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Pfeffer and Walder have opened significant new paths for interpreting Mao Ze-dong and the Chinese revolution in Marxist and in world historical perspective. They correctly criticize the virtual unanimity in the field of Chinese studies in ignoring or distorting Mao's contributions as a *Marxist* philosopher, teacher, and revolutionary. The issue is one with wide ramifications in American intellectual life: for in dissolving the link between Marx and Mao, not only does Marx become irrelevant to Chinese revolutionary praxis (and by implication to the entire Third World) but the relevance of the Chinese experience to the West is likewise negated. This perspective, central to the scholarly, political synthesis of the 1950s, remained an unchallenged cornerstone of American China scholarship for more than two decades.

Walder's work fruitfully begins to redefine the debate long dominated by Schwartz's striking, but in my view false, perception that Mao, like Lenin before him, contributed to the *disintegration* of Marxism. The disintegration thesis that Schwartz

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advanced in 1951 (and, despite myriad qualifications, defends in the present debate) opened free space for understanding distinctive features of a Chinese revolutionary path (contra Wittfogel), only to find the ground essentially barren: Marxism, he concluded, was irrelevant not only to China, but to the nations of the Third World, and Chinese revolutionary practice was, at best, retrograde Marxism. The heart of the matter lay with "the Maoist heresy *in action* on the matter of the relations of party to class." Mao's formulation of a revolutionary strategy of peasant-based revolution so appropriate— no, indispensable —under Chinese conditions, completed, in Schwartz's view, the process of disintegration which began with Lenin.

In exploring the significant common ground that links Marx and Mao in their approaches to dialectical analysis, in their grasp of the relationship between productive relations, productive forces, and ideas in defining and transforming stages of society, in their understanding of the transition to socialism and communism, Walder and Pfeffer have posed a series of critical and largely neglected questions which deserve full attention. They not only show that Marxism, as living philosophy and as revolutionary method, was vitally relevant to China during the phase of revolutionary war, but suggest that, *as developed by Mao,* it has provided effective guidance in transforming a poverty-stricken semicolonial, semifeudal society into a developing socialist nation.[1] On both counts its particular—but by no means exclusive—relevance to Third World nations is clear.

The work of Schram, widely acknowledged as the foremost Western authority on Mao Ze-dong, offers a point of departure for assessing Mao's contribution to China's socialist development in Marxist—Leninist perspective. The concluding section of Schram's first major work, *The Political Thought of Mao Ze-dong* ("is Mao Ze-dong obsolete?") provides a classic statement of a perspective which remains dominant in American social science: "In recent years [since the Great Leap Forward] Mao's personality with its extreme emphasis on struggle and

firmness of will, has collided head on with the nature of the tasks set by the transformation of the Chinese economy" (Schram, 1963: 81).[2] Here is an article of faith shared not only by the dominant voices in the China field then and today, but more widely by American social scientists, as well as their counterparts in the Soviet Union: mobilization politics (and particularly class struggle) are anathema to economic development and stem from voluntarist rather than from Marxist impulses.

The record of the People's Republic of China, from the land revolution of 1947-1952, through successive stages of cooperative formation culminating in the communes and the Great Leap Forward, to the Cultural Revolution and beyond, suggests very different conclusions. The application and extension of Marxist principles of class struggle effectively directed toward transformation of the relations of production and the realm of ideas lie at the center of China's remarkable progress as a developing nation striving for the realization of higher stages of socialism. The destruction of the landlord class and the step-by-step achievement of advanced forms of rural cooperation were no less central to China's socialist development than was the elimination of feudal and aristocratic impediments to capitalism centuries earlier in the West.

Noting that the bourgeoisie historically launched revolution and gained control of state power *before* the industrial revolution, Mao, following the seizure of state power, sought to transform the relations of production step-by-step in tune with, and leading the way toward, expanded productive forces. At each stage one finds experiments, sprouts of social formations appropriate to the subsequent stage when they would be appropriately implemented on a nationwide scale. Examples of these prefigurative institutions are the cooperatives initated in the Jiangxi Soviet and during the anti-Japanese Resistance and Civil War. Communist elements during the socialist era include the free supply system briefly (and with mixed results) implemented during the Great Leap Forward, and successful efforts since the Cultural Revolution to distribute an increasing

share of commune income on an egalitarian basis rather than according to the socialist principle "to each according to one's work." This approach, effectively developed in revolutionary China, has its origins in the Soviet Union's working class—Subbotniks—laborers for whom work (not income) is its own reward—during the early socialist transition. Earlier Chinese experience with prefigurative socialist forms during the Resistance War and land revolution facilitated the smooth and rapid transition to advanced cooperatives in the 1950s. In the 1970s, embryonic communist institutions, and above all the continued unfolding of class struggle, directed toward extending the dictatorship of the proletariat to restrict bourgeois right, augurs new phases in socialist development long before it is possible to achieve conditions for the advance to communism.

The strategy of uninterrupted revolution focusing on the relations of production and the realm of values and ideas in relation to levels of development of productive forces was not rooted in an idiosyncratic psychic drive on the part of Mao, as voluntarist and psychoanalytical interpreters hold. It was based on the correct analysis that uninterrupted revolution could burst the fetters restraining the productive forces even as the process itself expanded human self-realization. "In the course of the revolution," Mao concluded in his critique of the Soviet Union's "Political Economy," "after the backward superstructure had been overthrown, it was then possible to wipe out the old relations of production. This paved the way for the development of new social productive forces, consequently we were able to organize a technical revolution vigorously so as to develop social productive forces on a large scale" (Mao, 1974: 259).[3] As Walder correctly observed in laying to rest the voluntarism hypothesis, Mao's emphasis on politics in command and on mass mobilization was invariably linked with a precise analysis of stages of development and of the primary contradiction in the development process. As Walder correctly observes, "Mao sees social change as proceeding simultaneously in both superstructure and base, with the relations of production as the *central* link between them."

The Cultural Revolution's slogan, "Grasp revolution, promote production," summarizes the essence of Mao's political economy: politics and economics are inseparable; mobilization politics is the key both to unfolding the productive forces and to deepening the socialist content of human relationships and consciousness; the goals of revolution include a better material life for the people, itself a requisite for moving toward higher levels of socialism and eventually for making the transition to communism. Chen Yong-gui (1977: 12) provided an important formulation of the relationship between revolution and production in his speech to the December 1976 Conference on Learning From Dazhai:

> The difference between grasping revolution and promoting production on the one hand and practising the "theory of productive forces" on the other is whether one attaches the development of productive forces to socialism or to capitalism, that is to say, the criterion is which road one really takes. What we want to criticize is the erroneous tendency of not grasping class struggle and caring about politics and not taking the socialist road. We certainly do not criticize the development of socialist production.

If it is true that Mao Ze-dong's most distinctive speeches and comments have emphasized the revolutionary side of the equation, at no time did Mao lose sight of the goals of revolution in the service of production, production in the service of improved livelihood, and higher productivity paving the way toward more advanced social relations. This certainly was the case in the land reform, the Great Leap, and the Cultural Revolution, the three major epochs most closely associated with Mao's leadership in which fundamental transformation occurred in the relations of production, popular consciousness, and political institutions directed toward breakthroughs on the production front.[4] In each period Mao sought in the initial phases to mobilize popular forces and, having done so, to lead them toward a resolution which permitted expansion of productive forces and consolidation of revolutionary gains. Advocates of the voluntarism hypothesis have by and large ig-

nored Mao's preoccupation with raising productivity, still more his enduring commitment to raising individual incomes through collective processes.

Let us return to Schram's perspective on development. Pfeffer and Walder suggest that Schram and the field uniformly remain locked into the perspectives of the 1950s. Such a view was, I believe, basically correct until quite recently. Is it serviceable today? The work of Schram provides an important case in point. In his introduction to *Chairman Mao Talks to the People,* Schram (1974) highlights a number of Mao's perceptions which are crucial to the development process. He notes, for example, Mao's insistence "that the energy of the people as a whole can be maximized only by releasing the initiative of every individual. Only by mobilizing these energies can the country be effectively industrialized so as to increase both national power and the well-being of the population" (Schram, 1974: 18). Elsewhere, "The theme of class struggle is implicit in Mao's observations regarding the need to link education and production, which have as their corollary, the rejection of old ideas regarding the superiority of mental over manual labor" (Schram, 1974: 23). And, in striking contrast to much of his earlier writing on Mao's voluntarism, he observes "the remarkable balance and the sense of what is possible at a given time which Mao has nearly always displayed in his approach to political and economic problems" (Schram, 1974: 27). Again, however understated, Mao "is not opposed to progress and economic development, but concerned lest they produce, in China, the negative effects engendered elsewhere by urbanization and industrialization" (Schram, 1974: 29). Indeed, Schram (1974: 31) links Mao's understanding of dialectics with a distinctive approach to development: "in Mao's view, economic development is a spiral process in which successive increments in material and human resources combine and reinforce one another to produce a continual forward movement."

It would be a serious mistake to overlook changes wrought by the political and intellectual movements which swept the

United States and Europe in the late 1960s, particularly the civil rights, student, and antiwar movements. Equally significant has been the new phase in U.S.-China relations in the 1970s, whose reverberations include the appearance of *Modern China,* the present symposium, and the growing interest in Marxism in the West. The pioneering political economy of Gray (treading a lonely path for more than a decade), and in recent years the contributions of Andors, Gurley, Lippit, Riskin, Sigurdson, and others, have not overturned orthodox analysis, but they have produced impact. Schram's recent writing, particularly the introduction to *Chairman Mao Talks to the People,* exemplifies important changes in the field which produce the basis for new forms of dialogue and mutual learning. There is increasing recognition of China's impressive record as a developing nation reflected in the summer 1975 publication of the Joint Economic Committee of Congress' *China: A Re-Assessment of the Economy,* and the special issue of *World Development* (1975). A recent World Bank seminar explored the lessons of China's development strategy for the Third World. It is important, returning to the focus of the present symposium, to underscore the failure in much of this new analysis to grasp the Marxist-Leninist context of China's development path. But it is equally important to understand significant changes occurring within the field which make it possible for new and more fruitful perspectives to emerge on Chinese development.

A major task for future research lies in exploring the Marxist substance of China's development record in Third World perspective. For in throwing off the fetters of foreign domination and landlord despotism and in rapidly laying the foundations of industrialization, in moving toward an agricultural-industrial society, in feeding, clothing, educating, and raising the cultural levels of 800 million people, in achieving a remarkable degree of self-reliance, and in moving toward an eqalitarian society, the Chinese record speaks to stated objectives of increasingly articulate Third World opinion, above all to those seeking to build socialism. The unfolding of such an analysis requires

that we explore the relationship between political strategies and the harsh realities of a capital-poor nation seeking to achieve rapid growth consistent with social justice.

I would like to conclude by raising some questions posed earlier concerning Marxism and the peasantry. If China remains a "peasant nation" in the sense that 80% of the population lives and works in the countryside, today the category peasant bears little relationship to its definition in the era of Marx. In *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte,* Marx made his classic statement on the peasantry:

> The small peasants form a vast mass, the members of which live in similar conditions but without entering into manifold relations with one another. Their mode of production isolates them from one another instead of bringing them into mutual intercourse. . . . Insofar as millions of families live under economic conditions of existence that divide their mode of life, their interests, and their culture from those of the other classes, and put them in hostile contrast to the latter, they form a class. Insofar as there is merely a local interconnection among these small peasants, and the identity of their interests begets no unity, no national union and no political organization, they do not form a class. [Marx, 1972: 515-516]

Precisely the conditions of peasant isolation, mode of production, and culture of Marx's nineteenth-century French peasantry prevented it from emerging as a class *for* itself, capable of uniting in revolutionary struggle on behalf of its class interests. By contrast, Marx offered this analysis of the formation of the proletariat in his *Poverty of Philosophy:*

> Economic conditions had in the first place transformed the mass of the people into workers. The domination of capital created the common situation and common interests of this class. Thus the mass is already a class in relation to capital, but not yet a class for itself. In the struggle, of which we have only indicated a few phases, this mass unites and forms itself into a class for itself. The interests which it defends become class interests. [Marx 1964: 187]

Among the accomplishments of the Chinese revolution during the phase of national liberation was that of creating of the oppressed sectors of the peasantry a class for itself. Since 1949, China's socialist development, under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party, has initiated a transformation which might be described as the proletarianization of the peasantry and other classes. This process required transforming the productive forces (above all building an industrial base including rural industry), the relations of production (communal and state ownership of the means of production as the first step), and the realm of ideas consistent with the socialist values of human self-realization. In this process a socialist proletariat, drawn from the ranks of the industrial and agricultural work force, emerges gradually through participation in class struggle, productive activity, and scientific experiment even as the differences between peasant and proletariat gradually blur. China's peasantry in the era of people's communes has radically transcended Marx's definition set forth in the *Eighteenth Brumaire.* Indeed, in important respects it now exemplifies characteristics of Marx's proletariat: in its organization into large work units breaking down the isolation of individual farming; in breaching the walls which separate its interests and culture from those of other classes; in the formation of community and national bonds and identity; and in the joining of industrial and scientific pursuits with agriculture.

Has the Chinese peasantry in the course of a generation of profound revolutionary change transformed itself essentially into a socialist proletariat? No. Perhaps no one was more sensitive to this fact than Mao, who throughout his lifetime focused attention on the lag between the dynamism of relations of production and productive forces on the one hand and the conservative realm of customs, culture, and ideas on the other. As the succession of cultural revolutions makes clear, old ideas remain deeply imbedded—or rather continue locked in struggle with new socialist ideals—and this is true among workers as well as peasants. Mao never ceased to perceive the challenge

of socialist development in the countryside as China's most formidable task. Contradictions in Chinese society remain centered on China's poor and lower middle peasants, comprising the majority of the rural population: the conditions of their livelihood reflect most clearly the necessity for continuing revolutionary change to eliminate the vestiges of the inequality between worker and peasant, city and countryside, mental and manual labor, and women and men, to create the material, social, and ideological preconditions for the transition to a communist society congruent with the egalitarian vision of Marx and adapted to Chinese experience. But continued progress can no more rest exclusively on the shoulders of the peasantry than could successful waging of the Liberation War and the land reform. The formulation of Marxism—Leninism Mao Ze-Dong Thought, the leadership of a proletarian party committed to the step-by-step eradication of all exploitation, and a foundation in the worker-peasant alliance provide the basis for extending China's socialist development. The recreation of the links between Marxism and the Chinese revolution permit us to grasp anew both the richness of China's national experience and significant developments of the Marxist tradition whose direct relevance extends beyond the Third World to the original heartland of Marxism in the advanced capitalist countries.

NOTES

1. I read Pfeffer and Walder as attempting to overcome the imbalance which has led scholars to ignore the Marxist roots of Chinese revolutionary practice and to focus on the uniqueness (or deviation) of Mao and China. The result of such inquiry will not be to portray the thought of Marx and Mao as identical, nor will it ignore distinctive and developmental features of Mao's revolutionary synthesis.

2. Schram (1967: 386) made the point more sharply in his discussion of "Mao as a charismatic leader": "If throughout most of his career, Mao's ideas were on the whole well attuned to China's needs, the drama of the years since 1958 has been the increasingly flagrant divorce between the belief in human omnipotence born of his guerrilla experience and the objective difficulties of economic development. Mao's belief that political zeal can advantageously replace technical competence has involved him in a conflict not only with reality, but with a majority of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party."

3. It is worth comparing the rigid determinism of Stalin and his successors on this point of social development. In his "Dialectical and Historical Materialism," Stalin concluded that "First the productive forces of society change and develop, and then depending on those changes, and in conformity with them, men's relations of production, their economic relations, change." Mao criticized Stalin for ignoring the role of the masses in socialist development, for his denial of class struggle as the driving force in history, and for mechanically substituting a false "theory of productive forces."

4. I would like to take issue with Wakeman on this point concerning the Cultural Revolution. Changes in production relations such as transforming the roles of worker and manager in the factory, and the transfer of tractors from state to commune control, the formation of new institutions such as revolutionary committees, as well as the proliferation of such community services as cooperative health systems, require that we extend our understanding of the Cultural Revolution beyond struggle in the realm of ideas to include institutional change. For the most part the literature has failed to do so. Characteristic of Western scholarship on the Cultural Revolution in this respect is Baum's 110-page article on the countryside which provides a one-sentence mention of the sweeping institutional reforms which it produced (Robinson, 1971: 451).

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