

On Contradiction: Mao's Party-Substitutionist Revolution in Theory and Practice - Part 4

July 29, 2022



"The Reddest Reddest Red Sun in Our Heart, Chairman Mao"

(Women xinzhong zuihong zuihongde hong taiyang Mao zhuxi he women xin lianxin)

This is the final part of a four-part article. The other parts can be found here:

Part 1

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VI. "LIBERATION": THE SUBSTITUTE PROLETARIAT IN POWER

When Mao's Communist "party of the proletariat" swept into the cities from 1947-1949 this would have been the opportune moment for the substitute proletariat to validate its claim to be the "representative" of the proletariat by inviting the actual proletariat to become the "masters of the country" that CCP propaganda claimed they were. After abandoning the urban proletariat in 1927, the returning Party trumpeted extravagant pro-labor rhetoric and widely advertised their "New Democracy" as being under "the leadership of the proletariat." Official pronouncements hailed the workers as the "masters of the country" (*guojia de zhuren*), the "leading class" (*lingdao jieji*), and said that they should rightfully "take charge" (*dangjia zuozhu*).[107]

The substitute proletariat confronts the actual proletariat

Many workers and unions took those pledges seriously. Thus as Mao's armies approached the cities, here and there workers rose up against their capitalist bosses and took over their factories. A reporter from the Trotskyist journal *The Militant* described what happened in April 1949 :

From a worker, just escaped from Jinan (capital of the Shandong province), we learn of this horrible incident: As the 'liberating army' approached, the workers in his factory instinctively understood that it was time to liberate themselves. They drove out the boss and set up a factory committee to control production. They were immediately visited by a Stalinist political worker who demanded to know who was responsible for this action. The workers replied that they had decided in common to liberate themselves. He then insisted that the committeemen follow him to headquarters. There they were chained together and led to a courtyard where they were massacred wholesale by a firing squad. The factory was then returned to the frightened owner....

In another factory where a strike broke out for the simple economic demand of equal treatment, "the strike was brutally crushed by the Stalinists and three strikers stood up before a firing squad..."[108] In a third case,

An order was issued to the Sun Sun Textile Factory No. 9 to dismantle and move to Manchuria. Workers barricaded themselves in the plant to resist. Troops of the Stalinist "liberating" army were sent to carry out the order. A bloody clash ensued in which 10 workers were killed or wounded and three soldiers killed.[109]

The workers failed to understand that the Communist Party's revolution was not for the proletariat. It was a military conquest and capture of the country *of, by, and for* the substitute proletariat "new class," the Communist Party. The class that led the revolution and seized power in the name of the proletariat was not interested in sharing power, least of all with the workers. So it took immediate steps to suppress labor militancy while permitting the capitalists to continue running their factories until those were nationalized in 1956.

Thus in February 1948 as his armies prepared to cross the Yellow River, Mao declared that the party's policy in the newly liberated cities would be devoted to "developing production, promoting economic prosperity ... and benefiting both labor and capital." As his armies captured the city of

Luoyang, Mao telegraphed the Luoyang front leaders to give them instruction:

On entering the city do not lightly advance slogans of raising wages and reducing working hours, . . . Do not be in a hurry to organize people of the city to struggle for democratic reforms and improvements in livelihood.[110]

Before the fall of Shanghai, Tianjin, and other cities, Mao and General Zhu De issued a proclamation stating in part:

It is hoped that workers and employees in all trades will continue to work and that business will operate as usual . . . and obey orders of the PLA and People's Government." [111]

In 1949-50 the government issued labor regulations that prohibited strikes and mandated mediation and arbitration by the government-controlled Labor Bureau.[112] Banning strikes violated the principles and propaganda of the CCP in its first decade. The First Manifesto of the CCP (June 1922) included the demand : "Freedom to strike" as did subsequent editions. The Canton Commune of 1927 called for "the right to organize and strike.[113] But that was when the Party was still a majority proletarian party.

"Our golden age, our age of glory and splendor, lies before us!"

The program of the substitute proletariat

Mao did not think in terms of classes but of nations. In his view China was a "proletarian nation" and he, its heroic leader, the "force that will not stop, that cannot be stopped" its Great Savior, Great Helmsman, and Red Sun. Thus his first priority was to secure the dictatorship of the substitute proletariat.

Construction of the totalitarian police state

Once the communists seized power, they dispensed with the multi-class New Democracy they had been promising since the 1930s, and installed a police state modeled on Stalin's, replete with military regimentation of the civilian population, mass brainwashing, secret police, forced labor camps, mass executions of real and imagined "counterrevolutionaries," invasive state control over private lives including housing, jobs, birth control, children, school curriculums, etc., and decades of crazed political campaigns one after another to crush all real or imagined opponents and to cow the general population into submission.

First up: "elimination of counterrevolutionaries." Who were those? Immediately after liberation the entire population were assigned class labels (*chengfen*), one of roughly 60 in all, based on their family background, education, occupation, prerevolutionary employment, prior employment by the GMD or suspected sympathy with the GMD or Western imperialists, etc. This information was noted in the new dossiers, also copied from Stalin, which would follow a person for the rest of his or her life.[114] "Good" classes included revolutionary cadres, soldiers, industrial workers, and poor peasants. "Middle" (dubious) classes included petty bourgeois, middle peasants, and intellectuals. "Bad" classes included landlords, rich peasants, and capitalists. But these were shortly collapsed into "red" vs. "black"- revolutionaries and counterrevolutionaries. What's more, the labels were inherited.[115] In this way, the children and their children have suffered discrimination and worse for the alleged crimes of their parents or grandparents - down to this day.[116] The purpose of all this was to "struggle" against the counterrevolutionaries, "remold" those who were salvageable, and imprison or kill the rest.

The struggle against counterrevolutionaries got underway in the rural base areas occupied by the

Communists as the Civil War began in earnest in 1946. Mao directed cadres to launch all-out class war in the countryside. CCP work teams divided villagers into five classes: landlords, rich peasants, middle peasants, poor peasants, and laborers, mirroring Stalin's system in the USSR. The Party determined that at least 10 percent of the rural population were landlords or rich peasants – hence class enemies, counterrevolutionaries.[117] But village realities defied such crude distinctions. Never mind that there were great regional and even local differences based on climate, ecology, crop patterns, soil fertility, proximity to urban centers, local custom, indebtedness, subsidiary industries, and other factors that contributed to the economic condition of individual farm families. In some provinces such as Shanxi, Shaanxi, Hebei, Shandong, and Henan, peasant proprietors constituted two-thirds of farm families. Around the great urban centers in the Guangdong delta and Yangtze deltas, 85-95 percent of the farmers were tenants – but most to absentee landlords who resided in the cities, and those absentee owners were often collectives: clans, temples, clubs, etc. rather than individuals. So very often there were no landlords in the villages to struggle against. In other areas, seasonal farmwork was almost all done by hired labor – but many laborers were often as not migrants, not local villagers.[118]

Liu Binyan, the future renowned investigative journalist, was a young Party cadre working in land reform near Harbin in 1947 where he both witnessed and participated in atrocities. “The leader of our team gave orders to tie up a landlord and beat him. They tried to force him to confess that he had ties to local bandits, and had hidden arms and ammunition. The man denied everything and was beaten to a pulp. It was the first time I had witnessed such a scene. I could not interfere; I could only look the other way.... The landlord was just a miserable wretch who owned about an acre of land. But every village had its target of class struggle to arouse class consciousness, and that landlord served the purpose.” He adds “I felt quite ashamed.... I thought it was important to divide the land among the peasants.... But there were also landowners who had, through a lifetime of hard work, scrimped and saved to buy up small plots of land. There were of course also loafers among the landless peasants.”[119]

None of this mattered to Mao or to Kang Sheng, Liu Shaoqi, and Deng Xiaoping whom he had assigned to oversee the land reform campaigns in different regions. Kang demanded that every villager take a stand. Quotas were set for landlords and rich peasants to be found in every village and punished. The accused were often dragged out onto a stage where they could be ferociously denounced by crowds of villagers, beaten, sometimes gruesomely tortured and often killed in “struggle sessions.” Xi Zhongxun (father of Xi Jinping) reported the cruelties to Mao in January 1948: “People are drowned in vats of salt water. Some have boiling oil poured over their heads and burn to death.” Liu Shaoqi reported that “when the masses fight, they beat, torture and kill people, and right now it is out of control.” “People were buried alive, dismembered, shot, and strangled to death. Sometimes their bodies were hung from trees.”[120] Land reform turned into an orgy of violence across the countryside.

In preparing to launch land reform in the south in June 1950, Mao declared that land reform is war, “the most hideous class war between peasants and landlords. It is a battle to the death.”[121] The party proceeded accordingly: The reign of terror against local leaders in the south was accompanied by onerous grain requisitions that incited mass protests and rebellions against the Communists. Famished peasants stormed government warehouses and transport boats to retrieve their grain. Some seized arms from local police. Hundreds of villages turned against the government. By March 1950 internal documents reported that dozens of “relatively large rebellions of a mass character” had rocked Hubei.[122] The rebellions were crushed with extensive loss of lives.

Why all this violence and killings? After all, as Frank Dikötter points out, land reform was carried out peacefully in post-war Japan, South Korea, and even Taiwan under Chiang Kai-shek, and no blood was shed. In Taiwan large landlords were compensated by the government with commodity

certificates and stocks in state-owned industries for their farms, which were redistributed to the tillers. Land reform in north China had been carried out in the midst of Civil War so some violence might have been expected. But in the south, where the campaign did not begin until June 1950, the war was over and yet Mao's campaign was if anything even more violent. Even Stalin, who himself had massacred the kulaks in 1928 and sent two million to Siberia, cautioned Mao in 1950 to pull back, limit the struggle to landlords only, and leave the economy of the rich peasants intact to help China's post-war recovery.[123]

Mao wasn't listening. Dikötter argues that "Mao wanted traditional village leaders overthrown so that nothing would stand between the people and the party ... [and] unlike the Soviet Union where the security organs had liquidated the kulaks, Mao wanted the villagers to do the job themselves ... [to break the village social bonds of solidarity and reciprocity] by "pitting a majority against a minority. Only by implicating the people in murder could they become permanently linked to the party.... Everybody was to have blood on their hands through participation in mass rallies and denunciation meetings." [124] Between 1947 and 1952 when land reform was shut down, an estimated 1.5-2 million rural Chinese had been killed.[125] The terror crushed open resistance but depressed agricultural production.

Engineering human souls

Mao launched the first of his many terror campaigns in the cities with the Thought Reform campaign launched in October 1950 to "wash the brains" of the entire population. The campaign began with the intellectuals first because of their suspect bourgeois and petty bourgeois backgrounds and their role in education, culture, and social development. The Party applied the same methods as in Yan'an: Teachers, professors, students, scientists, journalists, and writers were all forced to submit to intensive indoctrination classes, public examination of family histories, self-criticism, confessions, and self-abasement to induce guilt and remorse until all resistance was crushed, until they "felt as if they were reborn" and sincerely expressed their gratitude to the Party for their redemption. Students were encouraged to "draw a line between themselves and their parents." For thousands the only way out was suicide. "Student suicides happen incessantly" internal documents reported.[126] In 1950, Hu Sidu, son of Hu Shi, a liberal leading-light of the May Fourth Movement, denounced his father, calling him "a public enemy of the people and an enemy of myself." In 1957 Hu Sidu himself was labeled a "rightist" and driven to suicide.[127]

The government hounded and persecuted non-communist teachers, artists, and musicians, even those who had been sympathetic to the Party. Those who only had their careers destroyed got off easy. Hundreds of thousands were publicly denounced, imprisoned, and sent to labor camps. Teachers were arrested and killed. Professors committed suicide.[128] Chinese and Western books were incinerated. Dikötter writes that "With the literary inquisition came a great burning of books." In Shanghai some 237 tons of books were reportedly destroyed in 1951. In the former treaty port Shantou in May 1953 a giant bonfire lasting three days consumed 300,000 volumes representing 'vestiges of the feudal past.'" [129] Western classical music was suppressed. Jazz was banned outright as degenerate, decadent. Popular music was replaced with the "Hymn to Chairman Mao," "The favors of the Communist Party are too many to be told," "Brother and sister plough the Wasteland" and similar hit tunes. In the Great Terror of 1951, Buddhism, Taoism, Catholicism, Protestantism, and Islam were suppressed, monks beaten, killed, sent to reeducation camps, and their books and institutions destroyed.[130]

China's gulags

Chiang Kai-shek's China had nowhere near enough prisons to meet Mao's needs. So in the late nineteen-forties and early fifties, the government built new ones and established its own gulag

archipelago of *laodong gaizao* or “reform through labor” camps (*laogai* for short) modeled on Stalin’s gulags. There were somewhere between a thousand and fifteen hundred of them situated in every province. Millions were interned and put to forced labor in road building, mining, reservoir excavation, and opening up new farmlands.[131] Many were simply worked to death. As the government explained:

Except for those who must be exterminated physically due to political considerations, human beings must be utilized as a productive force with submissiveness as the prerequisite. Laogai units force prisoners to labor. The Laogai’s fundamental policy is, “Forced labor is the means, while thought reform is the basic aim.”[132]

Unsurprisingly, Mao professed enthusiasm for the economic advantages of slave labor and called for more *laogai*. “The large number of people who are serving their sentences is an enormous source of labor ... they [the *laogai*] should be expanded.”[133]

Wang Bing’s eight-hour long film *Dead Souls* walks the viewer through former prison camp fields in Gansu province, turning over the exposed bleached bones and skulls of dead inmates and interviews dozens of elderly survivors of the more than a half-million Chinese intellectuals, teachers, critically thinking cadres and anyone deemed to have an independent mind who were imprisoned in the Anti-Rightist campaign of 1957, most starving to death.[134]

West North Korea

Life outside the gulags in China in the 1950s was somewhat freer but day-to-day repression was intense. Every aspect of one’s personal and work life was soon regulated by the state.[135] As capitalist enterprises were taken over, all jobs were assigned by the government. Living quarters were likewise assigned. Free mobility was abolished as workers were tied to their work units (*danwei*) which also provided housing, food rations, schooling, medical care, and so forth. Peasants were yoked to their farms by the *hukou* system that tied access to their food and clothing rations, schooling, medical care, and so on to the farmer’s place of residence. The government nationalized all schools and colleges, imposed its own Maoist curriculum. Compulsory political education was introduced in all work units, schools, and government offices. Newspapers and other media were replaced with thought control and propaganda. Loudspeakers were installed indoors and out across the country to blast out orders, propaganda, and patriotic music. Work life and even leisure were regimented and militarized. Political meetings consumed so much time that teachers, workers, and staff suffered from “extreme fatigue.” [136]

Thought reform campaigns encouraged colleagues to denounce each other, children to denounce their parents, parents to denounce each other, other family members, and friends.[137] Thus the *Shanghai Liberation Daily* of June 22, 1954, praised workers who “reported suspicious acts amongst friends. This shows that the political consciousness of the masses is being continuously raised.”[138] The despised criticism-self-criticism sessions were extended to workplaces to deflect criticism from the government itself and instill fear and docility before the police state.

Shortly after liberation, Mao announced his latest brilliant correct idea: “Every mouth comes with two hands.” In other words, the more people the more labor power the faster the economy will grow. So the government’s natalist policy banned abortion and by 1952 “contraceptive devices disappeared from the market.”[139] Predictably, the population exploded, nearly doubling in a decade while industrial and agricultural productivity plummeted, presenting Deng Xiaoping with the need in 1981 to come up with some new correct ideas: capitalism plus forced abortions and the one-child policy.

In short, “liberation” turned the country into the largest open-air minimum security prison camp on earth, sprinkled with gulags where millions languished in far worse conditions. Think North Korea, which Kim Il-Sung modeled after Mao’s China. That’s what Mao’s China looked like. As the bamboo curtain was drawn around the country in the early fifties, its borders were sealed. In Mao’s day, the only way to get out of China was to swim to Hong Kong, take a row-boat or a secret trail. In the 1950s and 60s more than million refugees did just that.

Today, after a few decades of comparative relaxation, retro-Maoist Xi Jinping has revived the lockdown nation as well as systematic invasive police-state control and manipulation of every aspect of Chinese lives again. Weibo critics call Xi’s China “West North Korea.” Xi’s repression is driving another generation of Chinese, at least those with means, to flee the country again. They call this *runxue* or “run philosophy” [a bilingual amalgam of the English “run” with the Chinese “xue”, learning] - researching how to run away from China.[140] Many of those who can’t find a way to escape describe themselves as “the last generation” because they’re refusing to have children. One Weibo user under the hashtag “#thelastgeneration” says “Not bringing children to this country, this land, will be the most charitable deed I could manage.”[141]

Self-reliant development by means of accumulation and its consequences

Mao’s second priority was to industrialize China and “overtake the US.” He was motivated to pursue this goal for two reasons: First, national chauvinism: Mao sought to surpass the West to reclaim China’s “rightful place” as the premier civilization and culture of world history, the natural leader of the world, while winning ever-lasting glory for the Communist Party, regardless of the costs to China’s masses. Speaking to the Preparatory Meeting for the CCP’s Eighth Party Congress (1956-58), Mao said:

We are going to catch up with to the strongest capitalist nation on Earth, America. America has 170 million people, we have several times that number, plentiful resources, and a similar climate; catching up is possible. Should we catch up? Of course we should, or else what are you 600 million people doing? Are you asleep? Should you be sleeping, or working? ... If you can’t catch up you don’t deserve any glory, and you don’t deserve to be called mighty.... If in 50 or 60 years you still can’t catch up with America, what’s the matter with you? You deserve to have your membership in the human race revoked![142]

Second: imperialism. Mao and the Party aimed not merely to industrialize but to do so as self-sufficiently as possible. To some extent self-sufficiency was imposed on them by the trade blockade imposed by the United States in 1950. But it was also the preferred option for Mao as with Stalin and for the same reason: China, and Russia were communist nations in a sea of global capitalism. To maintain their independence and prevent the capitalists from taking over their economies, they needed to be as self-reliant as possible. That’s why Mao pursued a near autarkic development strategy. That’s why Deng Xiaoping invited Western investors to modernize his economy but limited their investments to certain sectors and banned them from the commanding heights of the economy. Further, Mao and Stalin both understood that ultimately, their only guarantee of security was to achieve economic and military superiority over the United States. When the Soviets lost their economic and arms race against the United States in the 1980s, the Soviet Communist Party collapsed in December 1991 and the Soviet Union disintegrated. Deng and his successors, notably Xi Jinping, have been determined to avoid that error. That’s why Xi is suppressing the private sector, pushing back against Western demands to open new sectors for Western investment, and even driving many Western companies out of China.

The Bolsheviks understood that however fortunate their success in seizing power in 1917, they could not build socialism in largely pre-industrial Russia without massively exploiting the Russian workers

and peasants to extract the surpluses to pay for industrialization as the capitalists had exploited the proletariat of England and slaves of the colonies to accumulate the capital to industrialize England. That's why they tried to help the German revolution in hopes that a socialist revolution in Germany would enable them to hitch the Russian train to the "German locomotive." As Trotsky put it "We place all our hopes upon the revolution igniting the European revolution. If the rising of the peoples of Europe does not crush imperialism, we will be crushed ... that is certain." [143] When the European revolutions failed the Bolsheviks were not overthrown, but they were thrown back on their own resources with fatal consequences for millions of Russian peasants.

Whether such an internationalist strategy was feasible in the immediate post-WWII era is an open question. In fact, the great wave of post-war anti-colonial revolutions was only then just beginning so who knows? Yet even if the prospects for world revolution were slim at that moment, Mao's Party could have sat down with China's workers and peasants and put the question to them: "Should we pursue high-speed economic development that will necessitate great sacrifices from you, probably for many decades, in order to furnish the surpluses to underwrite high-speed industrialization, or, should we pursue a 'Bukharinist' New Economic Policy (NEP) strategy of development with tolerance for markets, that would give us some growth while enabling you to avoid undue exploitation and gradually improve your living standards?"

But the Great Savior-dictator was a nationalist, fiercely hostile to democracy as we've seen, and vaingloriously ambitious. The Great Teacher also knew little about economics. Worse, he ignored and criticized his own economic team of Bo Yibo, Chen Yun, Li Fuchun, and Deng Zihui who knew something about economics and urged him to slow the pace of economic growth and adopt a kind of Bukharinist NEP. [144] Even Joe Stalin warned him in September 1952 not to be "rash." But Mao was having none of it. He was philosophically an idealist and a voluntarist. On June 15, 1953, he told the Politburo that

The general line ... of the party for the transition period is basically to accomplish the industrialization of the country and the socialist transformation of agriculture, handicrafts, and capitalist industry and commerce in ten to fifteen years, or a little longer. ... Do not depart from this general line, otherwise 'Left' or 'Right' mistakes will occur. [145]

As always, Mao was full of himself and confident that he alone voiced the "correct line." But his idealist voluntarist fantasies could not overrule reality: Self-industrialization could only be based on systematic, ruthless, and long-term exploitation of China's workers and peasants as Stalin had done in Russia. Despite the strong strategic differences with Stalin, the CCP had nowhere else to turn, and so looked to the Soviet Union for aid and modeled its own industrialization strategy after the Russians'. Industrial expansion had been predicated on three sources of finance: Soviet aid, self-accumulation out of industry, and taxation of agriculture. As it turned out, Soviet credits and technical assistance, while critical to certain key industrial projects, were far less than expected. And they were loans, not grants. China's industrial sector provided roughly 50% of the state's budget revenues in those years. But the industrial base was tiny so it alone could not provide much. Consequently, Mao's strategy of industrialization depended crucially on accelerating agricultural output over and above population growth and taxing the surpluses to support industry.

Peasants resist surplus extraction

Those expected agricultural surpluses failed to materialize. In the first place, the extremely low productivity of Chinese agriculture meant that, by and large, the massive surpluses needed for industrialization did not exist in the Chinese countryside. For example, Chinese per capita grain production in 1952 stood at less than half that of the Soviets in 1928 (220 vs. 480 kilograms per annum). [146] This meant that there could be no question in China of a purely extractive solution to

the grain crisis: the Party could not simply go and seize huge surpluses from rich peasants, as Stalin did in Russia from 1928. Secondly, the new government lacked the industrial capacity to supply tractors and other industrial inputs to boost productivity. Thirdly, it faced peasant resistance to state surplus extraction.

In short, with respect to the peasantry, the state was caught in a double bind: it aimed to be developmental and extractive at once. To industrialize, to build steel plants, to produce tractors and other machinery, the state needed both to maximize agricultural output to skim off surpluses from agriculture to support industry and an industrial labor force. So agricultural collectivization had a two-fold aim: to boost output through cooperative and economies of scale, and to centralize surplus extraction by preventing peasant hoarding. But taking away the peasants' surpluses not only undermined their capacity to reinvest to expand output, it threatened their very subsistence. A policy that demanded sacrifices with little hope of gain in the near future would tend to provoke their resistance. Consequently each attempt by the state to step up taxation and collectivization was met by the peasant opposition.

The First Five-Year Plan set targets for increased grain output of up to 6.5% per year (1953-57). But far from providing a surplus, actual growth rates (of around 1.7% to 2.0%) barely kept pace with population growth.[147] Similarly, cotton production declined by 9.3% in 1954. Low government-set prices for these staples meant that the peasants had little incentive to produce them.[148] Thus they tended to cut back on production and conserve their surpluses. The output of farm subsidiary industries also stagnated or fell. The government reported that between July 1954 and July 1956, 17 million pigs were lost. Again, the peasants preferred to slaughter their pigs rather than market them at low prices or turn them over to the collectives.[149] By the mid-1950's, the situation had reached crisis proportions. There were increasingly sharp "grain crises" in 1953, 1955, and 1956 resulting in widespread food shortages in the cities. The lack of agricultural raw materials brought some industries, such as textiles, to a virtual standstill, and undermined accumulation.

Yet instead of backing off, Mao's response at every point was to accelerate collectivization to squeeze more surpluses out of the peasants. During the 1950's, the state sponsored a series of so-called "socialist upsurges" (the 1950-52 land reform, the 1952-53 mutual-aid campaign, the 1954-55 cooperativization campaign, and the 1955-56 collectivization drive). To each, the peasants responded by cutting production, slaughtering or neglecting their livestock, felling orchards, stopping fertilizer collection, and fleeing the land for the cities.[150] Each advance and the reaction forced the state to retreat, at least partially and temporarily. But with each next stage Mao wrenched the screws tighter.

During the second phase, in November 1953 the government imposed a state monopoly on grain to confiscate peasant surpluses. Whereas previously farmers could sell their surpluses on the market and pocket the profits, under the new "unified purchase and sale" system, farmers were allowed to consume only 13-16 kilos per head per month of their own grain - a bit over half the required amount to provide 1,700 to 1,900 calories per day - i.e. a less than subsistence diet. In response, across the country peasants protested shouting "Down with Mao Zedong!" "Eliminate the People's Liberation Army," "Better rebel than die from starvation." The state responded, as usual, with more violence. In 1954 the government was taking more food from the peasants than ever before and as a result "famine gripped large parts of the countryside" and it was reported that desperate peasants were selling their children. In January 1954 the Central Committee warned that peasants were being driven to starvation. Farmers were destroying their tools, felling trees and slaughtering their livestock. "Some openly rebelled as pitched battles were fought between villagers and the security forces." [151]

In the early months of 1955 Deng Zihui, then regional boss of south China who had calculated that

the peasants had a third less food than before liberation, starting letting some co-operatives disband. Others in the leadership including Deng Xiaoping supported this relaxation. Mao initially acquiesced to this setback but soon renewed his attacks on “negative attitudes toward collectivization.” In May he declared that “middle peasant claims of hardship are all fake.”[152]

A common response to collectivization was to flee to the cities and in 1954 farmers were fleeing the countryside en masse. But in June 1955 the Maoists cut off that exit by extending the household registration system used in the cities since 1951 to the countryside. On top of that, food was rationed from 1955 and without a ration card, which was valid only in one’s official place of residence, peasants who fled to the cities were denied food rations. That effectively tied China’s 120 million farm families to their land, virtually as state serfs, just as urban residence permits tied the workers to their *danwei*. This was the fourth stage of collectivization.[153]

In July, Mao pushed back at Deng Zili and Deng Xiaoping and called for a new campaign to accelerate the transition to socialism in just *three years*. In prose reminiscent of his 1926 investigation in Hunan he told the Central Committee

A hurricane in the new socialist mass movement will soon sweep across the villages throughout the country. But some of our comrades are tottering along like a woman with bound feet, constantly complaining about the others: too fast, too fast! ... No! This is not the correct policy, it is a wrong policy.[154]

Again, the Great Helmsman insisted that he alone had the “correct policy.” But 1957 was not 1927. In the “mighty storm” of the nineteen-twenties the peasants were overthrowing their landlords and seizing the lands they farmed to improve their lot, whereas in the 1950s Mao’s “hurricane” aimed to dispossess them, expropriate the private property they had been granted by the same Mao Zedong in the land reforms of 1947-52, and collectivize not only their land but their means of production and even their housing. Despite his rhetoric, Mao knew very well that the peasants would not accept this dispossession voluntarily. Collectivization would thus require a new “war”—this time against the peasants instead of landlords. On August 15, 1955, speaking before the assembled heads of all provinces and large cities, Mao condemned Deng Zihui’s order to slow the pace of collectivization, reiterating that

A tottering pace in collectivization suits the rich peasants, it conforms to the capitalist road [they want to take]. Socialism must have a dictatorship, it will not work without it.... This is a war: we are opening fire on peasants with private property.... [They’re] counterrevolutionaries who should be sent to labour camps.”[155]

Workers and “economism”

Peasant resistance to state surplus extraction was paralleled by productivity problems in industry and growing discontent from China’s industrial workforce. The development of workers’ opposition can be understood in terms of the revolution’s failure to develop institutions of workers’ self-rule. In contrast to the revolution of 1925-27 when workers’ strike committees—embryonic soviets—took control of Canton, Shanghai and other cities, Mao’s government imposed a top-down hierarchical factory management structure and absolute Party dictatorship over society and the economy. Workers were shut out of decision-making about economic policies—how much for accumulation, how much for improved living standards, etc.

With no say in wages or conditions, workers had little incentive to contribute. Thus the Party sought to boost productivity by imposing harsh labor discipline and material incentives. After banning

independent unions and imposing compulsory arbitration, rigid state labor codes enforced discipline with severe penalties for infractions. A system of police records or "labor books" was instituted to restrict mobility and job entry and to prevent organized opposition. Whereas in the 1920's, the principal demands of the Communist Party had been the abolition of piecework and the institution of the eight-hour day, in the early 1950's workdays were lengthened, vacations cut, and piecework expanded to one-third of the workforce in 1952, and 42% by 1956. The state-imposed speedups including "shockwork" campaigns, and instituted sharply graded wage scales in state-owned and private enterprises.[156]

Workers resisted actively and passively. From the early 1950's the Chinese press complained repeatedly about "slackened labor discipline," chronic absenteeism, "go-slow strikes," and "counter-revolutionary sabotage" in the factories and mines. These escalated into widespread strike waves in 1955-57.[157] Workers who protested the speedup, productivity drives, or low wages were attacked by the Party leadership for "economism" and "syndicalism" and told that they "spoke merely from the standpoint of individual welfare and did not sufficiently recognize that the state must accumulate capital to strengthen its defense and develop its industry." [158]

Cadres and corruption: from "serving the people" to serving themselves

Finally, by the mid 1950's, Mao's socialist construction project was running into difficulties from a third quarter — from a loss of "communist consciousness," a loss of commitment to self-discipline and self-denial by the Party cadre itself. As Mao complained in January 1957: "They vie with each other not in plain living, doing more work and having fewer comforts, but for luxuries, rank and status. They scramble for fame and fortune and are interested only in personal gain." [159] Such "bourgeois" tendencies also undermined production. As he observed, "Our experience is that ... the lordly behavior of the cadres makes workers unwilling to consciously observe and implement labour discipline." [160] Cadre self-interest and careerism also led to mismanagement of the economy. The press complained constantly that many factory and mining managers and provincial cadre "put their own interests above the needs of the state and the people" sabotaging national planning and accumulation by resisting higher output quotas, hoarding funds and supplies, and feeding misinformation to the leadership.[161]

Back in the Yan'an days of war communism there were few possibilities for cadre self-enrichment. But given their monopoly of political power, once the substitute proletariat assumed state power and gained control of the whole economy, the cadres had access to the receipts from industry, commerce, and agricultural taxation. After years of "plain living and hard struggle" they were looking to relax and consume. Arguably, after decades of hardship and privation they were perhaps entitled to some improvements. But in the midst of the poverty of China's masses, they had, in Mao's words, "gone to heaven."

VII. POLITICS IN COMMAND

With the "transition to socialism" in jeopardy, Mao reasserted his youthful voluntarist faith in subjective consciousness, mind over matter, and the will of dedicated people to "move mountains." If China's masses could win the revolution against overwhelming material odds, they could build both socialism and its prerequisites *simultaneously*. Flattered by the "great success" of the collectivization drive of 1955-56 as reported by his terrified underlings, the Great Teacher penned fatuous "revisions" of Marxism and gave himself up to delusions of imminent communist utopia. Not only was Marx wrong but even Lenin:

Lenin said 'The more backward the country, the more difficult its transition from capitalism to socialism.' Now it seems that this way of speaking is incorrect. As a matter of fact, the more

backward the economy, the easier, not the more difficult, the transition from capitalism to socialism.”[162]

In his most delusional tract, the Russian populist-inspired “poor and blank” essay published in June 1958, he explicitly rejected materialism and affirmed his messianic voluntarism in stark terms:

China’s 600 million people have two remarkable peculiarities; they are, first of all, poor, and secondly, blank. That may seem like a bad thing, but it is really a good thing. Poor people want change, want to do things, want revolution. A clean sheet of paper has no blotches, and so the newest and most beautiful pictures can be painted on it.[163]

“Barracks communism” and the militarization of labor

What a fine model of barracks communism! Everything is here: communal dining halls, communal sleeping quarters, accountants and offices regulating education, production, consumption, in a word, all social activity, and at the head of everything stands, our COMMITTEE, nameless and unknown, as supreme leader. This is indeed the purest anti-authoritarianism.

— Karl Marx[164]

In the fall of winter of 1957-58 Mao launched the Great Leap Forward in a superhuman effort to break through the impasse and hurl the country into modernity in the space of a few years of intense “exertion.” With mass mobilization, intense effort and “proletarian” leadership, Mao asserted, China could “catch up with the industrialized countries in 15 years.”[165] “Our revolutions are like battles. After a victory, we must at once put forward a new task.” And the new task was now “the transition from socialism to communism.”[166]

On the promise of imminent abundance cadres herded hundreds of millions of peasants into huge “communes” designed to maximize labor and minimize consumption. Whereas in 1950-52, men put in about 119 (and women about 70) full-time labor days in agricultural field work per year (excluding domestic labor and private plot sideline activities), in 1958-59 some communes were requiring more than 330 days from men, and 300 days for women.[167] On the promise that the commune “free supply” system would guarantee housing, free meals in public mess-halls, provide nurseries and “happiness homes” for the aged, peasants were required to turn over “to the common ownership of the commune all privately-owned plots of farmland and house sites and other means of production such as livestock, tree holdings, etc.”[168] It was said that “[t]he adoption of the combined system of grain or meals supply and wage payment marks the beginning of the gradual transition to the stage of ‘from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs.’ It ensures that everyone in the commune can equally eat his or her fill—a great liberation no doubt....” [169]

But how could the peasants’ consumption increase when the whole point of the “free supply” system was to maximize accumulation at the expense of consumption? As the *People’s Daily* of August 18, 1958, described it:

Grain can be saved ... on a planned basis ... everyone in the mess halls has a plan for grain consumption, which is less [than would be consumed in their individual homes]. For example, Yin Fu-yuan and his family formerly consumed eight catties and two tael of grain per day, now in the mess hall they consume only seven catties.... Consumption of firewood is also reduced.[170]

Enormous battalions of peasants were sent into the fields and engaged in round-the-clock "shock work" in a monumental effort to "turn labor into capital." The press reported that tens and hundreds of thousands of peasants "fight for every single minute or second regardless of night or day, rain or shine." In Hebei some 150,000 commune members "continued working even on windy and snowy days, eating and sleeping right in the field." In Henan, "people fought day and night, shifting all the activities of life—eating, sleeping, office, conference and even nursery—to the field." In the "Battle for Iron and Steel," peasants and workers in Kirin province "fought round the clock, eating and sleeping beside the furnaces"; and in Beijing too, workers moved their bedding into the shops during the latter half of 1958 under the slogan "not to leave the forefront before accomplishing the task" and "not to leave even when slightly wounded" and so on.[171] As a Henan party secretary described it:

The peasants were not equal to beasts of burden in the past, but are the same as beasts of burden today. Yellow oxen are tied up in the house and human beings are harnessed in the field. Girls and women pull plows and harrows, with their womb hanging down. Cooperation is transformed into the exploitation of human strength.[172]

"Revolution is not a dinner party"

It was the same story in industry. The abolition of piecework, wage-differentials, material incentives, and the like was, in principle, "a step closer to communism." As the *People's Daily* editorialized on November 13, 1958:

During the Great Leap Forward movement, workers voluntarily abolish the piecework system and the extra-pay for extra-work system. People now work not eight hours but ten hours, even twelve hours. If work requires, they work throughout the night. Each one is not working for himself but for the whole nation and the future. This kind of enthusiasm breaks down capitalist principles, the remuneration system and the strife for personal gains ... it gives a big lift to the Communist spirit.... [173]

The policy of the state was "to hire five workers on three workers wages." "Excessive increase in consumption and elevation of the wage level will run counter to the demand of the Chinese people for fulfilling the prescribed historical task," a ministry spokesman commented. "Hence the necessity for austerity...." [174]

When did China's workers and peasants "demand" austerity, demand to work throughout the night, and on reduced rations? Who decided they should work themselves to death to fulfill Mao's "historical task" of overtaking the United States in 15 years? The ministry spokesman didn't say.

Without modern industrial inputs, the overdriving of people, machinery, and the land brought the economy to the brink of collapse by the spring of 1959. As grain ran out, communal kitchens shut down, people were forced to eat grass, tree bark, even each other. Cannibalism became widespread.[175] Yet even as peasants starved, "Cadres continued routinely to eat more than their share while people starved around them." Filling their own bellies gave them the strength to beat thousands of peasants to death in anti-hoarding campaigns.[176] Suicides soared.

When I read the horrific testimonies and official government reports quoted in Jasper Becker's *Hungry Ghosts*, Yang Jisheng's *Tombstone*, and Frank Dikötter's *Mao's Great Famine*, even cynical as I am I can't understand how Party cadres who fancied themselves "communist" revolutionaries could be so cruel, savage, and inhuman toward helpless people under their control during the Great Leap Forward: deliberately starving prisoners to save grain to add to already overfilled party cadre

grainaries, savagely beating starving peasants, even skinning them alive for the “crime” of slaughtering livestock after the canteens ran out of grain, burying people alive and deliberately freezing them to death, “smashing cooking pots in every household to prevent them from being used at home to cook grass soup” and worse (Becker, chapter 8). I could understand if this were Genghis Khan or medieval Catholic inquisitors, but “communists?” Yet this is what the “substitute proletariat” morphed into, and not only in China.

In the end, Mao got neither accumulation nor communism. He got economic collapse, horrific famine and unparalleled barbarism. Somewhere between 30 and 50 million peasants starved to death between 1958 and 1962, either way, by far the largest famine in history.[177] Millions more perished in his gulags. Untold numbers committed suicide.

The Great Leap Backward was Mao’s penultimate “correct idea.” His ultimate correct idea, the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, aka “ten years of madness,” took another two million lives, witnessed even more extreme tortures, even Party-condoned cannibalism in the name of “class struggle,” wrecked the economy, the country, and permanently traumatized the entire population.[178] Instead of overtaking the West, China fell more decades behind.

Deng Xiaoping came up with new correct ideas. First: sell the 16-hour day labor of hundreds of millions of police state-enforced union-free, EPA-free, OSHA-free, NIOSH-free, civil-rights-free, helpless and vulnerable migrant Chinese workers to the Western capitalists at the world’s lowest wages — the “China price”[179] — in order to squeeze surpluses out of them to modernize China’s industry and catch up with the West. Second: marketize CCP power so that communists, beginning with his own children, could “get rich first.”[180] Third: impose his one-child policy with forced abortions. Fourth: lock up Democracy Wall protestors Wei Jinsheng and others to stop the calls for a Fifth Modernization: democracy. Fifth: shoot the Tiananmen protestors en masse and run them over with tanks à la Stalin in Hungary.

Today, retro-Maoist Xi Jinping has his own correct ideas: Enslave Xinjiang Muslims and Tibetan Buddhists in prison factories and erase their cultures and languages;[181] crush the Hong Kong democracy movement; obliterate or “partyize” Islam, Christianity, and Buddhism; crush the private economy; drive out Western/foreign liberal/cultural influences in universities and society; and lock up the entire populations of Shanghai and other cities for months on end rather than accept the “humiliation” that his China-made Covid vaccines don’t work very well and import vaccines that do work from the “evil” West. But far and away, his most catastrophic correct idea is his “China Dream” plan to drive his economy at 6-8% per year until China overtakes the United States to become the world’s leading superpower — even if this requires burning enough coal, oil, and gas to doom life on Earth.[182] In October 2019 climate scientists published research predicting that, on present trends, global warming is going to “all but erase” Shanghai, Shenzhen, and “most of the world’s great coastal cities by 2050” - barely 28 years from now.[183] There won’t be any “great rejuvenation,” any “golden age of glory and splendor” for the Communist Party when China’s glaciers evaporate, when its rivers dry up, when farming collapses across the North China Plain, when its coastal cities are flooded. There will be industrial collapse, ecological collapse, famine, and untold human suffering.

So much for the “proletarian attitudes and values” of the substitute proletariat. Little wonder that Maoists like the *Monthly Review* editors and the Qiao Collective refuse to discuss the nature of China. Even a cursory review of the historical evidence debunks their delusory Maoist theory. It’s past time to bury Maoism, bury Fidelismo, bury all third-worldist illusions in savior-dictator “substitute proletariats” and reassert the primacy of the working class and the indispensability of mass democracy. Socialism is not about skyscrapers, high-speed trains, blingrastructure, or Xi’s phony “common prosperity,” let alone the crude barracks communism of Mao Zedong. Socialism is

about liberation, freedom, social equality, and working-class self-rule, not repression, slavery, and Orwellian thought control. There are no “great saviors.” The emancipation of the working class must be the act of the working class itself or it won’t happen at all.

Notes

[107] Elizabeth Perry, “Masters of the Country? Shanghai Workers in the Early People’s Republic,” in Jeremy Brown and Paul G. Picowicz, eds., *Dilemmas of Victory: The Early Years of the People’s Republic* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2007), 58.

[108] RCP (5 April 1949) “Special Report from China on the Civil War,” *The Militant*, XIII, 18, 2 May 1949: 1-2.

[109] C.L. Liu (20 October 1949) “China: An Aborted Revolution,” *Fourth International*, 11, 1 (January-February 1950), 3-7. Thanks to Paul Hammond for these sources from *The Militant* and the *Fourth International*.

[110] Perry, op cit., 12.

[111] *New China News Agency*, May 3, 1949, in Gluckstein, *Mao’s China*, 212-213.

[112] Gluckstein, *Mao’s China*, 213-214.

[113] Gluckstein, *Mao’s China*, 214-15.

[114] Dikötter, *Tragedy*, 50.

[115] Dikötter, *Tragedy*, 47-48

[116] The impact this had on children is movingly described by Ai Weiwei whose father the poet Ai Qing, labeled a “black element,” endured innumerable humiliations, some which nearly killed him, over decades at the hands of Mao. Weiwei suffered many of those along with his father and also after his father died as a “son of a Five Black Category element.” *1000 Years*, chapters 6-9.

[117] Dikötter, *Tragedy*, 65,74.

[118] Hsiao-tung Fei, *Peasant Life in China* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1962), chapter 11; Hsiao-tung Fei and Chih-I-Chang, *Earthbound China* (Chicago: University of Chicago: 1945), R.H. Tawney, *Land and Labor in China* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1932).

[119] Liu Binyan, *A Higher Kind of Loyalty* (New York: Pantheon, 1990), 24-25.

[120] Dikötter, *Tragedy*, 69, 73-75.

[121] Dikötter, *Tragedy*, 76.

[122] Dikötter, *Tragedy*, 77

[123] Dikötter, *Tragedy*, 74-75.

[124] Dikötter, *Tragedy*, 74-75.

- [125] Dikötter, *Tragedy*, 73-74, 76-77, 80-81, 83.
- [126] Cheng, *New Man*, 70-75; Dikötter, *Tragedy*, 183.
- [127] Cheng, *New Man*, 73-74.
- [128] Dikötter, *Tragedy*, 182-83.
- [129] Dikötter, *Tragedy*, 190.
- [130] Dikötter, *Tragedy*, 190, 193, 196ff.
- [131] Dikötter, *Tragedy*, chapter 12.
- [132] Laogai Research Foundation, *Laogai Handbook* (Washington D.C. 2006), 14.
- [133] *Laogai Handbook*, 8.
- [134] Wang Bing, *Dead Souls* (Icarus and Grasshopper Films, 2018).
- [135] Liu, *Loyalty*, chapter 5.
- [136] Gluckstein, *Mao's China*, chapters 20 and 21. Liu, *Loyalty*, chapter 3 and passim.
- [137] Liu, *Loyalty*, chapter 6; Dikötter, *Tragedy*, chapter 9.
- [138] Gluckstein, *Mao's China*, 327-330
- [139] Liu, *Loyalty*, 38.
- [140] Alice Su, "Searching for a way out" Alice Su, Twitter, May 5, 2022.
- [141] Li Yuan, "'The last generation': disillusionment of young Chinese," *New York Times*, May 24, 2022.
- [142] Quoted in Liu, *China Dream*, Chapter 1.
- [143] In R. Craig Nations, *War on War: Lenin, the Zimmerwald Left, and the Origins of Communist Internationalism* (Duke: Duke University Press, 1989), 211. (Thanks to John Ridell for the source).
- [144] Dikötter, *Tragedy*, 227-31.
- [145] Dikötter, *Tragedy*, 230-31.
- [146] By 1957 Chinese per capita grain availability was still only 256 kilograms per annum: Anthony M. Tang, "Policy and performance in agriculture" in *Economic Trends in Communist China*, ed. Alexander Eckstein et al. (New York: Aldine Atherton, 1968), 466.
- [147] Nai-Ruenn Chen and Walter Galenson, *The Chinese Economy Under Communism* (New York: Aldine, 1969), 95; and Anthony M. Tang. "Policy and Performance In Agriculture", in Eckstein et al., eds., *Economic Trends*, 504-505.
- [148] On the grain supply crisis of the mid-fifties and peasant resistance to collectivization, see Kenneth R. Walker, "Collectivization in Retrospect: The 'Socialist High Tide' of Autumn 1955-Spring 1956," *China Quarterly* no. 26 (Apr.-June 1966), 1-43; and Thomas P. Bernstein, "Cadre and Peasant

Behavior Under Conditions of Insecurity and Deprivation: The Grain Supply Crisis of the Spring of 1955," in A. Doak Barnett (ed.), *Chinese Communist Politics in Action* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1969), 365-399.

[149] Kenneth R. Walker, *Planning in Chinese Agriculture* (London: Routledge, 1965), 66; also Mao, SW 5, 196-7.

[150] Walker, "Collectivization."

[151] Dikötter, *Tragedy*, 217-220, 222-23, 234-35.

[152] Dikötter, *Tragedy*, 235.

[153] Dikötter, *Tragedy*, 224-25.

[154] Mao, "On the co-operative transformation of agriculture" (July 31, 1955), SW 5, 184; Dikötter, *Tragedy*, 236.

[155] Dikötter, *Tragedy*, 236-37.

[156] Gluckstein, *Mao's China*, chapters 10-14; and Kenneth Lieberthal, "Mao vs. Liu? Policy Towards Industry and Commerce: 1946-1949," *China Quarterly*, no. 47 (July-Sept. 1971), 494-520. no. 859.[what does no. 859 refer to?]

[157] Gluckstein, *Mao's China*, 218-223; Mao's contradictions speech of February 27, 1957 in SW 5, 414-415; Elisabeth J. Perry, "Shanghai's strikewave of 1957," *China Quarterly*, no. 137 (March 1994), 1-27; Dikötter, *Tragedy*, 278-79.

[158] *Liberation Daily*, June 25, 1952, in Gluckstein, *Mao's China*, 235.

[159] Mao, SW 5, 350-55.

[160] Mao, *Miscellany of Mao Tse-tung Thought 1949-1968* (Arlington, VA: Joint Publications Research Service, 1974) no. 61269-1, 283.

[161] E.g., "The case of the Shenyang Transformer Plant," *New China News Agency*, July 22, 1956; and "Politics as the guide: ministry of coal industry deals with the 'under-assessment of capacity' question," *Political Study*, no. 5, May 13, 1958; *ECMM* no. 139.

[162] "Reading notes," (Taipei, 1967), in Meisner, *Mao Zedong*, 150.

[163] *Hongqi* (Red Flag), June 1, 1958, pp.3-4, in Meisner, *Mao Zedong*, 149.

[164] Thus wrote Marx in his sarcastic takedown of the forced collectivism and communism of the nihilist-anarchist Sergey Nechayev in his "Fundamentals of the future social society" (1870), K. Marx and F. Engels, *Soch*, 2nd ed., vol. 18, 414.

[165] Meisner, *Mao Zedong*, 143.

[166] Meisner, *Mao Zedong*, 140.

[167] Peter Schran, *The Development of Chinese Agriculture 1950-1959* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1969), 69-78.

- [168] "Tentative Regulations of the Weihsing People's Commune," August 7, 1958, reprinted in Cheng Chu-yuan, *People's Communes in China* (Hong Kong: Union Press, 1959), 61-80.
- [169] "The People's Commune Movement in Hope," *Red Flag*, Oct. 1, 1958, reprinted In *People's Communes in China* (Beijing: Foreign Language Press, 1958), 55.
- [170] Quoted in Geoffrey Hudson, et al., *The Chinese Communes* (New York: 1960), pp. 23-24.
- [171] ³⁴*Red Flag* no. 11, 1958. This and the following examples of "shock work" are drawn from Cheng, *People's Communes*. See especially chapters 3-6.
- [172] *Current Background (CB)* no. 515.
- [173] See Hu Shang, "Speaking of the Government Issue System," *Joint Publications Research Service* (hereafter *JPRS*) no. 6230.
- [174] Sung Ping, "Why is it Necessary to Introduce a Rational Low Wage System?" *Study* (December 3, 1957), *ECMM* no. 118. See also articles on the abolition of piecework, "bourgeois right," and "money in command" in *CB* no. 537.
- [175] Jasper Becker, *Hungry Ghosts* (New York: Free Press 1996), 118ff.
- [176] Yang Jisheng, *Tombstone: The Great Chinese Famine 1958-1962* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux 2008), 45.
- [177] Becker, *Ghosts*; Yang, *Tombstone*.
- [178] Zheng Yi, *Scarlet Memorial* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1996).
- [179] Alexandra Harvey, *The China Price* (London: Penguin, 2008).
- [180] On this, see my *China's Engine*, chapter 6.
- [181] Anthony Galloway and Eryk Bagshaw, "China forces 500,000 Tibetans into labour camps," *Sydney Morning Herald*, September 22, 2020, <https://www.smh.com.au/world/asia/china-forces-500-000-tibetans-into-labour-camps-20200922-p55xyk.html>.
- [182] In 2020, China's CO2 emissions were 10.67 billion tons (bt), more than twice those of the U.S. (4.71 bt) with a GDP just two-thirds as large, more than the entire OECD. What's even more concerning are the trends. In 1990 China's emissions were just 2.48 bt while US emissions were 5.11 bt. While U.S. emissions have fallen slightly from their 1990 level (and dropped significantly from their peak of 6.13bt in 2007), China's emissions have relentlessly grown, more than quadrupling since 1990, growing by 4-5% p.a. since 2016 with no end in sight. Data from Our world in Data, <https://ourworldindata.org/co2/country/china>.
- [183] Denise Lu and Christopher Flavelle, "Erased by rising seas by 2050," *New York Times*, October 30, 2019; and my *China's Engine*, chapter 7 and p. 195.