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Introduction

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Bo Xilai's campaign of "praise the Red and strike down the Black" in Chongqing when he was the municipality's Party secretary once again reminds people of the influence of Mao and Maoism. After all, Mao's portrait continues to adorn the Tiananmen Gate. Bo Xilai's promotion of the "Chongqing model" was an attempt to exploit the legacy of Mao to advance his own political career, and his challenge of the Party's leadership finally led to his downfall.

Bo's popularity, however, reveals that a segment of the population who has not benefitted from the rapid economic growth in the era of economic reforms and opening to the external world are dissatisfied, and they resent the values of developmentalism. This dissatisfaction and resentment are not unique to China; they existed in Eastern Europe in the mid-1990s too, which supported the electoral success of former Communist parties.

The Chongqing's experiments attracted the praise of many Chinese intellectuals who are often categorized as the New Left or its sympathizers because the present development strategy has its obvious deficiencies, and the Maoist model retains some ideological appeal. Mao Zedong Thought naturally may be subjected to many interpretations as it has evolved through many decades. For example, Mao's concept of New Democracy was promoted by Zhang Musheng and firmly endorsed by Liu Yuan, Liu Shaoqi's son and an important princeling serving in the People's Liberation Army.

The Chinese authorities' cautious handling of the Bo Xilai trial in August 2013 reflects their concern regarding the ideological challenge of Maoism, and the potential adverse impact of the trial on Party solidarity. Both the prosecution and the defendant avoided implicating any more senior leaders in the trial. Since the stepping down of Hua Guofeng, Deng Xiaoping and his successors too were very reserved in their criticisms against Mao, as demonstrated by the 1981 "Resolution on Certain Questions in the History of Our Party since the Founding of the People's Republic of China." In view of Mao's significance in the history of the Party, Chinese leaders whose top priority has been the maintenance of political stability do not want to rock the boat and risk the grave dangers of splitting the Party and adversely affecting the legitimacy of the regime.

This reluctance has led to Mao being exploited by various groups ranging from the Party leadership and the New Left to entrepreneurs seeking profits. Under such circumstances, it is perhaps a duty of Chinese scholars outside the country to offer an objective assessment of the use of Mao today and of the Bo Xilai case. This volume attempts to fulfill the task by enlisting a team of academics who are ready to offer their initial evaluations.

Arif Dirlik notes that the post-revolutionary regime in China has been trying to recruit Mao Zedong in support of "reform and opening" instead of repudiating his legacy. Under the guidance of Deng Xiaoping, China's official historiography since 1978 has drawn a distinction between Mao's role during the Cultural Revolution and Mao as the architect of "Chinese Marxism"—a Marxism that integrates theory with the actual circumstances of Chinese society. The essence of the latter is encapsulated in Mao Zedong Thought, which is viewed as an expression not just of Mao the individual but of the collective leadership of the Communist Party of China. In the most recent representations, "Chinese Marxism" is viewed as having developed in two phases: New Democracy which brought the Party to power in 1949, and "socialism with Chinese characteristics" inaugurated under Deng Xiaoping and further developed by his successors. The latter is officially perceived to be a continuous development of

Mao Zedong Thought. The Hu Jintao–Wen Jiabao administration had made an aggressive effort to portray "Chinese Marxism" as the most advanced development of Marxism which might also serve as a model for others. These interpretive operations have salvaged Mao for the national revolution and the legitimacy of the Party. But it also represents a predicament in keeping alive memories of Maoist policies which the Party leadership is not always able to control political memory, as has been illustrated in the Chongqing model in recent years. Professor Dirlik considers that the continued uncertainty over the future seems inevitably to play out a discursive terrain in which Mao is ever present in one form or another. In its appropriation by the Party regime, Mao Zedong Thought guarantees that Mao and Maoism will have a phantom existence imminent in Chinese socialism both in its achievements and anxieties.

According to Jean-Philippe Béja, the dilemma that Mao's successors faced was the following: how was it possible to keep the image of the regime's founder untouched while completely reversing his policies? The new leadership understood that a thorough criticism of the Great Helmsman would deeply undermine the regime's legitimacy. While Khrushchev could denounce Stalin's crimes and appeal for a return to Leninism, this was impossible in China as Mao was both the regime's Lenin and Stalin. Denouncing his crime would lead the people to question the very legitimacy of the People's Republic. The solution was to invent the Gang of Four that was supposed to have plotted against the Red Sun, and to accuse Mao only of insufficient firmness in his struggle against them.

Since the early 1980s, Mao's position in the minds of the Chinese people and of the Party leaders has been through ups and downs. Mao has been put to multiple uses such as a pop icon, a tutelary personality for disgruntled workers, a "maitre á penser" for New Left intellectuals, etc. However, his thought, no matter how re-interpreted, has remained the ideological cornerstone of the regime and it is still part of the Four Cardinal principles (Marxism–Leninism–Mao Zedong Thought, socialism, dictatorship of the proletariat, and Party leadership) created by Deng Xiaoping in 1979 to put an end to serious reflections on the regime

legitimacy. Mao's image has been used by the Party and it has also been used by the people. The multiplicity of these uses tells a lot about relations between the state and society in present China.

The nostalgia for Mao Zedong is kept alive by the refusal of the Party to launch a discussion about the 27 years of his rule. Commercialization of his image, while contributing to the demythification of his ideas, has allowed the Party to make him an idol for the youth. The combination of these two trends, argues Béja, has prevented questioning of the historical role of Mao, and has contributed to the reinforcement of his position both in the official discourse and in the hearts and minds of the population.

The chapter by Willy Lam studies the background and significance of the Maoist revival that began in Chongqing in late 2008 and spread across the nation in the ensuing years. The Maoist revival, Lam argues, is aimed at promoting "spiritual civilization," which was a concept raised by Deng Xiaoping to counter the materialism arriving in the wake of the country's market reforms and accumulation of wealth. Lam thinks that there is also a "materialistic" side to the Maoist revival: A re-emphasis on the values of egalitarianism and social equality that a sizeable segment of the population associates with the Maoist era. There was also a reaction to the increasing polarization of rich and poor. At a deeper level, the author sees the quasi-Maoist renaissance as a political movement on the part of the Party leadership to uphold political stability and weed out challenges to the regime. While Hu Jintao seldom talked about Maoism, he vigorously propagated ideological orthodoxy and the uniformity of thought through the campaign of "Sinicizing and popularizing Marxism." Lam discussed in some detail how the Maoist revival helped strengthen the "Gang of Princelings" and the legitimacy of the "red aristocrats." The Maoist revival was also linked to the hawkish turn in Chinese foreign policy. According to Willy Lam, the main factor behind Bo Xilai's ouster seemed to be the animosity between the ambitious Bo and the Hu Jintao–Wen Jiabao leadership, as well as the bitter power struggle between the princelings and the Chinese Communist Youth League faction. Lam believes that the obsession of Hu Jintao and Xi Jinping with preserving the Party's

monopoly of political power might likely leave them ill-disposed and ill-equipped to rekindle the economic, administrative and political reforms which have been neglected in the past two decades.

Mao is still serving as a foundation of the regime legitimacy to the Chinese leadership today, argues Ben Xu. Hence when one considers the possibility of regime change in China in the future, one has to answer the basic question about the founding of its political institutions. Political institutions in China were established along with the historical establishment of Mao's paramount leadership.

According to Ben Xu, there are three defining characteristics of the Mao regime: class struggle, socialism and one-party rule, but only class struggle has been abandoned. It has been replaced by new variations of the old rhetoric of single-party dictatorship, such as "three represents" and "social harmony." Socialism, on the other hand, has been discredited and has lost control of consumption and consumer culture. Repackaging Mao as a tactic of delaying or averting democratic reform may serve the short-term purpose of disguising the legitimacy deficit; but China simply cannot move forward by going back. Ben Xu thus believes that the strategy of limited and uneven economic reform in the absence of political change may be reaching its limits.

Michel Bonnin analyzes the impact of the Mao generation at the helm by trying to answer the following two questions: What are the main features of this generation? And is the generational factor influential in the Party leadership?

Bonnin wants to remind his readers that the impact of the "situation of generation" and the consciousness of generation are not equally distributed in the age bracket considered. Further, even when the new leadership elected by the Eighteenth Party Congress comprises many members of the Cultural Revolution generation, it is still multi-generational. Finally, while the princelings are prominent and were among the first members of the Cultural Revolution generation to reach a relatively high level of leadership, they are not as numerous as they could have been.

According to Bonnin's observations, the specificities of the political elites among the Cultural Revolution generation do not bode well for its inventiveness and boldness in the political realm. Now that a regular renewal of the political leadership has been institutionalized, state politics should be less dependent on the whims of any one leader, though each new team could bring its "generational style." This new style could only make a difference in case of new challenges requiring brand new solutions, but such challenges are quite possible in the not too distant future.

Torbjörn Loden looks at the phenomenon of New Maoism in relation to the quest for democracy in China. He believes that while with or without real threats of national demise, Chinese Communists have generally held a very negative view of the basic democratic rights and freedoms; Chinese society has during the past three decades moved in the direction of greater pluralism, more freedom for more people, and, indeed, toward democracy in several important ways. They include economic growth leading to the rise of a middle-class embracing largely universal values. At the same time, the control of the Party-state over the lives of the Chinese has shrunk and is much less totalitarian. China's opening up to the external world, as well as improvements in the judicial system and the media are significant trends. The impact of grassroots elections, especially elections of village heads and the Party's present discourse on democracy are not to be underestimated either.

At this stage, Loden considers that New Maoism seems to offer both a diagnosis of the situation in China in the reform era and a prescription for improving the situation. However, the former's attempts to identify neoliberal policies as an essential cause of China's serious problems today may contain a grain of truth but still appear largely misleading. Professor Loden also believes that only when there is open discussion with no taboos about China's modern history will it be possible to explode the myth nourished by New Maoism that Mao's China was a more equal and just society than China today.

The editor's chapter examines the Chongqing model and its meaning for China today. He argues that the Chongqing model reflects the challenges

of the present stage of China's development. The basic policy program of Hu Jintao and Wen Jiabao based on economic growth, a fundamental social security net covering the entire population, and good governance in the absence of democracy were found inadequate. Grievances have been accumulating, and an increasing segment of the population wants to see changes and reforms. Former Premier Wen Jiabao's appeals for liberal democratic reforms encountered strong resistance; and the ambitious Bo Xilai tried to offer an alternative.

The ideological and policy debate became more significant partly because of the leadership succession process finalized at the Eighteenth Party Congress in the autumn of 2012 and partly because of the perceived domestic and international challenges. The former includes the economic slowdown in the aftermath of the global financial tsunami; and the latter mainly involves the Barack Obama administration's "return to Asia" position and its exploitation of the hedging strategies of China's neighbors in response to its increasingly assertive posture in the territorial disputes since 2010. Chinese leaders normally have more tolerance for the leftists because they do not challenge the Party's monopoly of political power, whereas the rightists (liberals) demand democracy. The Bo Xilai case was one of the rare cases when a severe challenge came from the left and the central leadership became seriously concerned. Perhaps this revealed the inadequacies of the present achievements in economic development. Bo Xilai's departure from the political scene has reduced the appeal of the New Leftists, but it does not represent a victory or even a significant opportunity for the Rightists (liberals). There are no signs of any significant political reforms yet from the new leadership headed by Xi Jinping.

When the Chinese leadership put a stop to the "Red culture movement," actual signs (posters and inscriptions on walls) and online testimonies were removed practically overnight. In a heavy atmosphere of suspicion, people in Chongqing behaved as if nothing had happened, observes Emilie Tran. Her chapter shows how the Web 2.0 has actually enabled the Party regime to put into practice on certain Maoist methods of mobilization and propaganda. Modern technology certainly helps.

Instead of waiting for issues to create a buzz on the Internet and to react thereafter, the Chinese authorities since the late 2000s have adopted a proactive approach by encouraging citizens to denounce the malpractices on websites. In fact the Party regime has been using different methods to assert its control: from enacting laws and regulations, including licensing systems and enforcing real name registration, to online censorship, Internet police, Internet firewall devices, closure of websites, and physical intimidation of activists.

The authors argue that cleansing the Internet of its bad elements while praising the virtue of websites which "uphold the System of Core Socialist Values" may well be a modern application of Mao's "Talks at the Yenan Forum on Literature and Art." However, despite the ongoing online reactivation of Maoist mobilization methods and propaganda, the broad picture of Chinese netizens is not very different from that of social media users from other parts of the world, i.e., the vast majority of them are much more driven by depoliticized pastimes.

Sebastian Veg considers that the two films on Mao released in 2009 and 2011 set a new standard in the confluence of commercial and propaganda productions in terms of scale; and he argues that they contributed to defining the new "mainstream socialist culture" established as a cultural policy goal by Hu Jintao. At the same time, they redefined the figure of Mao and the role of the Communist Party of China in an attempt to stake out a popular consensus on the contemporary Chinese polity.

Veg observes that the image of Mao that the Party would like to present today is very restricted in time. In fact both movies entirely sidestep any engagement with the history of the People's Republic of China after 1949, and this probably reflects the absence of a consensus on the interpretation of that segment of history even within the present Party leadership. Throughout the 1990s and 2000s, however, there were two interesting trends concerning the repositioning of Mao: the commodification of the icons of Chinese socialism and of the figure of Mao himself; and the de-politicization of the Red Nostalgia, i.e., how "red" culture came to be "relieved" and subsequently theorized as an object of nostalgia distinct

from the official political arrangements. As the mainstream Party culture cannot let go of the Revolution and of Mao, Veg believes that the two Mao films in fact try to reconstruct a consensual figure of Mao as the centerpiece of the new emerging national narrative of "the great revival of the Chinese nation." This demonstrates that the centrality of Mao's role ensures that any critique of the present state of affairs that might venture to take propaganda discourse remains framed within the limits of his all-encompassing persona.

Minna Valjakka discusses how Mao's images have been renegotiated and questioned in the realms of contemporary art by both Chinese and Euro-American artists since the 1970s. Furthermore, collecting Mao has become extremely popular among Chinese and non-Chinese alike. For instance, for some Chinese collectors promoting their nationalism in this way can be a calculated method to earn more respect and influence in China. Nonetheless, completely opposite sentiments are also expressed among Chinese, and the ultimate examples are the two attacks on Mao's official portrait at Tiananmen Square on May 23, 1989 and May 12, 2007.

Valjakka demonstrates well that visual images related to Mao include much more than his mere likeness. Portraits are just one limited form of Mao's visual images, although without question, portraits are the most familiar and prominent ones. The presence of Mao can be implied with varying methods, without depicting the likeness of Mao at all. For example, similar to the original visual images created during Mao's lifetime, contemporary artists can use visual signs, such as the red sun or slogans by Mao to refer to him. Mao's handwritten calligraphic poems, slogans and writings have been enormously important representations of him in the visual culture in China.

While art works depicting Mao are primarily created for representing, invoking and questioning the traumatizing past, some are also made in order to appeal to the audiences, both foreign and Chinese. Disneyfication and commodification emerge when the Party creates amusement parks and tourist attractions relating to the revolutionary past, and when tens of thousands of entrepreneurs establish Mao restaurants and supply a myriad

of Maoist souvenirs for both foreign and domestic tourists. Hence Valjakka considers it quite hypocritical to criticize only contemporary artists for the commodification of Mao's visual image, when many artists are actively employing visual art to prevent historical amnesia by deconstructing and reconstructing the historical narratives.