dominate, to break people, to conjure old hatreds and animate new ones, and to destroy. Ironically, Mao’s sinister power lay in his ability to combine three powers into one inseparable unity: political leadership, ideological legitimacy, and moral authority. The prophetic voice in his poem that his literary talents surpassed the four esteemed founding emperors and made the terrifying Mongolian ruler appear to be a mere hunter resonated well with his presumed self-image: a military strategist without the need to carry a gun, a political leader who transcended bureaucracy, a teacher who received little formal education, and a theorist who derived all of his ideas from practice.

Had Mao actually wanted to be an emperor, he would have inflicted less social suffering upon the Chinese people. The damage would have been confined to the political arena, no matter how broadly defined. At least the Chinese moral spirit, as it was cultivated and preserved in the collective experience of the intelligentsia, would not have been so humiliatingly injured. It was his ambition to become more than a mere emperor, fueled by a fierce arrogance that only he knew what was really good for China, that made him into something even more terrifying than the imperial dragons of China’s past: a hard-hearted, self-righteous monster.

Ironically, the trinity embodied in Mao, reminiscent of the highest ideal in Confucian rulership (the sage-king), is unprecedented in Chinese history. I have only hinted at the process by which Mao assumed not only political leadership but also ideological legitimacy and moral authority. The story is complex because it involves the struggle of modern China as a race, a polity, and a

civilization, the struggle of the CCP as an idea, an institution, and as the steward of a mission, and the struggle of Mao as a strategist, a dreamer, and a destroyer. Moreover, it involves the intellectuals, landlords, peasants, capitalists, workers, soldiers, cadres, and a host of other variously classified “bad elements,” “counterrevolutionaries,” “reactionaries,” and “nonpeople.”

An often neglected dimension of the narrative is the symbolic capital that Mao deliberately manipulated or unconsciously inherited that gave him inestimable purchasing power over the life of the mind. Given the economic backwardness and political impotence of modern Chinese society, the available cultural resources were essential for any mass mobilization for the revolutionary cause. In traditional China, political leadership, ideological legitimacy, and moral authority were closely intertwined but separable in theory and practice. No emperor ever managed to extend his political power fully into the ideological and moral arenas. These were the province of the scholar-officials, dictated by a set of significantly different rules of the game. The Manchu emperors, notably Kangxi, Yongzheng, and Qianlong, worked hard to achieve “sage-king” status. Kangxi’s gallant effort pacified threatening Ming loyalist movements and won the tacit support of the literati class, but he basically styled himself as a devoted student of Confucian culture. Yongzheng’s concerted effort to appropriate ideological legitimacy struck terror among the educated, but he was not himself a source of inspiration for the scholars. Qianlong successfully established himself as a fellow literatus and was greatly admired for his martial and literary accomplishments, but he was neither an ideologue nor an exemplar.

There were quite a few strong rulers in the dynastic history: Qin Shihuang and Han Wudi’s power in shaping the polity and Tang Taizhong and Song Taizu’s influence over the bureaucracy made them model emperors of “great talent and bold vision” (*xiongcaidalue*). Yet, the majority of Chinese emperors were themselves victims of an elaborate ritual system with innumerable rules and regulations to ensure a routinized and harmonized form of life. This was perhaps the reason why, contrary to popular belief, a typical profile of the Chinese emperor might very well include incompetence, weakness, youth, and lack of power. Understandably, while there were plenty of mediocre rulers surrounded by

corrupt eunuchs and in-laws, there were few tyrannical despots in traditional Chinese history. Even though the symbolic system of the sage-king ideal continued to be a source of inspiration for the scholar-officials, their effort to make the king sagely was an endless task and they never confused what the emperor really was with what he ought to become. Indeed, the separation between his personality and his position enabled the scholar-officials to develop a functioning “feedback” mechanism within the bureaucracy that constituted a de facto loyal opposition not only to the powerful ministers but also to the “inner court” and the emperor himself.

Surely, the absence of the separation of church and state did not allow Chinese political culture to develop a symbolically and practically consequential priesthood, but the assumption that the Chinese emperor was, in reality, a combination of king and Pope and was therefore virtually infallible is one-sided, if not outright false. The other side of the story is that the scholar-official class, by combining the roles of cultural interpreters, transmitters, and creators with those of policy initiators, implementers, and evaluators, was much more influential than the priesthood could ever be in defining the order of things in the empire. If we broaden the category of the scholar-official class to include what was in the later imperial period often referred to as the “local gentry,” as we must when we analyze Chinese society as a whole, we may very well talk about a group in actual control of ideological legitimacy and moral authority. Zeng Guofan may have been an exception in his combination of ideological legitimacy and moral authority with military might; his role as a governor, charged with the mission of suppressing the Taiping Rebellion, gave him an unusual mandate to save the dynasty, but, true to the pattern of traditional Chinese political culture before the rise of Mao, no political leader fully embodied ideological legitimacy and moral authority. Sun Yat-sen was too marginal to the cultural center to assume such a role and Chiang Kai-shek never transcended his own iron cage, “the generalissimo.”

Notwithstanding Mao’s early decision to cast his lot with the peasantry, it was his success in capturing the hearts and minds of the intelligentsia that bestowed upon him the charisma needed for his mass mobilization. This is not to say that in assessing the

effectiveness of Maoism as a revolutionary ideology, the intelligentsia rather than the peasantry played the pivotal role. Rather, Mao's proven ability to arouse peasant nationalism and to transform many tillers of the land into guerrilla fighters and active participants in the revolutionary process through socialist education was a precondition for persuading the intelligentsia that he meant what he said and that through actual praxis his words carried a meaning that was authentic. Mao's literary talent, which was not widely known until 1946, was a happy surprise to the leftist intellectuals and became irresistible to those cultural conservatives who were seasoned in classical literature. If Mao's experience in the Long March and Yan'an alienated him from his fellow intellectuals, his immersion in traditional Chinese literary works made him a familiar face, indeed a kindred spirit. Ironically, Mao's radical otherness, especially his identification with the poor peasants, turned out to be a liberating message for the concerned intellectuals.

The Chinese intelligentsia seemed to have been well disposed to populist sentiments, having been educated in the Confucian tradition that the people are the root of politics, and agriculture is the root of the economy. If the people are not aroused, no effective political action is really possible, and if agriculture is in trouble, the economy necessarily suffers. The peasantry is the key to social stability and, by implication, to a truly revolutionary transformation of society. Underlying this glorification of the transformative potential of the Chinese people is a deep-rooted conviction that since "Heaven sees through the eyes of the people and hears through the ears of the people,"²⁰ the united will of the people, like the flood, cannot be stopped. The myth of Yu, the Chinese counterpart to the story of Noah, clearly shows that self-sacrifice, group discipline, hard work, patience, charismatic leadership, mass mobilization, and the right technology can channel a devastating flood into productive irrigation. Mao's favorite allegory, "The Foolish Old Man Who Moved the Mountains" (*Yugong yishan*), ingrained in the Chinese collective consciousness as the proper "modern" way of transforming China into a socialist utopia, is a simplified version of the same myth. No intellectual, individually or communally, could challenge the authenticity of this Maoist

vision, for it had become an essential dimension of the whole enterprise.

It was the fusion of scientism, an aggressive anthropocentrism, and populism, the myth of the general will, that made Maoism an explosive transformative ideology. All sacred symbolic mechanisms of control—the Mandate of Heaven, the ritual of ancestral veneration, the sanctity of the land, the harmonizing patterns of the four seasons, the dignity of the religious rites in honoring spirits and ghosts, and the intrinsic values of learning—were either relegated to the background or ruthlessly secularized. Dialectic materialism, as the new orthodoxy, rendered all forms of spirituality, especially the organized religions, futile and illegitimate. Paradoxically, however, the seemingly secularized Maoism was a fertile ground for all sorts of sentiments, including highly charged ethnic, linguistic, territorial, gender, and religious emotions, to express themselves. The Maoist romantic utopianism took on millenarian and evangelical overtones during the Cultural Revolution. As the relative historical revolution became absolutized into a project of universal salvation, the messengers (the Red Guards) condemned those who failed to share their vision as “monsters and demons” (*niugui-sheshen*), a category worse than miserable sinners and hateful heathens. The deification of Mao himself provided an ironic twist to the whole process: the man who insisted that he did not believe in negative cosmic forces (*buxinxie*), and thus could never be haunted by ghosts, became the most fearful and perverse “evil spirit” in Chinese history.

THE FORMS OF SOCIAL SUFFERING FROM MAOISM

The three capital events of social suffering in the People's Republic—the Anti-Rightist Campaign, the massive starvation as a result of the Great Leap Forward, and the Cultural Revolution—were all closely connected to Mao's policies based on his utopian vision. Although they differed remarkably in terms of other causes and circumstances, the presence of Maoism (the inversionary ideology) as a key factor is undeniable.

The most obvious type of social suffering attributable to Maoism is the brutality against individuals, prompted by an ideological zealotry to be correct, pure, and totally uncompromising. The

intense hatred of the enemy (landlord, capitalist, reactionary, bourgeois, nationalist agent, or imperialist spy) led to torture, murder, and even cannibalism. The psychopathology of treating those condemned to be counterrevolutionaries as subhuman, deserving no sympathy whatsoever, created an inversionary process of reducing one's closest kin to radical otherness. Among the youth with dubious class backgrounds (including virtually all members of the intelligentsia), the incredible practice of demonstrating one's commitment to the revolutionary cause by showing one's willingness to cut off primordial ties became a common occurrence. Indeed, it happened so frequently that, among the intellectuals, it was not uncommon to measure redness by the degree of alienation from parents and spouses. As a result, numerous families broke up and an immeasurable amount of guilt and frustration haunted the intellectual community for years in the aftermath.

The Maoist assault on the body politic so fundamentally shook the rigid structure of state socialism that, without the resiliency of Zhou Enlai's government apparatuses, the People's Republic might have degenerated into a lawless anarchy. The delegitimation of all forms of authority in politics and culture created a power vacuum and a dangerous occasion for violence. The main force of the Cultural Revolution was directed against hierarchy. Disappointment at those who had lost their faith in socialist idealism, hatred of those who had abused their privileges, and a desire to settle old scores blinded the fanatical leaders of the Red Guards to all other issues. Mean-spiritedness and vindictiveness soon overshadowed the appearance of distributive justice in struggle sessions. Numerous forms of humiliation, discipline, corporal punishment, and torture were invented to inflict pain and suffering upon social groups labeled as "bad elements." The effect of this unprecedented tyranny upon the intellectuals of the Party, who had hailed the Anti-Rightist campaign with enthusiasm, was profound. Many of them turned away from Mao's revolutionary romanticism in disgust. Some began to question the rationality, indeed the sanity, of Mao's vision for China.

In a deeper sense, the damages inflicted upon the value system by the Maoists were the most difficult to heal. The frontal attack not only on party politics and elite culture but also on the "habits of the heart," which had been firmly rooted in the folk traditions

for generations, so thoroughly destroyed the social fabric that the post-Mao reconstruction began with the rudimentary education of etiquette. Even polite expressions such as “good morning,” “excuse me,” and “thank you” had to be reintroduced and relearned as legitimate utterances in social intercourse. The grammar of action, defined in terms of conflict, confrontation, contradiction, and contention—a reflection of Mao’s insistence on the primacy of class struggle in social development—was, during the period of the Cultural Revolution, omnipresent in thought, literature, art, music, film, and drama. The effects of moral inversion on the social level were so extensive that kindness was mistaken for weakness, sympathy for sentimentalism, and civility for hypocrisy. The psychology of suspicion, linguistic violence, verbal aggressiveness, insensitivity in interpersonal communication, and an inability to be decent or polite in social relations would take years to overcome in ordinary practical living. A new intellectual vision, a new world view, indeed a new way of learning to be human is required to heal the wounds in the value system. “De-Maoification” is not only a political process but a social transformation and a cultural rejuvenation.

Mao occasionally acknowledged that he was responsible for some of these disasters, but there is no evidence that he ever regretted his obvious wrongdoings. The CCP, despite the bitter experience of each member of its top leadership, to this date, cannot bring itself to disown Mao, and the maltreated intelligentsia, almost two decades after the Cultural Revolution, is still mesmerized by Mao’s charisma. Apparently, China has yet to free herself from the grips of anthropocentric scientism and mobilizational populism. Her attitude toward other Enlightenment values, notably human rights, liberty, and the dignity of the individual, and her treatment of minorities, especially the Tibetans, will give some indication of whether a new life orientation is in the offing.

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ENDNOTES

¹Stevan Harrell, "Introduction," in Jonathan N. Lipman and Stevan Harrell, eds., *Violence in China: Essays in Culture and Counterculture* (Albany, N.Y.: State of New York University Press, 1990), 1.

²For the sake of expediency, "Maoism," rather than the official designation, "Mao Zedong Thought" (*Mao Zedong sixiang*), will be used in this essay to refer to this ideology. The term "Maoism," specifying a coherent and independent ideology, was first used by Benjamin Schwartz in his classical study, *Chinese Communism and the Rise of Mao* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1951). I am also very much indebted to Stuart R. Schram; since his publication of *The Political Thought of Mao Tse-tung* (New York: Praeger, 1969), he has been involved in a comprehensive study of Mao Zedong Thought, enabling interested students to see its evolution in detail. It should be noted that in order to preserve the Maoist legacy, a desperate attempt has been made by the ideologists of the Chinese Communist Party to make a distinction between *Mao Zedong sixiang* (Mao Zedong Thought) and *Mao Zedong de sixiang* (Mao Zedong's thought); while the former symbolizes an official ideology that allows ideas not originated from Mao as its constitutive parts, the latter includes Mao's original ideas that must be expunged from the official party line.

³The figure, based on an internal CCP report of 1961, cited in Arthur and Joan Kleinman's essay in this issue, is thirty million. My figure, based on Chen Yizi's analysis, is yet to be verified. The Shanghai University journal, *Society*, in 1993 cited a figure of forty million, but that issue was immediately recalled.

⁴Perhaps the most tragic form of destruction was done by families and individuals who "voluntarily" destroyed family treasures for fear of incriminatory acts against them by ignorant Red Guards obsessed with their mission of eradicating traces of the feudal past.

⁵See David E. Apter and Tony Saich, *Revolutionary Discourse in Mao's Republic* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1994).

⁶Ross Terrill, *Mao: A Biography* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1980), 151–52.

⁷*Ibid.*, 165.

⁸Although no systematic studies have appeared in print on the subject, Li Tou, the literary critic, in several oral presentations, suggested that an in-depth analysis of Mao's genre and of Party culture is essential for developing a communal self-reflexivity among Chinese mainland intellectuals in exile.

⁹Terrill, *Mao: A Biography*, 152.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, 159.

¹¹David Apter, "Yan'an and the Narrative Reconstruction of Reality," in Tu Wei-ming, ed., *China in Transformation* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1994), 228.

¹²Ibid., 225.

¹³Ibid., 161.

¹⁴See Vera Schwarcz, *The Chinese Enlightenment: Intellectuals and the Legacy of the May Fourth Movement of 1919* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1986).

¹⁵Fred Dallmayr, "Tradition, Modernity, and Confucianism," *Human Studies*, vol. 16 (The Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1993), 208.

¹⁶It should be noted that this often-quoted statement was meant to convey the Maoist principle "that the party commands the gun and the gun shall never be allowed to command the party." See Ellis Joffe, *Party and Army: Professionalism and Political Control in the Chinese Officer Corps, 1949–1964* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1965), 57, as cited in Jonathan D. Spence, *The Search for Modern China* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1990), 563.

¹⁷Terrill, *Mao: A Biography*, 221.

¹⁸Tu Wei-ming, "Confucianism: Symbol and Substance in Recent Times," in Tu Wei-ming, *Humanity and Self-Cultivation: Essays in Confucian Thought* (Berkeley, Calif.: Berkeley Asian Humanities Press, 1979), 268–76.

¹⁹Perhaps the most damaging biography of Mao is the recently published *Mao Zedong Sirenyisheng Huiyilu* (Memoir of Mao Zedong's Private Physician) by Li Zhisui (Taipei: China Times Publishing Company, 1994). The Chinese version, based on *The Private Life of Chairman Mao* (New York: Random House Inc., 1994), has generated heated debates on Mao's personality in mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, and Chinese communities throughout the world. Endorsed by scholars, notably Andrew Nathan of Columbia University and Ying-shih Yü of Princeton University, as an eyewitness account of the carefully concealed aspects of Mao's ordinary daily life, Dr. Li's vivid description of Mao's idiosyncratic habits significantly challenges Mao's public image as an exemplar of a committed revolutionary devoted to a simple life. Ironically, however, recent surveys among college students in the People's Republic of China indicate that Mao's reputation as the most admired leader has not been tarnished. Furthermore, to the astonishment of liberal-minded Chinese intellectuals, the cult of Mao as a god and as a protector has been spreading in both peasant communities and urban centers. Mao's reemergence as a folk hero in newly constructed temples and as an amulet in taxis in major cities is not likely to be deterred by revelations of his shortcomings.

²⁰The earliest reference is in the "Taishi" chapter of the *Book of Documents*; the statement in the "Gaoyaomo" chapter of the same book conveys a similar meaning. It has become well known because of Mencius's citation, in *Mencius*, 4B:5.