

China, cont'd

Lecture No. 0033 (April 8, 1974)

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Preliminary remarks

You know, you begin these damnable academic years in the middle of August, by the time you get to April... brutal. Terrific fun.

Two things before I begin. First of all, I will have for you as soon as you return from your holiday — we have class on Wednesday, do we have class on Friday? [*Students answer no; laughter*]. Well, I'll have for you when you come back, at any rate, the study questions for the final examination so that you can succeed on that. Do take all your paperbacks with you if you haven't read them, because the questions will be drawn very heavily upon those readings. And so if you're a bit behind in your reading, by all means take a pack of paper books with you to whatever rest or spot you choose.

The other thing is that, I think the date for the papers comes this week — or maybe came last week. And so if you're still typing the last paragraph of your paper [*laughter, murmuring*], be sure that you submit it, because my collaborators really have very little to do over the ten-day holiday. Got to read those.

Now, before I begin — because there are some things we want to talk about today — before I begin, someone has asked for a couple of minutes of your time...

[*audio cuts out*]

Lecture

How do we really get a grip on the Chinese Revolution? How do we begin to measure the velocity of that Chinese Revolution over the past twenty-five years? And how, if you please, do we put our hand on the force of that Chinese Revolution in our contemporary world? The point is, you see, that it is very difficult for us to understand, very difficult to get inside that kind of system. In the first place, because we are very far removed in terms of our economy, in terms of our society, from what a Third World country is and what a Third World society is. And we are very far removed, in terms of our political and our psychological experience, in what a revolution is and how a revolution really goes. And, consequently, it is a tremendous problem of

sensitivity for us to try to come to grips with what that Chinese Revolution has been from 1949 down until this point.

And let me suggest certain ways, certain kinds of measures, that we can take to try to sharpen our understanding or sharpen our perspectives. Let's think of that Chinese Revolution, in the first place, as a total revolution: a total revolution in the very terms that [Marxist theorist György] Lukács was going to use in defining that term, by which we mean a revolution that is concerned not only, for example, to accelerate the productive forces. Every Third World society that is en route toward modernization wants to accelerate its productive forces, but also wants radically to transform social relations. In other words, it's concerned, after all, to remove the old ruling structure from the land: to remove the landlords and the rich peasants, to remove those who had been the owners of the factories; in other words, totally to revolutionize what social relationships have been in that society. A revolution, if you please, that is not only concerned with raising the standard of living — of taking literally tens and scores of millions of people out of the zone of famine or out of the zone of epidemic — but is also concerned, and note it well, to change fundamentally the way in which people think and the way in which they act. If you want to put it in Marxist terms, what the Chinese Revolution has tried to be about is not only to transform the economic base, but to revolutionize the cultural and the social superstructure: in other words, to change the society in a very total way.

Now, let me give you two examples of that to see if we can dig into the very marrow of that bone. Take, for example, the attitude of Mao [Tse-tung] and the Chinese Communist leadership toward manual labor — or more precisely, that kind of impulsion that you find in Communist China to insert the bureaucracy or to insert the intelligentsia inside the actual work process, the manual work process. Now, here you find something that really digs very deeply into the thought of the Chinese Revolution. Why this concern, for example, that the bureaucrats should go out of their offices and learn about what manual work is? Why this concern that the universities and the schools should be emptied out, and that you should begin to pierce the walls between manual and intellectual labor?

In the first place, of course, it's a question of efficiency. And that is underscored many times by Mao and the Communist leadership. It's a question, after all, of thinking that the only way in which you can know anything is if you confront it in practice. That you cannot sit in a bureau, for example, and draw up regulations; you cannot make plans for a society unless you know something about the actual, realistic problems of that society, and unless you know what the impact of your plans are upon the people who have to execute them. All of that, after all, was underscored by Mao himself in a very classic essay that he was to write in 1937, his famous essay *On Practice*, because that is a very, very classic Marxist statement of what the function of practice is. And Mao says in that essay, "No one can know anything without practical contact.

We must discover the truth through practice and confirm it again in practice." And so what the Chinese are talking about is that kind of closeness between those who are the makers of the plan and those who must execute it. But that, you see, simply is in terms of efficiency.

There are two other factors that are much more important. One has to do with equality, with what a socialist community is: that you don't make a socialist society simply by superimposing the old values or the old social relationships and the old attitudes on the basis of an accelerated productive system. That, fundamentally, the point of origin or the point of departure for Mao is that struggle in the period before 1949 — the Long March, or the period in Yenan, or the period of the struggle against the Japanese and against Chiang [Kai-shek]'s army — in which there was terrific equality. There had to be an equal human community, because everybody, after all, was sharing very scarce goods and because they were sharing a common ideology. And over again, over and over again — in the Great Leap Forward, for example, in 1958, or in the Great Cultural Revolution of 1966, '67, and '68 — there is constantly that theme of returning to that egalitarian human community that was built in the great struggle for socialism in the period before 1949. The idea being that, as soon as the new society was established, as soon as the People's Republic was established, you began to get very, very real signs of differentiation. To be sure, for a couple of years after 1949, the bureaucrats and the intellectuals in the universities really lived very much like the peasants or the workers: and in the cities, for example, they rode bicycles or they took the buses and didn't have automobiles, or they ate with the workers in common canteens, or they played ping-pong or basketball with them in the break periods. And there was that sense of fraternity, that sense of community.

And then, you see, you begin to get differentiation, because you need experts in a society, you need authorities. And, consequently, you begin to make salary differentials for the bureaucracy in China. And you begin to get certain privileges, like better housing, or like better privileges in the universities for the children of bureaucrats. Now, let's not overestimate that. It never reaches the extent that it does in the Soviet Union; you never have those vast differentials between bureaucracy and working class that you are to get in the Soviet Union.

But for Mao, you see, the problem is not one of quantity; the problem is one of quality. The problem is one of how people think: whether they're going to develop a new psychology, a new way of relating to each other. And so it is that Mao says to [French novelist] André Malraux, for example, who comes to visit China in the mid-1960s, in an interview which Malraux published in *Le Figaro littéraire* — and later reproduced in total in his memoirs, called the *Anti-Memoirs* — and here, in this interview with Malraux, Mao says, "The people in the Communist Party aren't really that much different from others. And people, in general, don't like to fight the revolution all of their lives." What Mao is saying is that there comes a fatigue, and people begin

to give up and they settle into a routine. And they don't realize that there are always contradictions, and that you must fight a revolution all of the time, and that you must struggle all of the time to reach something that really is in the cauldron and the fire of human contact that makes the socialist society.

It's what Mao was to say in 1957 in a very famous essay, *On the Correct Handling of Contradictions*, in which he said a rather astonishing thing: that, unlike what Khrushchev and the Russians think, that contradictions exist in a socialist society as well as in a capitalist society. That the old values and the old thoughts persist and continue on: "The class struggle is by no means over. The proletariat seeks to transform the world according to its world outlook and so does the bourgeoisie. In this respect, the question of which will win out — socialism or capitalism — is still not really steered in any of the so-called socialist countries." Now, you see, what Mao is saying is that it's not only a question of who owns the means of the production, but it's a question of how people relate to each other and whether they think and feel and function and respond and act like socialists.

And so, after all, if you take, out of the bureaus the bureaucrats and put them to work, and if you take out of the schools the students and professors, and teach them the process of the things that they are doing abstractly — then, after all, you begin to do what is the second crucial thing. And that is the breaking down of the division of labor, the piercing of the wall between manual and intellectual work. And of course, that never is really possible in a Third World society in revolution. It's never really possible when you start with very low levels of production, because you have to have a mass of people to do heavy work. And you have to have experts; you have to have people that have some technological and scientific knowledge.

What Mao and the Chinese leadership is talking about is narrowing the gap, of making a bridge between the two, of not making it so pernicious and so much a sharp division between that manual and that intellectual labor. And for Mao, that is so crucially important in China. Because, you see in China, there had been that long tradition of putting the literati on a kind of pedestal, of making the mandarins a very special class in Chinese society. Now, you know, Mao is an intellectual. And Mao is a poet, and he has great aesthetic sensibilities. And he looks at what the old mandarins did in China. And he says that they made a contribution artistically, and they do peak his aesthetic sensibilities. But he is enraged at the idea of the tradition in China in which the mandarins grew their fingernails long to show that they couldn't possibly ever put their hands to anything that was manual work.

And what Mao does is look into that Chinese society that is developing. And he looks into the schools and the universities and he says, "Oh ho! You see, it is starting up again." Because in the

schools and the universities — and note this well, because it's really at the very deepest root of that Cultural Revolution of the 1960s — that in the schools and universities, they're saying that what we really need are experts, that we have to advance into the twentieth century in China. And so the professors that are really experts, and the students that are the best students and make the best grades, that they begin to bask in their talent; they begin to bask in their possible rewards.

And so you get in that marvelous little book of Bill Hinton's, called *The Hundred Day War*, which is a study of Tsinghua University in the course of the Cultural Revolution — and what Bill Hinton does is to cite the example of an architecture professor in Tsinghua University whom he interviewed and who had done his studies in the Soviet Union, and who had copied all of the Soviet attitude toward the idea of expertise, toward the idea of being a scholar. And when this man finished his arduous studies in the Soviet Union, this Chinese professor, he was given by the Soviets, as a reward for his very great accomplishments, three small presents. And as Hinton properly points out, those presents are symbolic of the whole attitude that the Soviet model has toward its literati, toward its bureaucrats, toward its experts. Because he was given, in the first place, a beautiful leather brief case within which to keep his Ph.D. thesis. And he was given, in the second place, a beautiful little wooden box embossed with a picture of the Kremlin in which he was to keep his medals and other honors. And then he was given — yes! — a leather wallet [laughter].

And so, quite obviously, there was something in that system that Mao didn't like [laughter]. Because it all ran counter, after all, to what Mao thought about education. And he said, "The goal of education isn't grades, or a prosperous life for the expert, or even the cultivation of Red engineers, but to enable everyone who receives an education to become a worker with a socialist consciousness and culture. The period of study should be drastically shortened, not lengthened. And students, far from being locked year after year into their classrooms, should take a regular part in production and in the class struggle." And if you're looking for something to do this summer [laughter]. And it suffices to say, at any rate, that the idea of piercing those walls never, obviously, a goal to be obtained, but something toward which to move. And that begins to tell you a little about the totalism of that revolution.

Or take the second example that I want to use. And that, of course, the whole restructuring of the institution of the family. Because, you see, here you are at the nuclear cell of the society; here is where people learn their value system, learn to relate to each other. And you know what the traditional Chinese family was like, and how much it is a paradigm of the family in Third World societies: that it is authoritarian, it is patriarchal, it is hierarchical. But more than that, it is really a mold to exploit the women and to exploit the children. The lot of the Chinese woman in

the traditional family was hell on wheels, because the woman had no rights. She didn't have any share in the property. But more than that, there were marriages for children: there were arranged marriages, there were peasants who had to sell their daughters to pay off debts or in order to raise cash, and you get these women with the bound feet who really are the servants of the men. And it's just as bad with the children. And in the autobiography of Mao Tse-tung, as he recounts it to Edgar Snow and as Snow writes it in *Red Star Over China*, Mao talks incessantly about what a brute his father was toward his children: that he beat his sons, he beat Mao, because the children never seemed to work hard enough for him. And, consequently, you're talking about, really, the kernel of a society.

And that changes so very drastically. And so you get, after all, the Marriage Law of 1950. And Article I of the Marriage Law of 1950 reads thus: "The purpose is to guarantee a new democratic marriage which is based on the free choice of partners, on equal right for both sexes, and on protection of the lawful interest of women and children." And Article II specifically prohibits the following: polygamy, concubinage, child marriage, exaction of money in connection with marriage. And from that point of the Marriage Law, you see, you begin to create a collective culture that begins to liberate the women and the children. That if you have in the communes, for example, collective commissaries, if you have nursing centers — if you have, in other words, those kinds of collective in agencies that relieve the woman of that work — then she goes into society. If you have in the educational system an equal opportunity, then she gets another self-image.

And surely it is true with the young. It is surely true with the children, because we have an excellent study that dates all the way back to 1959 that's made by a Canadian psychiatrist, Dr. [Denis] Lazure of the University of Montreal, and that was published in 1960 in the *Canadian Journal of Medicine*. And Dr. Lazure did what was called the Thematic Apperception Test, the TAT test, on hundreds of Chinese children. And what he discovered as the primary result: "Our most significant conclusion about Chinese youth is that they have come to invest the emotions which they formerly reserved to the family into society as a whole." And what Lazure goes to point out, in a number of cases, is the desire of the individual now to feel an equal participant in the construction of socialism or some kind of participation in society.

What, you see, you're talking about is no perfection. What you're talking about is an approach; is, at least, a statement of a certain kind of problem. You're talking about a society in which, after all, the bonds of the old authority begin to snap, in which there is a certain kind of attrition of those traditions that have bound the Chinese. All of which means that people begin, at least, to take off the blinders, begin to demystify themselves. And you find that so magnificently in those wall posters that go up everywhere in the course of the great Chinese Cultural Revolution. And

so Hinton, in his study of Tsinghua, cites one of those posters, which really is a marvelous perception on the part of students of what their education has been and why it can no longer be that — and see if this poster really doesn't ring a bell and touch a kind of a nerve end — and the poster says, "In primary school, dead serious about reading books; in high school, read dead books seriously; in university, seriously read books to death" [*laughter, applause*]. Obviously, you're interested in moving out from that kind of tradition and into something else. So you begin to sharpen your understanding if you think in those totalistic terms.

But let me suggest two other ways in which, perhaps, your understanding really gets richer than it would sitting here in Madison, Wisconsin. One way is comparatively. And it's a way that really is important, you see, because no great historical event can be taken into a laboratory; you can't judge it by any kind of abstract, absolute standards. When I say "comparatively," I mean what the life of the Chinese was before communism and what it has become since communism. Now, that's the whole thrust of my old friend Edgar Snow, and I learned a hell of a lot about Asia from knowing Snow over the years. I used to go up into Eysins (in Switzerland, where he lived) to see him, and spent long, long times talking to him exactly about that: the people he knew, and how they had lived once, and how they came to live now. And so he writes in his book *The Other Side of the River* about one of those people, and I cite you the biography because I think it's fascinating. It's about a guy called Yen Wei-chuan, who was the chairman of a commune called the Yellow Ridge Commune, and whom Edgar Snow had known a little bit before and whom he now interviewed in 1964 when he was in China. And this is what the man said about his past:

"My parents were poor tenant peasants of Yellow Ridge. I can remember we were hungry every winter. If there was a flood or famine, we had to go into debt to survive. My mother died of starvation during the Japanese occupation. My father is still alive and a working member of this commune. When I was seven years old, I began to do farm chores. At that age, I became a full-time farm worker hired out to a local landlord as an indentured laborer. We belonged to the six families in ten who owned no land, and we were sharecroppers or laborers.

"Education? I had two years of character study but had forgotten all of it by the time of liberation. I couldn't even write 'moon' or 'sun.' Since then I have become fully literate through spare time study. In ten years, you know, we have wiped out illiteracy among about 5,500 adult members of our 6,000 commune families.

"Was I a soldier, you've asked? No. I've always been a farmer. I didn't take part in the revolution. I knew nothing about it. After the revolution, our landlord fled. I received my portion of land and began to eat better. Party cadres asked me to join a mutual-aid team

with three other poor families. As master of my own land for the first time in my own life, I was grateful and wanted to help. I had few tools and needed help too, and they chose me as a team leader."

Then, after some description of the revolution, he gets to the commune as it is since then:

"Well, our cooperative joined the commune, and you see the results all around. Great improvements we couldn't have dreamed of in the past: income up 20% in 1959 alone, and for us that was a year of floods. That's what co-ops and communes have done for us: a clinic for every brigade, altogether five doctors, forty-four medical assistants and nurses, ninety-six community dining rooms, our own factories making our own tools, fertilizers, and building materials. Who could talk about machines and electric pumps in former times? What poor farmer ever heard of regular meals, good clothes, cash in the banks, schools, and medical care for everybody? Even in good years, we were hungry and in rags. In bad times, our people died of starvation, sold their sons and daughters — or worse."

Now, you see, the point is really not to make glory stories about the Chinese, but the point is to try to understand what it means to go through that kind of evolution. You see, it really is something when every day you face the problem of survival, and then you no longer face that problem; you move over some kind of a doorstep, at any rate, in life.

Or take another form of comparison which, in a sense, pins down the point I want to make. The other form of comparison is the one that created the great angst, the great kind of anguish in [political sociologist] Barrington Moore, and that made Moore go from his liberalism to something else — he's in the middle of limbo now — but it suffices to say that he moved, at least, from American liberalism, which is a tremendous journey given the nature of America. And, consequently, it's the comparison between the cost of a revolution — the cost, really, of breaking structure — and the cost of not making a revolution; in other words, the comparison, let's say, between China and India.

And it's a point which I could labor to you. Because India, you see, in all of the travels that I have made — and I really have traveled a hell of a lot in my lifetime — but the only thing that completely freaked me out in my travels was India, was the thing that I could not cope with. Because I came into that city of Calcutta, and I could not believe it! That I could not believe what I saw of a Third World society that was so devastated with poverty, that was so devastated with human superfluity, that had all of those pockets of consumer richness and consumer affluence. Because the economy, after all, ran by the private sector and not by any kind of viable

state planning. Where I saw superstition; where I saw women so benighted that on New Year's Eve in Park Circus, when I saw a million and a half men out celebrating New Year's Eve, there was not one single woman.

And, you see, Barrington Moore was freaked out by it too [*laughter*]. And he says in *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* something he hadn't conceived of at the beginning. And he writes about India, for example: "In response to such an assessment, the Western liberal observer almost automatically responds that even if Indian agrarian policy, indeed her economic policy as a whole, has been rather long on talk and rather short on accomplishments, at least there has not been the brutality of Communist modernization." Some sacrifice in speed, so the argument runs, is necessary for the sake of democracy.

"This comfortable generalization overlooks the dreadful cost in human suffering that a policy of *festina lente* imposes in the Indian situation. To measure these costs in cold statistics is impossible. But a few figures will give a rough notion of their magnitude. In 1924 and 1926 the All India Conference of Medical Research Workers estimated that India suffered from five to six million deaths a year from preventable diseases alone. After the famine of 1943, the Bengal Famine Commission concluded that about a million and a half deaths occurred as a direct result of the Famine... Though wartime disruption contributed to the tragic results, fundamentally the famine was a product of the structure of Indian society."

And then, you see, Barrington Moore goes to this conclusion — and note it well, because really it is something that you ought to research yourselves much more deeply: "For a Western scholar to say a good word on behalf of revolutionary radicalism is not easy" — I don't know why, but at any rate:

"... is not easy because it runs counter to our most deeply-held mental reflexes. The assumption that gradual and piecemeal reform has demonstrated its superiority over revolution as a way to advance human freedom is so pervasive that even to question such an assumption seems strange. Yet, in closing this book, I should like to draw attention for a last time to what the evidence from the comparative history of modernization may tell us about this issue. As I have most reluctantly come to read as evidence, the costs of moderation have been at least as atrocious as those of revolution: a great deal more.

"Fairness demands recognition of the fact that the way nearly all history has been written imposes an overwhelming bias against revolutionary violence. Indeed, the bias becomes horrifying as one comes to realize its depth. To equate the violence of those who resist

oppression with the violence of the oppressors would be misleading enough. But there is a great deal more. From the days of Spartacus through Robespierre down to the present day, the use of force by the oppressed against their former masters has been the object of universal condemnation. Meanwhile, the day-to-day repression of 'normal' society hovers dimly in the background of most history books."

Good going for Barrington Moore, in the confines of the Houghton Library at Harvard [laughter].

And consequently, it indicates, quite obviously, that there is a point of comparison. It takes us, really, to the meaning of a kind of astonishing statement that Mao made at the end of 1949, in December of '49 when the Chinese People's Republic had just been installed. And, you see, '49 had been this fantastic year. And, after all, that ages-long crisis of Chinese society had finally reached the breaking point. And the old ruling establishment had been defeated in the civil war, and Chiang had fled off to the island of Taiwan, and the People's Republic had been established. And yet, Mao said all of that, monumental though it seems, really is nothing, that it is just a prologue and a precondition. And, consequently, before us we have the enormous task of socialist construction: "Our conquest over the whole country is only the first step in our long march of 10,000 leagues. Though we can be justifiably proud of it, that step is small nonetheless. And after some score of years, we'll look back at today's victory and know that it was only a prologue to a long and passionate play." And you see the point of what Mao was saying: that the civil war itself, as monumental as it was, was the precondition for a revolution and not the substance; that the torrential force of revolution is really embedded in the effort of the Chinese Communist leaders and of those indefatigable Chinese masses to chart a revolutionary strategy of development and to create a Chinese model of socialism.

And the question we then raise is: What is the Chinese model of socialism? And the Chinese describe everything in threes. And so we go in threes, and we say that there are three paths to understanding what we mean by a Chinese model of socialism as distinct, for example, from the Soviet model. We can approach it from the point of view of the evolution, or the steps, of the Chinese strategy of development, because that strategy has gone through at least four discernible stages, or four discernible steps. We can approach it, in the second place, from the issues in the cleavage and the breach between the Soviet Union and China. And we can, of course, approach it — and most dramatically — from the Great Cultural Revolution of 1966 and the years after. Cultural, in that context, incidentally, not having to do with formal culture, but having to do with a way of life, with really what the values of what a society are.

Now, when we talk about the approaches to strategy of development, or the stages of the strategy

of development, let me point out that, in that evolution, you move from a Soviet model to a non-Soviet model. That the Chinese really started out with the only example that they had, the only other big society, after all, that had made some kind of socialist reconstruction. And so they rather copied what the Soviet Union had done and followed that particular model — and finally, for reasons that we'll try to point out, shucked it off.

Now, when you're dealing with development, you must keep three things in mind about China. You must understand, first of all, that it is abysmally underdeveloped. And you can begin to understand that if you realize that in 1949, the per capita income in China was \$50; if you realize that in 1949, China produced 158,000 tons of steel, which put the largest and most populous country in the world 26th in the world's production of steel; if you realize that China had 80% of her population in the villages, in agriculture, and that that agriculture yielded very low per-acre yields. [American economist John] Lossing Buck, writing in the 1930s before the Japanese war, said that in an acre of wheat land in China, you produce 3.5 quintals of wheat, whereas the British produced 8.5 quintals, the Danes 13.5 — showing how low the productivity in China was. But something more than that: that the population pressure on that land meant that the farmsteads were so small that they were bound to be insufficient for really proper survival. That in 1949, it is estimated that the farm population lives on an average of less than 1/3rd of one acre; and that in 1955, even after you have had the agrarian redistribution of 1950, you're still dealing with a half an acre if you divide it on the per capita basis.

And secondly, to remember that that basis of underdevelopment was crushed down, was intensified by the Japanese war and by the civil war. You're talking about the destruction of rail lines, you're talking about the destruction of canals, you're talking about the deterioration of irrigation works: you're talking about an inflation that is so terrific that, really, commerce comes to a standstill, and nobody has any confidence in the money at all; that you have a flourishing black market and terrible corruption.

And you're talking, in the third place — and note it well — about Chinese isolation. That it is not, after all, to be the recipient of American aid, as half the world was the recipient of American aid; that the only help the Chinese could count on was pitifully small help from the Soviet Union. What they had by way of their resources were a billion arms: the hands of half a billion people.

So with that in mind, the first stage of Chinese development is the stage 1949 to '52, which we call the stage of New Democracy. And the stage of New Democracy is a stage of rehabilitation: it's a stage to try to restore the production levels of the best prewar year, which was 1936. And so, at the New Democracy level, you're dealing with the historic Bloc of Four Classes: in other words, a collaboration of workers, peasants, petty bourgeois, and national bourgeois. In other

words, everybody who supports the Communist regime (or who doesn't actively oppose it), is to labor and to work for the reconstruction of China. You're talking, in the second place, about what is called the *san-fan*, the *san-fan* which is the Campaign of the Three Anti's. And that is a campaign to clean up the government: it is anti-corruption, anti-bureaucracy, anti-speculation. And, consequently, the bureaucracy becomes integral, honest, and you really smash the black market and remove it from the economic scene.

But what is fundamental in this first period are two things. What's fundamental, in the first place, is the Agrarian Law, the Agrarian Law of the 30th of June of 1950. And the Agrarian Law, after all, was a redistribution law: in other words, it was to bind the peasantry to the Chinese Revolution, basically, by giving them the land, so that among 300 million peasants, there are divided about 40% of the arable land. And, consequently, you create a small landowning peasantry, you eliminate the absentee landlords (or what we call the gentry), and you eliminate a lot of the rich peasantry from the scene in the Chinese villages.

But, you see, that doesn't resolve two very contradictions. It doesn't resolve the contradiction between low productive levels and population growth; in other words, to redistribute the land doesn't mean that you will produce enough for the cities, it does not mean even that you will produce enough even to support your peasant population. And, in the second place, it doesn't resolve the contradiction at all between private landholding and a socialist society. And, consequently, at the very end of that New Democracy period in 1952, Mao and the Chinese Communist leadership begin to call for the formation of what they call "lower cooperatives." Lower cooperatives mean that the peasant does not give up his individual plot, but that there is a fusion of the plots under a common committee in order to work the land together, and thus more efficiently, and then to divide the productivity on a prorated basis, on the basis of the amount contributed and the amount of labor contributed. The second important thing in that period is nationalization. Because all heavy industry was nationalized, a good deal of light industry; artisan and some light industry, left in private hands.

The result of the New Democracy period, striking. The result was to get back to 1936 levels and to surpass them: that in coal and in iron and steel and in textiles and in cement and in electricity, China was better off in 1952 than she had been at any time before the Japanese war.

All of which take you to the second stage. And the second stage is really the Soviet stage, because it's the stage between 1953 and '57, and it is the stage of the first Chinese Five-Year Plan. And that term Five-Year Plan, that already rings with a kind of a Stalinist ring. So you make a Five-Year Plan in China, and that Five-Year Plan is a Soviet plan. Because the perspective of the Chinese Five-Year Plan of that '53 to '57 period was that heavy industry was

the base of Chinese development, and that when heavy industry developed, then you could invest in light industry, and then finally you could invest in agriculture. That the priorities were the basic industries first, light industries second, and agriculture third — which was, obviously, the whole strategy of Soviet development.

Now, that all opens a very, very important parenthesis for us. And it opens the parenthesis of how the Chinese looked at the Soviet Union, and why they followed that model so slavishly in that period of the 1950s, and ultimately why they shucked it off. Now, let's not be naive: that when Mao went to Moscow — the first time he'd ever been out of China, he chose Moscow for his vacation — and when he went to Moscow in December of 1949, and negotiated by the 14th of February of 1950 the Sino-Soviet Pact, which was a friendship and alliance between the Soviet Union and the new popular democracy of China — when he did that, we can well imagine that he didn't trust the Russians a great deal: that he knew perfectly well that the Comintern had interfered, and indeed betrayed the Chinese revolution at many turns.

But you are dealing with inevitability: that China is isolated, that she will soon go into the Korean War, that she has to have a friend, that she has to have some kind of a model, some kind of a protector. And so Mao says in December of 1949, before going off to Moscow: "Before us we have the enormous task of socialist construction. We know how to do some things, but of others we are profoundly ignorant. Now, the imperialists are counting on our failure, just as they expected the USSR to fail after its revolution. But the Communist Party of the Soviet Union triumphed, and under the leadership of Lenin and Stalin, it not only knew how to make its revolution, but how to build a successful socialist state. The USSR is therefore our best teacher, and we must learn at that school." In other words, what the Soviets had done, at least, was some kind of blueprint for China. And also, that maybe they would give aid; maybe they would give money for that kind of socialist construction in China.

Now, what Mao got in Moscow was pretty disappointing, because the Russians showed in that whole negotiation that they really held China to be subordinate. And, consequently, if it's a question, for example, of the Manchurian railroads: Would the Russians give up the South Manchurian Railroad, which they had taken from the Japanese after the war? And they said they'd give it up at the end of 1952. Would they get their troops out of Port Arthur in the Liaotung Peninsula? They said they'd withdraw their troops at the end of 1952. What about Chinese Turkestan, which is called Sinkiang? And the Russians have always had their eye on Sinkiang, and Stalin does say that Sinkiang, or Chinese Turkestan, really owes its sovereignty to China. But forced upon Mao and the Chinese, two mixed companies: mixed companies which were Soviet-Chinese companies to exploit the petroleum and to exploit the non-ferrous metals, especially the uranium of Sinkiang. These companies to mean that the Russians would give the

money for the exploration, the Chinese would do the labor, and they would divide the product equally between them. All of which, after all, is pretty unequal, and pretty imposing of the Russians upon the Chinese. But what is most disappointing: Stalin was very niggardly about the kind of aid he was willing to give to the Chinese. What was given was \$300 million to be spread over five years; in other words, \$60 million dollars a year for five years, which was really a piddling amount for a country like China, and less than the Russians were then giving to Poland for their reconstruction — much less than the United States would give to Taiwan and to Chiang Kai-shek for his reconstruction on that particular island.

Now, it's only after the death of Stalin in 1953, only after that the Russians begin to open their treasury a little more. And so the Chinese are able to strike an agreement on the 12th of March of 1953, in which the Russians agree to subsidize 141 large industrial projects. In other words, they agree to send the technical help and to give the money for certain large metallurgical complexes, certain mining enterprises, the beginning of a chemical industry, the beginning of a tractor industry, and so forth. And that is followed up in October of 1954 by the new Sino-Soviet Accord, which has that common declaration that I've already referred to in another context, in which both states claim the principle of equality of rights, of reciprocal advantages, of mutual respect, of national sovereignty and territorial integrity. So you get, you see, by the mid-1950s, you get the one moment when relations between the Soviet Union and China seem to be going all right, and when the Soviet model seems to be very much the model the Chinese want to follow.

Now, what was the result of that first Five-Year Plan period, or this second stage? Certainly, from the statistical point of view, the results were very striking. What happened, of course, in industry was total nationalization. It was anticipated that there would be about 87% of industry nationalized by 1959; what happened was that, by the end of 1956, basically everything in China was nationalized in heavy and light industry.

But what is very revealing — and what we really have to linger on a little bit, because it begins to tell us something about differences — is the agricultural program during this five-year period. Now, you see, the Russian advice (and the advice that was taken by Liu Shao-ch'i, for example, and other Communist leaders) was that you couldn't do anything with collective farming. You couldn't do anything, really, with improving your agriculture until you had heavy industry. That's a kind of a classic dictum; it's practically a cliché of Soviet planning. And, consequently, what Mao did in July of 1955 was really kind of heretical. Because what he did was to make a famous address, which was an address — let's see, where the hell is it... yes! — which was an address called "The Question of Agricultural Cooperation and the Necessity of Going Ahead Resolutely and Not Timidly." Not a sprightly title, "The Question of Agricultural Cooperation and the

Necessity of Going Ahead Resolutely and Not Timidly." Now, get that title; now, that's really interesting. Because Mao is talking in the summer of 1955 about moving ahead rapidly on what he called "higher cooperatives" as distinct from "lower" ones, or what you would call collective farms — or what the Russians would call kolkhozes. And in that tract, or in that speech on these agricultural cooperatives, Mao makes three points. He makes, first of all, the point that the agricultural system as it is in China is not good: that is to say, the production is low, the farms are inefficient. And, consequently, the peasants do not...

[*audio cuts out*]

"... once again some of our comrades, who are tottering along like a woman with bound feet, always complaining that others are going too fast."

Now, we know who the women with bound feet are in Mao's party, because we know that from the later Cultural Revolution. We know that, basically, he's already talking about Liu Shao-ch'i, who basically was considered to be his successor, was considered to be the Dauphin in the whole Chinese structure. And Liu Shao-ch'i was very Russian in his approach to planning, and very urban in his view of the way in which Chinese society ought to develop, and bureaucratic in the way in which he approached the whole problem of Chinese development: that you had to have experts, you had to have careful plans, you had to develop heavy industry. All of that was a fixed orthodoxy. And Mao was saying, "To hell with that." Mao was saying, "Let's really get these peasants off their private plots: let them give up those plots, let them go into these collectives." Well, Mao prevailed in the summer of 1955. And, consequently, that was the line, and so it was assumed that about half the peasants would be in these collectives by 1958. But by May of 1956, 92% of all Chinese peasants were in these collectives.

Now, statistically, from the point of view of development, China at the end of this first Five-Year Plan period had increased its productivity, by Chinese figures, 11% per annum over those years; by Western figures, 7% per annum. By Chinese figures, the distortion was admitted: that industry increased 18% per annum and agriculture 4.5%. And there is the contradiction.

And so you enter a third period, and the third period is a transition. And it is the period 1958 to 1960, and it is the Great Leap Forward. Well, the Great Leap Forward is fantastic, you know. I mean, there were human anthills all over China. And in the background are about three things that you ought to remember. You ought to remember, first of all, that there is a terrific crisis in Chinese agriculture: that in following the Soviet model, they haven't taken care of the mass of their people, and they haven't taken care of their primary resource, namely, the land; that the Chinese peasantry, after all, was supposed to produce enough for the cities, it was supposed to

produce the raw materials for light industry, it was supposed to produce surplus for the export trade to get machines. All of that it was failing to do because the state wasn't investing in agriculture: it was investing in heavy industry. That is critical, and that is point one to keep in mind.

The second point to keep in mind is that there is a conflict going on in the Chinese Communist leadership. Mao is in a struggle; he is always in a struggle in the '50s and '60s. And he really is because, you see, most of the Chinese Communist leaders really followed a fairly orthodox view of development. And they thought, first of all, that you must raise the standard of living in order to create a socialist consciousness. In other words, people will accept a society if they see that that society is doing something for them. That's very Soviet, that's very Russian: if we produce a better standard of living, perforce, automatically, we will create socialists. Now, Mao took the exact diametric view: that you must create socialists to create a new standard of living; that, fundamentally, it's only if people have a commitment, if they believe in a society, that they will do herculean things, that they will do remarkable things. Secondly, most of the Chinese leaders believed that you had to have a hierarchy. You had to have the experts, you had to have the bureaucracy to rationally make a plan and execute a plan. And Mao followed what we call the "mass line." And he's really hip on the mass line, and it is at the heart of Maoism. And it is the idea that, if you can only unleash the mass, you can do anything. Now, it's dangerous. And you do it in a country like China... hell.

And here is Mao, quoted in the *Peking Review* on the 20th of August of 1966, at the time of the Cultural Revolution — you see what this is about — and Mao says, "It is necessary to trust the masses, rely on them, and respect their initiative. It is necessary to boldly arouse the masses and to let the masses rise up in revolution, educate themselves, run their own affairs, and liberate themselves." It really is a throwback to those statutes of 1864 at the First International that Marx composed: "And the emancipation of the working class will be the work of the workers themselves." It is Mao saying, "Unleash these masses and see what they may not be able to do."

And a third thing is connected to that. And that is Mao's growing suspicion of both the Russians and of the bureaucrats in China, something that really digs into the Cultural Revolution a decade later very, very deeply. And so you get this rather astonishing tract of 1957, of February of '57, *On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People*. And here is Mao saying to Khrushchev, implicitly, and saying to his own Chinese bureaucrats: "It is naive to believe that there no longer can exist contradictions in a socialist society. To deny the existence of contradictions is to deny the dialectic." Now, in line with that, what Mao does in 1957 is to call for a campaign of criticism. It's the so-called Let a Hundred Flowers Bloom Campaign, Let a Hundred Flowers Bloom in the spring of 1957. The phrases are: "Let a hundred flowers bloom;

let a hundred schools of thought contend." And it comes from an ancient Chinese view that if a hundred schools of philosophy contend, then you will arrive at the truth.

And what Mao is doing in calling for this criticism from below — from people, from intellectuals — is two things. He is concerned, I think, to show to the state bureaucrats that their reliance upon experts, their reliance upon the intelligentsia, is misplaced; that when the intelligentsia has a chance to criticize, it will show how many bourgeois attitudes it still really harbors and has. And that was proved in the Hundred Flowers Campaign: that you get a lot of sentiments about wanting more individual freedom, but for the personal glory of the people involved. The second thing is to let the people criticize the attitudes of the bureaucrats: that they are arrogant, that they are sectarian, that they begin to lord it over the people. And that was done, and there was a purge of the bureaucracy that followed. It's in that context that Mao really regains control of the Central Committee and the Party, and consequently launches in 1958 the so-called Great Leap Forward.

The Great Leap Forward: an effort to mobilize, on the vastest scale in all of history, the Chinese masses, by the tens and the scores of millions, in order to make industrial production far beyond the figures of the plan, in order to make agricultural productivity far beyond anything that had been done. At the center of it, the creation of the people's communes — the creation of the people's communes, which meant the consolidation of the collectives or the cooperatives into these vast people's communes. So that what had been 740,000 collectives were united into 26,000 of these people's communes, in which there was not only agriculture but industry, not only public works but industrial works. Let Tibor Mende, in his book *China and Her Shadow*, tell you how it looked to him when he saw it: "Monumental antheps were busy on the sites of future reservoirs. Endless lines of blue-clad men and women were filing up mountain sides, like some unnatural stream changing its course. In the background, scattered all over the field, multitudes of people were moving around with two buckets hanging from their shoulder poles. Altogether they recalled the rhythmic breathing of some mythological colossus, suddenly awakened and flexing its billion muscles in a supreme effort to change the face of the earth." Well, it was fantastic. It was fantastic, and during 1958 and '59, the rate of industrial increase was of the order of 32% per year. All kinds of little backyard steel mills were planted, all kinds of new agricultural products were planted, and so forth.

But with great, great losses — with tremendous losses, because there was a great inferiority of product. There was a great exhaustion of people. It was an effort. It was an effort, and in no way a wholly successful effort. But was clobbered the Great Leap Forward were two things. First of all, that it converged with a period of terrible, terrible climatic conditions. Between 1960 and 1963, you're dealing with drought in the north, you're dealing with typhoon at the coast, you're

dealing with flooding of the rivers — literally awful for the agricultural system. And secondly, you are dealing with that moment in the summer of 1960 when the Soviet Union pulls out completely: when it withdraws its 1,400 technicians, when it ceases all economic aid, when it leaves 200 big projects unfinished and simply dumps them, when all of that happens. Why? Well, Khrushchev had attacked the Great Leap Forward at the Congress of the Hungarian Communist Party in December of 1959 as "adventurism." And then Mao had answered in *Red Flag* on the 16th of April of 1960, in an article entitled "Long Live Lenin" [*laughter*], on Lenin's 90th birthday, in which he said, "Long live Lenin, but who's in the Kremlin?" And what he did, after all, was to attack the idea not only of peaceful coexistence, but attacked the Khrushchevian idea of the peaceful transition to socialism. And with that kind of challenge, Khrushchev simply responded, and all Soviet aid was removed.

And that takes you to the fourth and final stage, which is that the Chinese had to recoil — take a leap backward, as it were. They didn't dismantle the people's communes, but what they did was to make 70,000 rather than 26,000 of them. They were reduced in size. And they also had the program of the so-called Three Privates and One Guarantee. The Three Privates meant that the peasantry could have a private garden plot, could have private handicrafts and a private market in which to sell those, as long as they made the One Guarantee: that their quotas of farm produce for the state were to be fulfilled. All of that was a step backward in Mao's terms. But when the Central Committee met in January of 1961, it turned the plan on its head. And that is where it remains. And the strategy of development has become Chinese: which is that the center of investment and the center of the plan is agriculture, and that's where the investment goes, and that industry both heavy and light is geared toward the productivity of agriculture. So that there are not those grandiose plans that the Soviets had, that kind of industrial elephantiasis which really was the great disease of Stalin. But it is the idea of making those tractors, those small works and so forth, that the Chinese need for their agriculture and for their living. All of that, a great reversal.

And then Mao was not satisfied that you go, and go, and go. And, consequently, here we have Mao then, in 1964, in an essay — a satirical one — called "On Khrushchev's Phony Communism and Its Historical Lessons to the World":

"In the Soviet Union, Khrushchev has betrayed true Marxism-Leninism by promoting material incentives, encouraging free competition, undermining the social collective economy, sponsoring bourgeois humanity, debasing socialist morality, and colluding with imperialism — all within an attempt to place the vested interest of a handful of people above the interest of the Communist Bloc. The lesson for China is obvious. Let us look at the facts. Is our society clean, thoroughly clean? No, it is not: classes and class struggle

still remain."

And Mao, we know, is a poet. And so in October of 1965, right before that Cultural Revolution — of which we still have to talk — in October of 1965, Mao writes a little poem (and one could hardly imagine a head of state whom we have ever known writing it) in which he says, "Seize the day, seize the hour! / Away with all the pests, and our popular force is irresistible." [*applause*]