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DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY AND SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY

SOCIAL PROBLEMS AND CRIME IN RURAL CHINA:
AN ANALYSIS OF THE COMMUNAL PERIOD AND REFORM PERIOD

The undersigned hereby certify that they have read and
recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for acceptance a
thesis entitled "SOCIAL PROBLEMS AND CRIME IN RURAL CHINA: AN
ANALYSIS OF THE COMMUNAL PERIOD AND REFORM PERIOD" by Zhanbin
Ma in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts.

by

ZHANBIN MA

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts

at

Dalhousie University
Halifax, Nova Scotia
September, 1994

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Dated Sept. 12, 94

Signature of author

da

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine social change in a village in northern China, more specifically, the effects of the initiation of economic reform in the commune period (1953-1983) compared with effects in the reform period (1983--present). China is still a rural country with 80% of the Chinese people living in the countryside. It is here that the problems of the new reform have had their most profound influence.

Findings from my fieldwork indicate that the earlier community solidarity and social cohesion engendered by communal social organization have been diminished by reform policies. The more competitive, money-making, ethos of reform has led to an expansion of crime and social problems.

A discussion of specific crime and social problems in one Chinese village is used as evidence to demonstrate the case. My data show that the introduction of capitalism in the Chinese countryside has led to a fundamental weakening of social security and to increasing social malintegration. Moreover, the typicality of this village indicates that the problems found there are prominent in a wider rural context.

Chronology

1949 Liberation: People's Republic of China established
1946-52 Land Reform
1955-56 Collectivization of Farming
1958 Great Leap Forward
1959-61 The "three hard years"
1966-76 Cultural Revolution
1976 Mao dies

1976-78 Hua Guofeng takes power; transitional period
1978 Deng Xiaoping comes to power
1979 Rural reform begins
1983-84 Communes disbanded
1989 Tian An Men Square event

Central government
Province
Prefecture
County
Township
Village
Villagers' Group

Note on Weights and Measures:

1 li (Chinese mile) = 500 meters
1 jin (catty) = 500 grams
1 mu = 1/6 acre
1 yuan or 1 kuaì = US\$ 1/6

Administrative Levels

Acknowledgements

The commune period: extend my sincere thanks and appreciation

to my Central government
Province
Prefecture
County
Commune
Brigade
Team

The reform period:

Central government
Province
Prefecture
County
Township
Village
Villagers' Group

Note on Weights and Measures:

1 li (Chinese mile) = 500 meters
1 jin (catty) = 500 grams
1 mu = 1/6 acre
1 yuan or 1 kuai = US\$ 1/8

Acknowledgements

I would like to extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to my key informants in my study village. They are the ones who are experiencing the current difficulties sweeping through rural China. I am fortunate that most of them shared their joys and woes with me without much reservation.

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Chapter I INTRODUCTION--The Setting

This is a documentary report about social change in a village in northern China. My major research involves a study of social change in rural China emphasizing the effects of the initiation of economic reform by a comparison of the commune period (1953-1983) and reform period (1983--present). It is my contention that reform in China is really a misnomer since it has not resolved the problems facing this vast country, but has, if anything exacerbated old and even raised new problems.

A. Historical Context:

(1) The Commune Period: Achievements and Problems

In the commune period, China had achieved impressive progress. Villagers enjoyed a great deal of social security such as food, housing, clothing, education, medical care, etc. Agricultural production had been increased dramatically by emphasizing modern technology such as seed multiplication, chemical fertilizer, insecticide and mechanization. The living standard reached a level never seen before the revolution. In Schurmann and Schell's words (Schurmann & Schell, 1966, p. XV):

The new leaders were finally able to begin rebuilding the country despite failures and setbacks, they have scored great successes: the country is united and organized; a powerful political system governs the remotest parts of the country and the smallest units of society. The Communists have created the foundations of a modern industry, science, and technology.

But the rural successes achieved in the Commune period were accompanied with failures, among which were catastrophes; and the cost of the success was heavy. As a result of some bureaucratic economic policies, China suffered from serious industrial, ecological problems (e.g. in the Great Leap forward, trees were cut down to build backyard furnaces) which have been accelerated in the reform period. As Daniel Kelliher points out (Kelliher: p. 13):

For years China had imposed uniform policies on an exquisitely varied farm ecology. People tilling wet rice in the hilly south were locked into the same commune structure as farmers growing wheat on the north China plain.

There were various factors which undermined new China's early achievements and limited its further accomplishments. One major problem with the commune system, as I see it, is that traditional feudal bureaucracy was carried into the commune system. Socialism was increasingly infused with much that was worst in that tradition. The long tradition of decision-making from top down instead of the grass-roots had been strengthened in the commune period with more governmental power to reinforce it. For example, during the collectivization campaign, the state posited that

Large units of pooled labour and shared distribution would be more productive because such units would eliminate the exploitation, competition, and irrationality of small household farming and the market. A central Committee directive specified that agricultural producers cooperatives are not permitted to engage in trade. (Friedman et al: p. 172)

Based on this analysis, villagers in some areas were forced to join cooperatives. This for a while raised anxieties among villagers. Some slaughtered draft animals and some hoarded food. Worried that above-average earnings would be confiscated and the somewhat better-off scapegoated as class enemies, some villagers grew passive (Friedman et al: p. 182). This violated the promise of a longer transitional period from family farming to collective farming by the government, as voluntary cooperation and preparation to assure mutual benefit were thrust aside in many villages. Although in some areas conditions were ripe for collectivization, some areas were still unprepared. However, the central and local governments demanded collectivization everywhere, regardless of local conditions. As a result, while some areas benefitted from collectivization, some areas were devastated.

In the commune period, Mao had launched numerous mass campaigns to curb bureaucracy and get the masses involved in the political arena, but every campaign recruited the same kind of bureaucrats if not worse. This vicious cycle has not been broken. Instead, the lack of clear-cut boundaries of each political campaign allowed room for manoeuvre if the cadres wanted to play the game with higher-ups, since the practice of "putting politics in command" placed social and ideological priorities ahead of farm production (Kelliher: p. 10). Often political and ideological correctness was arbitrary. During the campaign, sometimes innocent victims

turned into scapegoats, and those who did not get along with cadres often were targeted. In the end, real problems remained untouched, and the Chinese revolution often failed to maintain development even before Mao died. The various campaigns were always based upon directives from on high where power was monopolised and unchecked, and this kind of totalitarian structure did not and does not allow for democratic self correction. The paradox of the end result of the Chinese revolution like others puzzles many scholars both from the left and right.

Another problem with the commune system was the constant attack on market activities. As Friedman, Pickowicz, and Selden point out (p. XXIII):

The state seized monopoly control of the grain trade and imposed fixed low prices in order to channel the rural surplus to nation building, military expenses, and urban-based heavy industry.

Some villages, deprived of commercial and sideline income declined economically. Although in theory the Communist party allowed some trade on the market, in reality the government lashed out at commercial activity of many sorts in order to eliminate a commodity economy and curtail monetary exchange in an attempt once and for all to abolish all forms of private property and exploitation. This kind of ultra left actions did more harm than good to communal China.

In retrospect, one can see that economic life was left in the hands of bureaucrats who had lost touch with the real world. This kind of system did not work much of the time.

Plans often looked good, but their implementation was problematic. The inflexibility of state plans which did not take local situations into consideration hurt many areas.

The lack of economic incentive is also constantly mentioned as a major flaw of this system. In fact, in the early years of socialist construction, more time and energy were spent on long term strategic projects such as water conservancy projects, land levelling and road construction. Thus, the lack of incentive lies more in the fact that peasants did not obtain immediate gains from building a basic infrastructure. As Blecher indicates:

Former peasants and rural cadres interviewed by numerous scholars in Hong Kong during the 1970s did not complain about indolence among the peasantry. Instead, their complaint was that the peasants worked very hard, as they always had, but did not seem to be reaping economic gains commensurate with their efforts. (Blecher, pp. 94-95)

However, the diligence in this period did benefit China in the long run. The hard-working of the commune period finally paid off in the late 1970's, and early 1980's -- the early years of the reform.

Nevertheless, collective farming is not a failure everywhere, peasants did not have uniform feelings about the collective system. A peasant says: "if it runs well, they like it; if it runs poorly, they don't". As Kelliher comments (Kelliher, p. 96):

And in many places it ran well enough, organizing work adequately and producing a livelihood for peasants.

farming has unleashed farmers' initiative to the money-making business.

At the beginning of the reform, peasants benefitted from the increased price of grain sold to the state. A surplus was created because of the decreased grain quota set by the state, hard work was rewarded since benefits were directly related to performance. However, the short term prosperity in agriculture disappeared quickly also due to decreased grain production as a result of the deterioration of the agricultural infrastructure built during the commune period. Double digit inflation also quickly subverted the peasants' short term gains. In 1993, official inflation had averaged 13 percent nationwide and 23 percent in the largest thirty cities. (Perry Link: 1994) Since 1984, grain production has stagnated and even decreased. As the peasants do not really own the land, they try to reap a profit as soon as possible. As a consequence, the rural infrastructure has been exploited excessively, and land deterioration is epidemic throughout the countryside. Irrigation and drainage systems are no longer taken care of. Peasants tend to use more chemical fertilizers rather than organic fertilizers which have a negative effect on soil fertility, and eventually on grain production.

Since farming is not profitable any more, farmers shifted their efforts to commercial activities. Peasants now are permitted to move to the urban areas to seek jobs. The

spirit has been eroded, while money seeking has been

freedom for the peasants to move has assisted a booming urban economy on one hand and brought serious problems on the other. Politically, although the Party is still the ultimate authority, party officials are no longer as respected as they used to be since they are busy using their power to make money themselves. Instead of abusing their power to take advantage of public means of production as in the commune period, now they are in a transitional process moving toward private ownership themselves.

Relatively speaking, the Chinese people now have more freedom to express opinions different from the official line. During some campaigns in the commune period, which for example, responded to complaints, or to complaints about personal favours, private concerns could be raised to the level of "wrong political attitudes and counterrevolutionary activities" (Siu: p. 210). Now people can say virtually anything privately. However, the loosening political control has created a chaotic society. As Kelliher summarized:

China under Deng offers a spectacular example of state socialist reform running out of control . . . [due to the rigidity of the reform regime] one initial privatization reform brings a second, then it is discovered that the second reform cannot work without a third, and so on, in an accelerating logical progression that quickly outstrips the reformers' control (Kelliher: pp. 35-36).

Ideologically, the government still claims that China is a socialist state. This kind of claim is ridiculed even by the Chinese officials on private occasions. The collective spirit has been eroded, while money seeking has been

encouraged. The disappearing collective spirit still suffused with a semi-feudal mentality is being replaced with a full capitalist mentality. Apparently, the villagers no longer pay attention to the values so central in the past, while eagerly adapting to the government motto "Shut up and I'll let you get rich".

In the commune period, officials were periodically checked by political campaigns, in which some wrongdoing usually would be exposed to the public and corruption was limited to a certain degree. In the reform period, "enrich yourself" is the ultimate goal. As the central government constantly declares no more political campaigns, officials dare take chances. They embraced the reform, because such a transition would enable them to own the means of production rather than merely managing them.

The breakdown of the system of communes has brought an unprecedented opportunities for those who were prepared and connected to power, and also a series of social problems. Social welfare such as health care is abandoned and criticized as "petty peasantry egalitarianism"; with the increase of patriarchal power, more and more children drop out of school to help the family to pursue economic activity; there are increasing disputes and violence; trafficking and abduction of women, and prostitution are revived. As Jan Wong reports:

Prostitution, first described in Chinese literature in the sixth century B.C., was stamped out after the Communist took power in 1949. But... Today, the flesh trade is flourishing. (Wong, March 1992)

Among these social problems, public corruption and "the squeeze" are considered the most notorious by the villagers. This will be more fully discussed in later chapters.

B. The Locus of Research: A Chinese Village

China is still a rural country with upwards of 80% of the Chinese people living in the countryside. It is here that the problems of the new reform have had their most profound effects. It is my contention that the earlier community solidarity and social cohesion engendered by communal social organization have been diminished by reform policies. The more competitive, money-making ethos of reform has led to an expansion of crime and social problems. A discussion of specific crime and social problems in one Chinese village will be used as evidence to demonstrate this proposition. My data will attempt to show that the introduction of capitalism in the Chinese countryside has led to a fundamental weakening of social security and to increasing social malintegration in the Chinese village.

(1) Mao Village:

a. Location:

Shandong province is in northern China, and Laizhou city (formerly Ye county) is located in the north-west of the Shandong peninsula. It has a monsoon continental climate with

four clear-cut seasons. Its yearly temperature is 12.5 centigrade, and yearly precipitation 612.1 mm. It has about a 200 day frost-free period. The highest temperature was 38.9°C (1961) and coldest was temperature -17°C (1971).

Liang-guo Township is in eastern Laizhou, and Mao Village belongs to Liang-Guo Township. Mao village consists of 1285 mu (1 mu = 1/6 acre) and a population of 800. Its agricultural staples include wheat, corn, peanut, and sweet potato and sideline products of sorghum, peas, and millet.

b. History:

It is said that a person named Mao An from Sichuan Province came to Shandong with his three sons in 1404 * (Ming Dynasty, Yong-le Year II). One son settled in Ye County, and the other two settled in Mouping County and Wendeng County, all in Shandong province.

In 1956, Mao Village became the Elementary Red Star Cooperative.

In 1957, it became the Pioneer Advanced Cooperative.

In 1958, it became a district of Liang-guo Commune.

Between 1961-1983, it had been called Mao Brigade.

After 1983, Mao Brigade was named Mao village. The village has four villagers' groups which were the four former

* In 1983, Laizhou county started putting up a tablet in front of each village recording its origin. In the County Annals, it is recorded that a 78 year old villager named Zhao Yuxi from Mao village was interviewed. According to him, the Stele said Mao's ancestor came to Mao village in 1380 (Ming Dynasty, Hong-Wu Year 13). Although there is a Zhao Yuxi in Mao village, he was not 78 years old in 1983. The senior villagers all agreed that Mao's ancestors came to Mao village in the year 1404, so this remains the official legend.

teams under the brigade. Group I is dominantly Lin people, and Groups II, III, IV are Mao people.

c. Grain Production:

The grain figures over these years show that there has been tremendous increase. From 1950 to 1980, total grain production has increased 160%; average grain production per mu has increased 217%. The total and average grain production have both been decreasing after the breakup in 1983. If we take into consideration the fact that village accountants have been "guessing" the grain figures since the reform started, actual grain production may have been even lower.

Year	Land (mu)	Average (Jin/mu)	Total (0000jin)	Year	Land (mu)	Average (Jin/mu)	Total (jin)
1949	1500	280	42	1977	905	6566	594,358
1950	1470	290	42.6	1978	920	7095	649,177
1951	1450	310	45	1979	-	-	-
1952	1420	330	46.9	1980	1090	6360	686,633
1953	1390	320	44.5	1981	758	7553	570,701
1954	1350	350	47.3	1982	-	-	-
1955	1292	247	31.9	1983	758	8115	618,000*
1956	1179	359	42.3	1984	758	3899	296,000
1957	1225	261	32	1985	-	-	-
1958	1277	304	38.8	1986	733	4770	540,300
1959	1177	280	33	1987	730	4770	343,200
1960	1186	192	22.8	1988	939	4655	343,800
1961	1165	257	29.9				
1962	1193	312	37.2				
1963	1200	365	43.9				
1964	1205	332	40				
1965	1220	441	53.8				
1966	1093	500	54.6				
1967	1090	499	54.4				
1968	1120	351	40.2				
1969	1127	402	45.3				
1970	1130	445	50.3				
1971	1080	498	53.8				
1972	1020	471	48.1				
1973	1040	514	53.5				

* In 1983, Mao village carried out the so-called "family responsibility system" as did other Chinese villages. Under the new system, it is impossible to report the accurate grain figures, since each family is responsible for its own production. Thus, since 1983, figures have been conveniently rounded with two or three zeroes. Accountants

1974	980	633	62	can more easily	manipulate
1975	941	665	62.5	figures that	higher-ups
-----				desire.	two periods.

Regarding the grain statistics, there are two points worthy of note: first, the overall grain figures just indicate a trend, and the accuracy should be called into question. Local cadres often manipulate statistics for their political ends throughout the commune and reform period. Here, political necessity is more important than statistical accuracy. In the commune period village accountants had accurate statistics but sometimes doctored statistics were reported; in the reform period, village accountants can not even obtain accurate data as the family is the production unit. Second, although grain production after the reform has generally been downward, sideline income in the reform period is definitely greater than that of the commune period.

C. Structure of the Thesis

As crime and social problems cannot be fully understood without their historical and social context, in Chapter II I will briefly discuss the two political economic systems, and analyze different mechanisms of social control in the two periods.

Chapter III and IV will document the problems in Mao village in the two periods. Chapter III deals with the public squeeze of fees, and in Chapter IV, public corruption, intra village conflicts, thievery, gambling and other minor problems

will be presented. In both chapters, various cases will be provided to show the differences in the two periods. In the concluding chapter, Chapter V, the representativeness of Mao Village is discussed along with a brief conclusion.

really a matter of whether China should have cooperative agriculture or competitive agriculture.

Between 1953 to 1963, China had cooperative agriculture. After the reform in 1983, individual competitive family farming has been the theme for Chinese agriculture.

(1) The Commune Period:

From 1949 to 1952, China completed the land reform which redistributed land to all peasants on a relatively equal basis. Land distribution was considered transitional to more productive, cooperative agriculture. Mao had predicted that individual farming would last for a long time in this transitional period and then China could have socialism. But soon after the land reform, many peasants were forced to sell land since individual peasants were defenceless against natural disasters such as floods or droughts and personal mishaps such as illness or the death of a family member. As Hsu and Ching point out:

A. Two Different Political and Economic Systems:

The difference between the commune system and the current system, as I see it, is the fundamental difference between building socialism and building capitalism in China. When it comes to the Chinese countryside, this difference is really a matter of whether China should have cooperative agriculture or competitive agriculture.

Between 1953 to 1983, China had cooperative agriculture. After the reform in 1983, individual competitive family farming has been the theme for Chinese agriculture.

(1) The Commune Period:

From 1949 to 1952, China completed the land reform which redistributed land to all peasants on a relatively equal basis. Land distribution was considered transitional to more productive, cooperative agriculture. Mao had predicted that individual farming would last for a long time in this transitional period and then China could have socialism. But soon after the land reform, many peasants were forced to sell land since individual peasants were defenceless against natural disasters such as floods or drought and personal mishaps such as illness or the death of a family member. As Hsu and Ching point out:

public debate, and fair competition between collective farming and individual farming, people at the grass-roots should have been given a chance to choose which way to go. Instead, under political pressures, peasants had to join the collectives regardless of local conditions.

Communes were established in 1958. After the Great Leap Forward, collective agriculture settled down to a fairly standard pattern for the next fifteen years until 1983.

Communes were first set up in Honan province because the threats of flood and drought were more serious in Honan than other parts of China. A series of irrigation projects were launched in this province, and a vast majority of villagers were organized to carry out these programmes.

Creches, baby-care groups, sewing groups, temporary mess halls, and centres for old people have been set up to enable more peasants to be free from domestic chores (Hofheinz, p. 112).

This implied and required a much greater degree of co-operation among villages and districts. In 1957, a "commune-like form" of organization was being experimented with. Mao paid a visit to Honan province, and realized that "it is better to run people's communes". Thus, the commune was born.

Setting up communes was suitable to some areas but was problematic to others. However, the policy was implemented across the whole country all at once. There were plenty of people with different social and natural conditions who did not see setting up communes as a positive alternative. Since most of the peasants joined the revolution in order to obtain

"shi-mu di, liang-liang-tou nju, lao po hai zi re kang tou" (10 mu of land, two cows, wife and children with a warm bed), many of them did not have the consciousness expected by the government and did not see collectivization as a way out of poverty. State schemes conflicted with individual plans.

Helen Siu says:

Most of the members felt that their work schedules and autonomy were unnecessarily restricted. Profits were locked into the collective. Those who had run their own businesses resisted collectivization in various ways (Siu: p. 149).

Nevertheless, many areas successfully set up communes. As Siu found in her study area Huangcheng in northern China:

Despite evidence of ambivalence and conflict among both peasants and cadres, joining the cooperatives remained largely voluntary in the Huangcheng area (Siu: p. 159).

I heard the same story in my study village. It would be safe to conclude that in those areas where people had to unite to deal with nature disaster such as flood or drought and where both cadres and peasants saw the cooperative as the only way out of poverty, cooperatives were run successfully.

The lowest level in the commune system was the team, made up of about 200 people. Usually there were several teams in a village. The teams were the 'basic accounting units'. Team members owned the land and major means of production collectively. Each team member earned a certain number of work points which was recorded by a group bookkeeper. At the end of the fiscal year, the total number of work points earned by the team members was divided into the team's net

distributable income: that is, what it had left after paying taxes and after setting aside funds for investment, welfare and other expenses. Each team member's annual income was then calculated by multiplying the work point total by the work point value (Blecher, pp. 91-93).

Team members could enjoy the same share of grain and vegetables even though some team members did not have enough work points. The latter would repay their overdraft in later years when their children grew up and they would have surpluses of work points. Most inequality within teams was due to life-cycle stages, for example, people with more children would be poorer than those with few. In the long run, income was equalised. Inequality resulting from exploitation was eliminated (Blecher, p. 94). This way, teams would find work for the elderly and disabled and there was a fair division of labour. Under this system, basic consumption was guaranteed; free or inexpensive education, health care, etc. were provided for all.

Along with the coop movement and various other campaigns, including the Cultural Revolution, Chinese peasants transformed small, hand-dug fields into large ones ploughable for tractors and worked on hills and slopes to reclaim unused land. As Stephen Endicott found in a Sichuan village, even "during the years of greatest turmoil, from 1967 to 1971, the value of production rose by almost 30 percent" (Endicott, p. 113). He also says:

What is more, no estimates or published statistics exist for the billions of labour days invested by the peasants in basic farmland capital construction from one end of the country to the other during the Cultural Revolution. If such calculations are ever made it is safe to say that they will dwarf the pyramids, the Great Wall or any other previous human construction in scale and social purposes many times over (Endicott, pp. 113-114).

In the "Learn from Dazhai" campaign*, all able-bodied villagers went to the fields to level the land, change the soil, work on water projects, etc. in the winter time. A popular slogan at that time was to "stop working on the last day of the old year and start working on the first of the new year". Says Hinton:

Based on the ability of cooperative agriculture to mobilize idle winter labour for capital construction work after 1957, China's peasants greatly improved agricultural infrastructure throughout the country. They terraced millions of acres of hills and mountains, reclaimed river bank land, vastly expanded the irrigated area and protected it with windbreaks, thus creating conditions for high stable yields where none had existed before (Hinton, p. 47, 1988).

It is difficult to estimate the value of such assets as brigade members all earned work points instead of money. In fact such labour not only brought no immediate return, but also decreased the average income of the brigade. The more workpoints the labour force as a whole expended on capital

*Dazhai is a mountain village in Shanxi Province that Mao Zedong chose as a model of rural development, primarily because it practised cooperation and self-reliance. This small community of eighty families turned a barren, gully-scarred mountainside into rich, terraced farmland with irrigated yields, ... and used the income from their crops and shops to build solid, stone housing for every family, educate both children and adults, and provide medical care for all-- (Hinton, 1988)

construction, the less each point was worth because the work yielded no income in the current year. But these assets ensured a higher level of yield in the future. In a Chinese proverb, "Qian-ren-zai-shu, hou-ren-cheng-liang" (if people in the past plant trees, then people in the future can find a shadow from sunlight).

In retrospect, however, bureaucracy became more and more serious in the later years of the commune period. As Hinton says:

Even though peasants, under the Communist leadership, did divide all the land of the landlords, wipe out landlordism as a social institution, and transform landlords individuals into labouring people, so that they ceased to exist as an exploiting class, revolutionary leaders and followers failed to transform other bastions of feudalism that had enormous negative influence on future development...

The most important of these bastions was the centralized bureaucratic state. When the Communists overthrew Chiang they broke up his administration but quickly reconstructed a traditional hierarchical apparatus of their own (Hinton, November 1991, p. 5).

Commandism was widespread in the commune period and took the form of bureaucratic intervention in day-to-day operations and held back the development. A major source of friction was the way in which decisions about production were made. As Siu comments in her research area, communes were

Under pressure from the provincial government to fulfil its grain quotas. For a district like Huancheng, where cash crops were traditionally grown and subsidiary activities offset the lack of cultivable land, undue emphasis on grain growing, combined with low state prices for grain, cut into peasants' income. When peasants resisted, anxious cadres then tightened control over the planning and management of their collectives. The county newspaper reported numerous

strengthened (Friedman, p. 269).

In a backward society like China, the government probably should have allowed some commodity economy while at the same time seeking ways to limit excess profits, including taxation, regulation, and competition. While emphasizing grain production, some villages should have been allowed to produce what they deemed the best, as long as they paid taxes and delivered the agreed-upon crops to state agents. Perhaps the government should have allowed cooperatives to compete with each other in order to develop the economy. This would keep the goose laying golden eggs. Instead, the goose was often killed by waging a war on the market. As Siu mentions:

A Vegetable-processing factory proposed by the commune was abandoned because county-level cadres condemned the project as 'capitalistic'. A brigade could not build a much needed road because its quota of cement from the county government was small and nothing else was available in rural markets (Siu: p. XVIII).

The state plans sometimes served the national economy quite well, sometimes brought more harm than good, and sometimes there were mixed results. For instance, the Great Leap Forward (1958) led to a famine in China, villagers weakened by hunger forced themselves to eat things they ordinarily would not feed even dogs or pigs (Friedman, p. 242). But in the same period, more new acreage was irrigated than in the prior eight years. (Friedman et al: p. 215). During the Great Leap Forward, the commune embarked on numerous major construction projects, such as bridges, roads, and dikes. Siu offers this observation in her study area:

The floodgate still stands today and has been vital for controlling the tidal current that affects over two-thirds of the commune's land (Siu: p. 178).

Needless to say, in some other cases, the emphasis on rapid, labour-intensive construction led to considerable wasted efforts.

To counter bureaucracy, work teams were constantly organized and sent to the villages to "squat" (dun dian) in the villages to evaluate cadres' performance. Some of these teams were quite successful in persuading villagers to report on the wrongdoing of cadres. Though some cadres were disciplined, many others were let off the hook.

Realizing that bureaucracy was the major problem in communes, Mao saw the only way out was to mobilize the masses and get them organized and participating in the decision making process. This, of course, would not work, since the bureaucracy to be attacked had the monopoly of power under the party's leadership. Thus public participation was almost impossible. The last resort for Mao was the Cultural Revolution. However, "opportunists sought to rise in the party/state hierarchy over the fallen body of the cadres they attacked" (DuRand, 1990), genuine revolutionaries who rose from the masses often became bureaucrats in the system into which they were inserted (DuRand, December, 1990).

In the Cultural Revolution, Mao mobilized millions of citizens to confront powerholders, particularly capitalist roaders, to overthrow the traditional hierarchy from below, and to build a new government structure, starting with revolutionary committees composed of citizens, cadres, and soldiers. But every

effort in this direction generated a counter-effort from the establishment under attack (Hinton, 1991, p. 10).

In a sense, the failure of various campaigns including Cultural Revolution had created a social base for Deng's resumption of power and eventually the current reform.

What David Kotz said about the former USSR is also true about China:

The system was distorted by the authoritarian and highly centralized character of the state and its economic institutions, and by the absence of any real civil liberty or democratic processes in the society. One may view these distortions as elements of nonsocialist relations, some of capitalist, and some feudal (Kotz, 1992).

As mentioned above, before the reform, China already was a bureaucratic society. Appointment was based on political criteria, in some cases only loyalty to a personalized leadership counted, the Communist party became a hereditary, self-perpetuating elite. "Government on behalf of the workers' interests turned into the regime of officials; the primacy of the plan became the primacy of the planners" (Vilas, July-August 1990). As Friedman, Pickowicz, and Selden point out:

The party, which eliminated property-based structures of inequality, institutionalized its own stratified inequalities. Rights were distributed according to hierarchial positions in state networks (Friedman et al: p. 285).

Various campaigns did not transform or eliminate bureaucracy, instead the attack usually led to attacks on the "vulnerable, the scapegoats, and the targets of personal

grudges" (Friedman et al: p. 288). People targeted in the past would again be easy scapegoats so that the real bureaucrats powers often remained intact. In the end, each campaign would consolidate the power of the loyalists around local leaders, and personal reliable recruits would be brought into the personally knit party organization. As political and ideological loyalty became the yardstick for correctness, local leaders quickly found it safer to be leftist rather than rightist, as in Chinese "rather to be left than right" (Ning-zuo-wu-you).

As long as there is no democratic systems to change top down decision making, China would continue to suffer from bureaucracy and the monopoly of power as predicated by the "Iron Law of Oligarchy".

(2) The Reform Period: Structural Antecedents And Present Realities

After Mao's death, Deng repudiated Mao and in traditional authoritarian manner carried out the reorganization of the countryside in 1983. Under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping, communes were replaced with the so-called "responsibility system" throughout most of the countryside. At the start of the reform process, the whole countryside was dismantled undemocratically "with one chop of the axe" (yi-dao-qie) by the directives from a top leadership which promised more "democratic" government.

Though some communes only retained a collective name and divided the land even before the reform such as in Sichuan and Aihui provinces, there were plenty of successful communes which resisted the division of land (Siu: pp. 277-284). As Siu continues:

Relative stability in agricultural production meant that the teams could count on meeting their quotas and maintain the value of work points. This in turn induced villagers not to break with the collective, since the collective still provided basic security (Siu: p. 281)

However, both successful and unsuccessful communes were forced to change, regardless of local conditions.

The mixed results of the commune system led to mixed reactions. As observed by Siu, old peasants were anxious, since:

They had known poverty and were more tolerant of the short-comings of the socialist regime. As they said, 'we had seen worse times when we had no legitimate claims to anything. We were counting on the collective to see to our old age, but now we are left on our own'. This reaction was especially common among households with few labourers. They knew they could not compete on an equal footing with others (Siu: p. 275).

Some brigade cadres shared the apprehension of the old peasants and felt betrayed by the party. One cadre said:

During the land reform in the 1950s, we took the land from the landlords and bullies, and now the peasants, with the approval of the party, are taking the land from the collectives. The efforts we put in to transform the countryside just vanished. We have made a full circle back (Siu: p. 276).

There would not be a great problem if every household could maintain their share of land after the reform. But this would change in a short period of time since land would

accumulate in a few households. This would be the real "full circle back" for the bypassed revolution.

It has been speculated by some scholars that the reason for the cadres to resist reform was due to the fear of losing power. It was true for some old cadres who were going to retire even without the reform. But this was certainly not the case for all the cadres, since cadres could retain power if they followed orders. For some cadres, as Siu interpreted:

Not only would these cadres lose the most because the collective economy that had given them power was unravelling, but the party reformers were also using them as scapegoats for past mistakes. However, they did not lose everything. When pressures from party superiors could no longer be avoided, they started dismantling the collective by allocating the best resources to their own households. They were able to get away with this because the average peasants, whose experience had taught them never to stick out their necks before the political dust had settled, did not challenge the cadres immediately (Siu: p. 277).

The government asked the cadres to take the lead in dismantling the communes. As the media constantly assured the cadres: "it is okay if you make mistakes when you carry on the reform, but it is not okay if you do not carry on the reform". Facing resistance from those who did not want to respond to the call for reform, the central government decided to retire all the old and some young cadres who were against the reform.

Many Chinese perceived that the original reform plan was intended to create a democratic socialism. China would have a mixed economy in which democratic planning and decision making would be the core with markets playing a secondary role. The social base for the reform was that ordinary

intellectuals, peasants and workers wanted change within the socialist system. They favoured the overall democratization of society and wanted to eliminate the bureaucratic element of socialism and replaced it with democracy. However, as the reform developed, it became increasingly clear that a capitalist road was taken by the reformers.*

Throughout the whole process, there were two groups which had played a dominant role to perpetuate the current capitalist system. One group is the cultural elite, i.e., the intelligentsia. During various campaigns, intellectuals were more likely than other social groups to speak out, but their criticisms were considered anti-socialism, thus they were usually silenced and punished. With a feudal tradition, the Chinese authorities did not and do not allow open criticism which would be considered "counter-revolutionary activities". For example, in the commune period,

Thirty reporters throughout China who had written stories exposing the expanding network of popularly resented secret shops for officials were branded rightists and sent to labour-reform camps in poor places (Friedman et al: p. 210).

The central government did not listen to the criticisms, instead powerholders cracked down on those who had pointed out ineffective and corrupt leaders or flaws in policies. During the cultural revolution, intellectuals were

* It has also been argued that the previous system was state capitalism not socialism, since the elite had alienated themselves from the rest of the society and had become a capitalist class. According to this argument, China had never had socialism, but a managerial system with state ownership.

sent down to the countryside to be "re-educated" by the peasants and by themselves. This re-education was a failure for two major reasons.

First, intellectuals did not have a chance for open debate about problems, so they were less likely to change their political and ideological outlook expected by the party. Secondly, local leaders and villagers, long mistrustful of the educated and of outsiders often treated the latter as strangers. Villagers tended not to cooperate with them.

The failure of the reeducation had fostered the intellectuals' hatred toward socialism or what passed for it in China. For years "socialism" has meant bureaucratic socialism to them, therefore anti-socialism is the same as anti-bureaucracy. They saw the only way out for China was the western-style democracy which they think exists in capitalism. However, they do not know much about capitalism. Many of them believe in an idealized, nineteenth-century picture of capitalism, which they see as a system of economic freedom and opportunities for all (Kotz, p. 20).

During all these forbidden years, they learnt about capitalism through the official classic books. For years, they were told that the capitalist world was rotten and hopeless.

If the official media had previously not been telling the whole truth, perhaps the whole truth was the opposite of what they had previously been told (Kotz, p. 20).

child However, there is no doubt the reform has brought some good changes to Chinese society. First, people, especially the intellectuals enjoy more freedom in expressing their point of view where different from the government. Unlike the commune period in which the political atmosphere smothered criticism which would be considered rightist or reactionary, the new regime has loosened its political control. Second, the lifting of marketing restrictions has unleashed people's initiative to pursue commercial activities for their own interests. Under the new system, Magdoff says:

Individual family units contract to work a certain amount of land and in return promise to pay a certain amount of grain and cash. Farmers are free to produce whatever crops they wish once the grain quota is met, and any production above the contracted amount can be sold on the open market (Magdoff, p. 8, 1990).

result Now on the market in China, there are many more consumer goods available. The open-door policy has attracted foreign investment in the coastal areas which pushes more export of Chinese products.

However, the reform has brought numerous problems. First, bureaucracy is far from over. Deng has brought the peasants from socialist bureaucracy to the yoke of capitalist bureaucracy. Now they have to pay to get anything that was free under the former communal system. As a small percentage of the people are benefitting from the reform, the majority of the people become victims of the unfair redistribution of wealth. In the commune period, brigade members received most or all of their services free, such as medical care,

children's education, etc. Now they have to pay for everything they want or even do not want. The collectively owned enterprises collapsed. The social services provided by the collectives were abolished, since collective enterprises have come under private control. Former cadres have been well positioned to take advantage of the new economic opportunities, since they have the power to contract out to themselves or their relatives or friends the lucrative factories at a discount rate and pocket the difference.

What is emerging side-by-side with a rapidly expanding private sector of the economy is a universal, multi-layered concession system that lavishly rewards those who control productive resources, and most lavishly reward those who control the most (Hinton, p. 47, 1988).

Second, the lack of agricultural investment has resulted in the deterioration of agricultural infrastructure. Since the state still nominally owns the land, peasants do not want to put any investment into land because of their concerns that policies will change.

Since implementing the contract system, not only has little new capital construction taken place on the land, but the projects and engineering works previously built have not been well maintained. Everywhere the infrastructure, so painstakingly created in the 60s and 70s, is falling apart with adverse influence on production (Hinton, p. 47, 1988).

In fact, peasants tend to use more chemical fertilizers instead of human and animal manure. This has caused both environmental problem and soil erosion. Many good practices have been given up as being inefficient. In the commune period, peasants used to accumulate human and animal manure,

firewood ashes, and river mud, and the flue materials for the kang (a heatable brick bed made of clay brick. Every year, peasants used to dismantle an old kang and use the clay brick as fertilizer, and build a new one). As a consequence, the rural infrastructure including the irrigation system suffered from deterioration and even collapse. This is also realized by the Chinese leaders. These leaders, including Deng Xiaoping himself, complained about the negative results of the reform: the damage done to water conservancy projects, the shrinking area of cultivated land, the drop in soil fertility, the lowered resistance of soils to disaster, and the weakening of institutions that provide technical services to rural people. As a result,

Cooperatives provided the scale and the infrastructure for the modernization and mechanization of the Chinese countryside, a development that has been severely hampered if not totally aborted by the family contract system (Hinton, pp. 26-27, 1989).

Third, after the breakup of communes, inequality increased immediately as individuals with power or connections to power purchased collectively owned property at prices below its real value. The reform created growing polarization in the village, as summarized by Hinton:

So what used to be a community of relatively equal labouring people who shared their collective income on the basis of work performed, is rapidly turning into a stratified community consisting of a well-to-do minority moving into position to realize unearned incomes... Capital assets including means of production held or controlled now have more to do with income levels than work done (Hinton, p.49, 1988).

** According to the survey, the gross income comes from publicly funded projects (Gong-kuan-yang-qing) (Materials Digest, Issue 8, 1993, p. 6)

A jingle (or doggerel) which classifies ten ranks in current China says:

- The first rank do contracts, whatever expenses will get reimbursed;
- The second rank are servants*, having not enough salary but are compensated; (*government officials)
- The third rank buy cheap and sell dear through connections, having illegal doings but protected;
- The fourth rank are actresses, making money by moving their butts;
- The fifth rank are clerks, using public fund for dining in the restaurants; **
- The sixth rank are avoiding taxes, becoming rich in a short time;
- The seventh rank are doctors, asking money before and after surgeries;
- The eighth rank are foolish soldiers, "Learning from Leifeng" with guns in their hands;
- The ninth rank are teachers, who can't distinguish a fish from a lobster;
- The tenth rank are peasants, paying the taxes and the squeeze of fees.

Moreover, with the economic reform, older spiritual problems are epidemic. Says Hugh Deane:

The heavy and accumulating costs include an infectious selfishness that is shaping social attitudes, a destructive impact on the environment, pervasive corruption, and two-digit inflation that has so far been hardly touched by countermeasures. Some systematic undermining is taking place in the countryside as exploitation of labour, access to resources, and political influence create political assets and economic power (Deane, 1989, p. 7).

Siu also points out the same problems:

Once the ideological lid is lifted, individual entrepreneurship and traditional popular beliefs, phenomena that the party-state attacked as 'feudal practices', have come back with a vengeance (Siu, p. 2-3).

** According to the estimation of the State Statistics Bureau, among the medium and big restaurants, 60-70% of the gross income comes from publicly funded feasts (Gong-kuan-yan-qing) (Materials Digest, Issue 8, 1993, p. 6)

In summary, there were serious problems and shortcomings within the commune system, and the countryside demanded change. But the kind of change has often exacerbated problems without reducing the bureaucracy long existed in Chinese society. There are many questions remaining. As Hinton points out:

The issue is not whether there should have been change, but what form that change should take. Were there no effective options available within the context of the cooperative system to overcome stagnation? Was privatization the preferred solution to the problem that arose? (Hinton, p. 13, 1989)

B. Two Different Mechanisms of Social Control:

(1) Social Control in the Commune Period:

a. Political Control:

There was a total turnover of local leadership in the years immediately after the Communist takeover with poor peasants becoming the local leaders. Differing from previous bandits or quasi-bandit revolutions or rebellions, which punish the rich and aid the poor, the Chinese Communist revolution was determined not simply to exercise control over the rural areas but to transform them. It aimed at a total reconstruction of the social order. This was not the case with earlier peasant rebellions as Eric R. Wolf has pointed out,

[w]hile such a revolution may be made with the aid of a peasantry, it is not made for the sake of peasantry. Such revolutions aim, ultimately, at the subjugation and transformation of peasantry into a new kind of social grouping (Wolf, p. 109).

The Communists shaped the administrative structure at the village (the lowest level below the county), which had never been the case in traditional China. As Barnett described:

In pre-Communist China, centralized political power, when effective, reached down to the county level, but management of village-level affairs was in large part left in the hands of local, nongovernmental social institutions which operated with a fairly high degree of autonomy.

One of the Chinese Communists' aims, and accomplishments, has been the destruction of almost all such social institutions inherited from the past, and the restructuring of rural society by the creation of new mass organizations under close Communist Party control (Barnett, 1967, p. 412).

Right after the revolution, the Chinese Communists had shifted power:

From those who previously exercised it on the basis of wealth, influence, naked might or social prestige to the Communist Party, which claimed to represent the working class--an alliance of peasants and workers (Gray, p. 232).

Progressive peasants from poor families were recruited into the party. Through establishing village Party branches and other organizations, the government was able to mobilize the entire countryside. The Communists had applied the organizational principles used within the Party to the organization of the entire society. "Everybody in China is a member of some organized group which was brought into existence by the Communists" (Schurmann, 1958, p. 2). As a result, the Communists had successfully built up an organizational apparatus through which they were able to

communicate effectively and continuously with the mass of the population at the grassroots level. This organizational mechanism made it possible to ensure the implementation of directives from above in a way that had not been possible previously (Barnett, 1967, p. 379).

At the heart of the system of political control was the Party itself, "whose members were embedded in every important social group and grasped every important lever of power" (Barnett, 1967, p. 389). Party members monopolized the key leadership posts in government bodies at all levels, and Party dominance of the government bureaucracy operated not only at the upper levels of leadership in the hierarchy, it also reached effectively to the lowest levels.

Under the political system, there were many different mechanisms for political control. Among them were registry of population and control over travel and movement, reinforced by food control through food rationing.

When a child was born, his or her identifying information would be recorded in the village. This became the basis for obtaining food, applying for schooling, and later years for getting jobs, obtaining a marriage license, etc. The government generally controlled and restricted voluntary transfer of residence motivated solely by personal considerations, except marrying out of place of residence, joining the army, or other mobilization arranged by the state.

The peasants become politically conscious of what the government defined as 'feudal oppression' and destroy the very bastions of the old social order (Potter, 1967, p. 410).

But the raising the mass's consciousness and maintaining it are no easy task. Wrong ideas cannot be confiscated as easily as the means of production. As Red Flag, the Party magazine, summarized in one editorial:

It requires a very, very long period of time to eliminate the old ideas, culture, customs and habits left over by the exploiting classes for thousands of years. We have confiscated the property of the landlord class and the bourgeoisie, but we cannot confiscate their reactionary ideas (Broyelle, 1975, p. 178).

Stress was placed upon prolonged, patient mass persuasion through intensive propaganda and indoctrination. Indoctrination, i.e., thought reform, also called "political study" in China, was carried out by groups. Thought reform

Consists of two closely related elements: confession, the detailed recitation of past evil accompanied by the promise of humble service to the regime in the future; and re-education, the attempt of remaking a man (sic.) in the communist image (Shurmann & Schell, 1966, p. 138).

In the thought reform process, each was constantly criticizing other group members and also being criticized. There was no sense of privacy, everything personal could be discussed in the group. Since no one was perfect, thus people seemed to be sincerely confessing their wrongdoing. When some people were reluctant to do this, they would encounter patient persuasion, or sometimes these kinds of people would become

industrialized. In 1953, a nationwide state monopoly of grain was introduced. The state involved itself directly in the process of planning production activities. The state not only ordered what kind of products to produce, but also set the targets for each team. This system was called "unified [state] purchase and supply". At the same time, the government assumed responsibility for grain distribution and introduced grain rationing for all urban residents. Under this system, ownership of the privately-owned plots was restricted and sometimes even banned, so that villagers would not waste their energy in private business; the free market, also called the black market, was under tight control, commodities classified as first- (such as grain) or second-category (cotton) goods were not allowed to be traded. Except grain and vegetables, peasants had to sell other items and got rationed industrial goods from the state. As Barnett describes:

A few commodities had to be sold by team members directly to the commune's Supply and Marketing Cooperative, and pigs had to be sold to the commune pig farm; but the brigade's Supply and Marketing Cooperative handled the purchase of many other items, ...[its] store stocked and sold a variety of goods, the most important of which were daily necessities and miscellaneous consumer goods--sugar, salt, matches, fish, cigarettes, wine, and the like. (Barnett, 1967, p. 376)

d. Informal Control:

In comparison with traditional China in which informal control played the major role, in communal China formal

control played a major role . However, informal control never disappeared even during the heyday of the commune years. Politically the state did not and could not smash the clan and lineage system. People in one village usually have a common ancestry. A team, for example, usually was composed of the closest clan members. This made things complicated, especially for cadres. Cadres had to be careful when they dealt with deviants, since villagers were related to each other one way or another. In the long run, cadres relied upon the villagers' cooperation for maintaining order and the status quo. Disputes and conflicts were usually settled informally by cadres, as had been the case when the gentry class handled mediation in traditional China. The difference was that gentry members did not hold any official offices, although they had informal connections outside of the community, while cadres were official office holders. Except in severe cases, cadres usually resolved minor cases informally. The combination of cadres' formal position and informal dispute resolution was a peculiar feature of the Chinese justice system. The state recognized the importance of local dispute resolution as long as the cadres did not deviate too much from the official lines. Mediation by people who were familiar with the conflict situation, as well as with its participants, "increased the likelihood that a satisfactory solution would be reached with minimal residual bitterness" (Gallin, 1966, p. 268). Although fairness was

also emphasized, there were still much arbitrary and unjust action, since the monopoly of power in the hands of local rural officials made villagers:

As a result [d]ependent on the goodwill of the party secretary for everything from recommendations for getting sons into the military or family members into the party to securing jobs outside the village (Friedman et al: p. 189).

Although there were plenty of honest, self-abnegating and disciplined rural cadres, the unaccountable party power had created a favourable condition for those who were involved in favouritism, nepotism, and corruption. Cadres lived within the village mores in which they had been socialized, their work style continued to be shaped by the traditional cultural orientation. Being afraid of cadre power, villagers sometimes accepted cadres' resolutions with different degree of reservations, since they had to live in the same community and they usually would sacrifice justice for harmony. Even sometimes if one wanted to appeal to the upper authority, most cases s/he would find higher-ups usually protecting their subordinates who abused power. There is a saying in Chinese: "Guan-Guan Xiang Hu" (Bureaucrats shield one another). As Edward Friedman commented:

Local leaders, as they had for many generations under various regimes, [tried] to dodge, deflect, and blunt the impact of demands detrimental to local interests and values. Those negative impacts gradually erode the new state's popular legitimacy (Friedman, p.xv).

The loosening social control has unleashed money-seeking activities and also old and new social problems.

(2) Social Control in Contemporary China:

The current economic reform has loosened social control in the countryside, and China has been in a chaotic situation.

As a report says:

China admitted today to a serious breakdown of law and order in parts of its countryside, with warlords, bandits and feuding clans running rampant.

The nightmare vision of discontent and chaos among the country's 900 million rural dwellers has been a focus of concern for China's leaders...

In some areas, village social order is out of control, and local officials are weak and lax, and some are already paralysed (Wilhelm, May 4, 1994).

The reform has brought the countryside back to traditional individual family farming which "results in modifications and transformations of values and cultural goals" (Pearse, pp. 70-71). The growing market economy has linked some villagers directly to the outside world by market relations and makes for the use of money as a sole means of exchange, and "money increases in importance, for the purchase of manufactured and processed necessities." (Pearse, p. 73) The change of social structure has modified "the manner in which socialization impinges upon different members of the same society". (Kasdan, 1965, p. 346) While some villagers are looking for wage work, some villagers return to traditional life; thus some young people gain economic independence, and some are back to the yoke of patriarchal control. The loosening social control has unleashed money-seeking activities and also old and new social problem.

As one reporter points out, Chinese peasants:

[U]se illegal criminal methods to realize their own desires for wealth. The countryside now has problems of murder, explosions, rape, prostitution, kidnapping of women and children and theft (Wilhelm, May 4, 1994).

The economic reform has created unprecedented opportunities as well as dangers for women. "Women Hold Up Half The Sky" was once proclaimed by the Communists, signalling a new equality between the sexes. The leadership in the communal time paid more than lip service to the principle of equal opportunity in employment--with all jobs provided by the state under an assignment system. Now the slow but steady abandonment of marxist social ideals, the erosion of Maoism and:

[T]he rise of new value systems associated with economic change are reinforcing old gender stereotype; at their core is the belief that women are inferior to men.

Now, as market-oriented economic policies transform China, even communism's theoretical commitment to women's rights is gone, and many feudal concepts and practices have returned in force, ranging from the sale of women to child marriages to bigamy (Sun, Feb. 17, 1993).

Browne points to the same problem:

It is women who are most vulnerable in a world where strict Communist morality has crumbled and sex has become an exploitable commodity.

Brothels, massage parlours and dance halls used as pick-up joints for prostitutes have sprung up everywhere (Browne, p. 26).

The climate of insecurity created by crime is eroding confidence in the government. Complains an elderly victim of two robberies in Beijing:

owners Chinese peasants currently are paying three kinds of fees to governments at different levels: taxes which are fixed by the central government; fees which are set by central government for local government to collect as administrative expenses; and squeeze of fees (i.e. illicit fees) which are banned by the central government but still collected by local governments.

For Since the economic reform started, local economic powers have been arising, and the political power of the central government has been decentralized. The former economic mechanisms such as the taxation system that the central government used to rely on are no longer effective.

near With less and less budget transfer from the central government, local governments set their own rules to collect money from the people at the grass-roots. Local and central government agencies follow suit and collect fees at their will. Whenever needed, government agencies will charge the public using different excuses, for services which used to be free. As Wilhelm puts it:

A 'greed is good' mentality and increasing local autonomy have fostered the return of an old curse: rapacious local officials who prey on the peasants, raising taxes and seizing land for their own benefit (Wilhelm, 1994).

squeez In the commune period, the brigade would pay the fees directly through income from collectively owned factories. After the reform, collective ownership was replaced by private

will charge more than required in order to give favours (peasants will feel grateful if an official lowers the fees), to exempt friends and relatives from taxation. The supposedly official relationship becomes personal and feudal. If you give me a free hair-cut, I will charge less fees. This kind of system has benefited those with money and power. The more power you have, the more money you will make. Power can make money, and money can buy power. It has never been so obvious in China that money and power have such a clear monetary relationship.

Zhao Desheng from Mao village, who sells tobacco, once boasted to a customer in another county that he sold thousands of jin of tobacco a year. On his reputation everyone knows him in the township. This customer wrote a letter to the Township Taxation Office and asked if Zhao paid taxes since his business was so good. Officials came to Mao village and calculated that Zhao should pay 17,000 yuan of sales tax. Zhao was astonished and asked them how they reached such a figure and they said it was going to be 27,000 if he wanted to argue. Zhao summoned some friends who knew these people and invited them to a dinner. The problem was quickly resolved.

A. How Statistics Are Doctored

When peasants have no problem of paying the taxes, they usually do not complain about the percentage of net income in fees set by the government. However, the problem lies in the base upon which the fee is calculated. The central government

village accountant for the two periods in a nearby Shy village, and found out how this was done.

One day, I walked into the village headquarters. Present were the party secretary, the informant, and six other team leaders. The informant said, in order to be a "10 Billion Yuan Strong Country" (a campaign launched by the central government to select 100 "strong counties" whose yearly GNP surpasses 10 billion yuan in 1994), Laizhou county decided that Laizhou will have 13 billion yuan GNP in order to become one of the "one hundred". To reach that level, each village is given a certain amount. Then it is up to the village accountant to divide it up among the households in the village. My informant told the leaders that he already made the calculations and selected some representative households.

He said that every household had to remember the amount of income that was given when people from the provincial government came to check it. Why? Because he was told by the county officials that last year some representative villagers in Deng village did not pass the provincial government's inspection. Since the figure they gave did not match the yearly income on paper, the village was 10,000,000 kuai short of the reported gross income last time. To avoid this "loss of face", my informant selected 20 households, and he told the team leaders to give the sheet to those representative villagers and let them sign their names. A team leader murmured, "why bother to give it to them, I'll sign for them

right here". It seemed that my informant did not bother with this. But he reiterated that if asked, representative villager's answers have to match the figure on the paper. One team leader said, "this is like the time of 'Great Leap Forward', when sweet potato stalk was considered grain and added to the statistics."

In order to reach the level of 13 billion yuan, everyone including students was assigned with an income. When I interviewed Lin Yamin (a later case), she said the village said her 12 year old son had a yearly income of 3970 kuai, an amount almost equivalent to her whole year's salary.

As local governments try to cheat the central and provincial governments, villages are also cheating local governments. Some villages even have two accounting books, one called the "outside book" which is for the inspection from government authorities, the other called "inside book" or "black book" which is to show to the villagers for collecting fees. Everything in the outside book will not violate the state's regulations, while the inside book will have those fees that are illegal to collect. And this book is not publicized to anyone except the few village cadres.

My informant told me that since the grain yield can not be too high, he let each household till more acreage of land on paper so that his village could fulfil the quota. I suggested that the inspectors can simply calculate the number of households by multiplying the average acres of land each

household tills, and find that your village has more acres of land than your village really has. He laughed, and said everybody knows it is a joke. Those officials just want to tell a lie that looks real. He added that gifts given by friends or relatives, money or things picked up on the street are all considered income. In this way a lie will be completely covered since nothing will ever be officially discovered.

My informant said that the central government knows what has been done at the grass-roots, so the central government has formally promulgated some regulations. These regulations have never been effective. For example, a poster "The Administration Articles for Peasants Fees" by Shandong province has never reached the village, it is kept in the township. The poster said these articles were effective on January 1, 1992. When I asked my informant to get a copy for me on January 2, 1994, villagers still did not know it. Since October 31, 1985, the central government has started promulgating documents to lighten peasants' burden, but none of them has had any effect (Rural Work Correspondence, April, 1993, p.10). My informant said, "if villagers see this, it will be more difficult to collect fees."

As a matter of fact, the central government is doing the squeeze itself. For example, the central government wants to construct a seaport in Laizhou, and it would fund half of the project. But where does the other half of the money come

were frequently stolen, Xueji township in Hubei province once issued an identification card for each cow, and charged 10 yuan for each cow with a picture. Peasants say 3 yuan will cover the cost, the rest of the money is put in officials' pockets (Rural Financial Accounting, November, 1993, p. 29)

other A common trick used by governments is to plan some kind of project which is supposed to benefit the community, then ask each household to give volunteer labour. At the last moment they will change their mind and want to contract the work out. It ends up that villagers will pay anyway.

the co As television is more and more popular in the countryside, villagers do not go to see movies, and theatres run by the township are losing money. In the name of upgrading villagers' cultural activity, the township forced villagers to pay 1 yuan each a year to "invite" the movie team to come to the village to show a film. If the township security station needs money, they will collect it from each village, called a "united defense fee". It is said that sometimes when they themselves need money to gamble, they just simply go out and fine gamblers.

In this kind of environment, village cadres learn how to squeeze fast. Another informant complained that every year they paid the money for killing rats, but nobody comes and rats are still running everywhere and the money goes to the village cadres' pockets. Since every level tries to squeeze the villagers, if one person is against it, it is against the

pay the fees. (Accounting, September, 1993, pp. 4-8) In

terms In Chinese, this is called "to kill the chicken to scare the monkey" (Sha-ji-jing-hou, to punish someone as a warning to others).

The accountant informant said all these problems are caused by the lack of collective factories, and he explained this to me:

Before, when we had public factories, the income from them could pay for these expenses. But now, they are either collapsed or contracted out. In a word, there is no where to get the income. To tax and squeeze everyone as much as possible is the only way.

Once when I was on the train, a factory manager told me that if a factory is not leased (cadres can lease factories which belong to the village to individuals), it can only retain 1.5 % of the profits. But if leased, a manager can retain 45 % of the profits. And he emphasized: "remember, if you contract it, you can fly a plane anytime and live in fancy hotels, these will all be put into normal operating costs. Many factories contracted out are not making money, so they do not bother to give government the other 55%.

It was mentioned before that the central governments has announced many regulations to attempt to stop the squeeze of fees. The latest is Number 10 document of 1993 of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party. This document is intended to eliminate 37 fees (including security fee, movie fee, rat fee), to temporarily suspend 2 fees, to modify 17 fees, to correct 14 fees, and to continue 29 fees.

(Rural Financial Accounting, September, 1993, pp. 4-8) In terms of the ways of collecting and managing the fees, the central government admits the following are most popular:

1. Collect fees in advance. In some places, fees in year 2000 have been collected.
2. Raise fee percentage at each level.
3. Apportion according to the size of the family and land.
4. Deduct fees when peasants sell grain to the government.
5. Force peasants to borrow loans to pay the fees.
6. Use compulsory means to seize grain, draft animals, furniture from the peasants.
7. Substitute labour for money. (This way authority will say there is volunteer labour somewhere, if you can not do it, you pay for it.)

But this is not going to work. I had a chat with junior high schools teachers, one of them quoted one township official by saying:

Which is more powerful? The central government or the provincial government? Central government says 5%, but provincial government has increased it to 7%. Which is more powerful? Provincial government or county government? The government made the percentage much higher. But in the end, the village leaders are more powerful. Whatever they say, goes.

In summary, I think the squeeze experienced by the Chinese peasants has been institutionalized by the Chinese government, and the squeeze is not going to stop. As Kathy Wilhelm reports:

The official magazine Outlook Weekly said taxes and fees have averaged more than 10 percent of peasants' incomes in recent years. The central government has promised to cut that in half, but local officials seem oblivious to Beijing's orders and growing peasant anger.

Official media carry reports of officials paying peasants too little for their grain and overcharging

them for tractor fuel or fertilizer. Peasants who complained have been beaten, robbed, even killed (Wilhelm, 1994).

Fee squeezing is a manifest result of an economic policy which institutionalizes private money making to the detriment of public financing possibilities. As a consequence of this, government squeezing becomes a way of life for government officials at all levels of government. Instead of consistent application of public regulations typically found in the commune period, peasants face a welter of methods of official grabbing of hard-earned income. Accordingly, public authority increasingly loses its legitimacy as a focus of agreed-upon values and becomes simply one more hostile element, albeit a more powerful one, in a hostile environment. The controllers of public order are out of control and the consequences for social harmony are harmful for all and most harmful to the majority of powerless peasants.

When I asked how corrupt village leaders were in the commune period, villagers responded that the worst was just attending a dinner party occasionally. And even this did not apply to every cadre. Former Party secretary Lin Hongjian often was invited to a dinner party, and former brigade head Nao Jinyou rarely showed up at a dinner feast.

There were also plenty of cases where cadres took petty revenge on some villagers they did not like, for example, assigning hard work. Cadres also took advantage of their

power, for example, sending their own sons to join the military since that was a major alternative for village youth to move out of the village, or they found jobs outside the village for their siblings or friends. This was done quietly but most villagers knew it. Lin Hongjian, the former party secretary, and Mao Jinyou, the former village head all sent their sons to the military or factories. But they were careful, and sometimes had to make fair decisions in the eyes of the villagers no matter what their motivations were. Thus, there were also numerous cases where children from the poorest families were sent to the military or assigned factory jobs.

I was interested in those villagers who had been systematically abused during the commune period. Usually the most severely abused were from landlord or rich peasant families. Siu has similar observations in her study:

The group that suffered most in the villages were the former landlords and rich peasants. Their class labels reduced them to the state of perpetual political scapegoats. They were paraded around and roughed up whenever party superiors made rural cadres go through the motions of the class struggle (Siu: p. 206).

(1) The Case of Former Rich Peasant Mao Junmin

I learned that Mao Junmin and Mao Guangrong were the two who suffered most in Mao village. I managed to interview Mao Junmin who is half deaf but writes very well. At the beginning he hesitated and just generally talked about how tyrannical village leaders were. After a few times of

(3) No, he dared not. There was a campaign every few days. How dare you? Two people worked for the pen shop before, they wasted a lot of money. When a mass campaign came, one was put into prison, and the other hung himself.

I also wanted to interview Mao Guangrong, but he worked in the county seat. One day, his wife, Lin Jinying, 68 years old, married to Mao Guangrong when she was 16, paid a visit to the household I was living in. She mentioned many things that even my householders were not aware of. But she did not remember the major events.

Among many things she said:

Before a struggle meeting, Mao Xuzeng said our family had loads of clothes. So we were asked to hand in 46 pieces of clothes. That is why before my father-in-law went to the struggle meeting, we had to make a cotton pants and coats for him to wear temporarily.

The government set a quota for how many rightists. When your grandfather was asked if socialism was good or not, he said, socialism was good, except there were stones in the grain. That was why your grandfather became a rightist.

We had bad class origin. Nobody wanted to marry your uncles (her sons), so we had to exchange sons and daughters. We found another rich peasant family having both a son and a daughter. My daughter married their son, and my son married their daughter.

My impression is that some village cadres abused their power but they were careful, and there were some good cadres too. This is different from the current leaders who all are involved in self-interested activities.

(3) The Case of Party Secretary Lin Zhanyou

One day, an informant, a village leader from a nearby village, told me that Lin Zhanyou had been dismissed as Mao village's party secretary at a township meeting. I had learned that party secretary Lin Zhanyou and village head Mao Yingzeng, formerly called by villagers as "iron brothers", broke up and did not get along with each other any more. One day, a Da-zi-bao (big character newspaper) was put on the wall to criticize Lin Zhanyou's business dealings.

Lin's dismissal did not stir the villagers. Corruption is so common now that sometimes when top officials want to get rid of the notorious leaders, the villagers do not agree. Since the corrupted are "full with their belly", the new ones have to be fed if the old ones are replaced.

As most ordinary villagers do not know the details, I decided to ask Niu Yuguang. He is close to the new party secretary Mao Xiangbo, who knows Lin Zhanyou's ins and outs.

"Why was Lin Zhanyou dismissed?" I asked Niu Yuguang.

Two reasons. First, he built two houses. People can apply for a lot of land and build a four room house if the son is more than eighteen years old. But his son is only six or seven years old. Not only is Lin Zhanyou's son under that age, but also he built two houses with eight rooms. One house was built in the name of another villager, the other was said for raising silk worms. Second, he sold a brand new forty KW generator owned by the village at a price of 9,000 kuai (=yuan, Chinese currency) while the purchasing price is 18,000 kuai.

"But Mao Xiangbo and Mao Yingzeng are also corrupt, why were they not dismissed?" Mao Yingzeng is not considered a

Besides houses, rent, and the generator, he contracted a bridge project at 18,000 kuai to someone else while Mao Longquan's bid was 13,000 kuai. Why would not Lin let someone to build the bridge cheaper? Obviously he received goodies. And he also supports many small village cadres who were hooligans. For example, Mao Shijin, Lin Xuehua, Mao Youshan, etc.

Mao Youshan is so hated by the villagers that in the past three Spring Festivals, his stackrack had been set on fire. This is how people take their anger out. He was also involved in a fight with another villager which will be discussed later.

(4) The Case of Mao Shijin: A Group Leader

I find Mao Shijin's case most interesting. Mao Shijin had many problems as a group leader and all the villagers in Group IV stopped paying taxes and fees. This brought township leaders to the village to "pull out nails" (meaning "solve problems"). Even now, group IV still do not have a leader, while four party members are the acting group leader.

I asked Lin Hongjian, the former party secretary, who is one of the four about this. He hesitated, and claimed that he did not know what to say. During my first interview with him, he was very cooperative on many other issues, but not on problems of the village. I thus interviewed another villager in group IV, Mao Yaowen.

"What kind of problems do you know about Mao Shijin?"

Mao Shijin had been a team leader (after 1983 called Group leader) since 1982, and he was dismissed in the first half of 1993. We have not had a team leader since then.

10,000 kuai. In September 1993. Lang and his two brothers contracted a gold mine from the village. The contract expired in April 1994. During the daily operation, these three had conflicts, and the other two brothers threatened Lang with guns. Lang decided to confiscate the mine to the village party committee. He asked Qiu to help him and succeeded. Lang thinks that he owes Qiu. After Qiu's first son went to university, Lang said to Qiu, 'my nephew (i.e. Qiu's son) goes to university now, and your wage is low, I would like to help you'. Qiu deposited the money in the bank for five years.

3) The township department store was panning gold illegally and was found out by City Mine Bureau. Since the department store faced a fine, its director Wang Guoan went to Qiu for help. Qiu used his connections and favours from the bureau director. In order to pay back the favour, Wang spent 1,400 kuai and bought a 13 gram gold necklace for Qiu's wife. Qiu accepted. The necklace is estimated by the court at 700 kuai.

4) Lin Guangyun worked in township water station. He could not reimburse his hospital bills according to the regulations. Qiu called up the township finance director to reimburse Lin. Later on, Lin spent 736 kuai and bought a bicycle for Qiu's second son.

5) Director Sun of the Post Office wanted to decorate his office after the Post Office was built. Since Qiu supported him to collect seven yuan from each person in the township, Sun wanted to return the favour and decorate Qiu's office, and Qiu agreed.

One morning, Sun sent Qiu two sofas, a coffee table, a bed, and an office desk to Qiu's office. Qiu brought them home, he argued: 'it is normal, since I work at home too.'

6) Qiu admitted that when he was in hospital, Zhang Kedong the party secretary of Zhang village, gave him money three times, a total of 2,500 kuai. But the Public Procurator thinks this is a personal transaction. (Zhang is in a later case)

"But isn't the sum of these more than the official figure of 21,600 kuai," I asked.

After Qiu was arrested, the township party committee publicly asked everyone connected that they must protect Qiu and not tell the truth in order to make a

serious problem a trivial one and a trivial one disappear. That is why the evidence the county court got is different from the Procuratorate. Evidence the court collected the first time is also different from the second time.

For example, after Qiu was arrested, Qiu's wife asked Lang for an IOU. During the second investigation, Lang admitted this himself.

The Security Director, Yang Congmao, is afraid that he will be exposed, so he invited the court people to dinner, and begged them to let Qiu out. And the director of our court also knows Qiu, he said there are many people asking to let Qiu off the hook.

"Are there other things?" I continued.

People have told us a lot of things. For example, Qiu supported Hao Jixing, the former party secretary of Hao village, whose penis was cut out by a woman. But not only was he not dismissed, he was promoted by Qiu. Qiu, Hao, Yang (security chief), and party secretary Zhang of Shangpuo village are fictional brothers [swore as such in a ceremony]. Qiu let Dong from Xiaoge village build a business building on Liangguoji village's land. The party secretary of Liangguoji was against this deal and then was dismissed by Qiu.

What this case demonstrates in detail is not only the magnitude of official corruption, but the dense network of corruption and its coverup among officialdom.

Back to Mao village, let me elaborate upon the dismissal of the two party secretaries since their stories play upon important points. After Deng came to power, many local leaders were against rural reform, partly because of what they believe, partly because of their power base. Their ideological commitment would have to be stronger since this would be going against the tide. The strength of this opposition was one of the reasons that rural China did not divide up the land until 1983, five years after Deng launched

the reform. The majority of the people did not want to divide up the land. This was typical nationwide and I heard much of this when I went to university in southern China. Lin Hongjian (the former party secretary) said,

We were just getting better after all the collective efforts. Cadres and masses all dislike the reform, including officials in the commune, county and the prefecture. Even the governor of Shandong province did not want to divide up the land. The mayor of the prefecture has been replaced a few times. When we were forced to reform, everything public went to auction, tractors, draft animals, etc. It is really sad. And look at what is happening now, nobody cares about each other.

In order to carry on his reform, Deng's regime retired many cadres in their 50's. That is why Chinese jokingly said that people in their seventies or eighties (like Deng himself) were retiring people in their fifties.

In retrospect, Lin Hongjian (who was dismissed as the party secretary when the reform started in 1983 and was charged of receiving a blanket from rich peasant Mao Xuzeng) indeed had many problems, but one factor would never be the single reason to dismiss him. The dismissal is social and institutional, and it is due to the whole shift of power connected to a transformation of programs and social structural movements. He was a political scapegoat at a time of ideological rectification.

Lin Zhanyou's case (who was dismissed as the party secretary in 1994) is different because everyone knew that he was dismissed not because of his corruption since almost all cadres are corrupt. His dismissal is rather very personal.

He was dismissed because he did not follow the rules, he did not kiss up in time. The commune leaders know very well that Mao Yingzeng and Mao Xiangbo are also as corrupt if not worse. Thus, the old feudal way of wielding power through favours, bribes, reciprocal status arrangements, etc. has been reinvigorated since 1983. Concomitant with the market system, corruption is a standard process by which leadership leads and maintains their power. Thus one gets dismissed or caught not because of "improper corruption" but actually because of not "buying your way out" (in Chinese, da-tong-guan-jie, meaning push through by money and gifts), or not going through the "normal" process of getting away with it. Then the government itself full of corruption grabbed him and used him as a scapegoat. He became the official counterrevolutionary within an already counterrevolutionary process.

In comparison, village leaders in the commune periods were constantly checked by the government through the means of party rectification, mass campaign, etc. I believe some of them were real honest people with a firm belief in justice. Nevertheless, village leaders had to be careful if they wanted to abuse their power due to structural constraint. And they were generally better than the current village leaders in the villagers' minds. Mao Jinyou, the old former village head, had his mother's body cremated when the government called on people to cremate rather than bury the deceased because of the decreasing arable land. When Lin Hongjian personally disliked

Zhao Zhuqing, and ordered not to give Zhao's mother a living allowance, Mao Jinyou said, his mother and your mother were both revolutionary martyr's families, how come your mother received while his mother should not? This plea was effective, and Lin Hongjian agreed.

The early mass campaigns were relatively effective. For example, the Three-Anti movement (sanfan) which started in the winter of 1951, was directed against "corruption, waste, and bureaucratism. "'Struggle meetings' were held throughout China in which offending cadres were attacked, and by mass demand removed from office" (Schurmann, Ideology, p. 318). Sanfan was not an attack against offending individuals. "This was the first eruption of the endemic Chinese communist fear that bureaucratization could mean a reversion to traditional bureaucracy" (Schurmann, p. 318).

However, as the country developed, official power was not checked by the people. The continuous mass campaigns did not solve the problem. The translation of party policies to rural areas was always problematic. Whenever there was a campaign, some cadres would somehow target scapegoats, while the majority of the villagers were not organized and did not know what to do. And in the end, both the masses and the cadres were tired of the mass campaigns for different reasons. Therefore, the mass campaign scared the cadres but did not root out the real problem. At the end of Mao's era, only a few officials dominated real power and villagers were kept at

from the commune working in Mao village for a year when the village decided to give that space to Mao Xuewen. Wang Dingcheng wrote a letter to Lin Zhanyou (the party secretary) confirming that the space was for Mao Xuewen. When Mao Xuewen handed the letter to Lin, Lin read it and threw it into the fire, saying Wang's words did not count.

Mao Xuewen went to see Lin Hongjian asking him why the brigade was not compensating him if no space was given to him, Lin said no reason; when asked why there was no reason, Lin answered that he did not need a reason.

When the court opened, Mao Xuewen asked the judge Cai Suiting to do a deep analysis. Cai said it was not necessary to do that, he believed whatever the village leaders said. Mao Xuewen said, then what was the use of court?

One day, Mao Xuewen heard that Mao Guozhi's husband told Mao Guozhi: "this is your fault. If it were not for his mother, how could we win the law suit?". Mao Guozhi's daughter married Mao Yushan's second son, who had a hard time finding a wife. Also, Mao Yushan and Lin Hongjian are connected by a marriage between Lin's son and Mao Yushan's daughter. No wonder the village leaders supported Mao Guozhi.

Mao Xuewen was a retired elementary school teacher, he appealed many times, the last time up to the central government, but the case was later sent back to the original court. He said he could not understand why the communists are not fair any more. Significantly he was diagnosed with

schizophrenia in 1986 from which he is now recovered. He said:

Now I have thought it through: communists are no longer communists any more, the masses no long believe them. If the same rules which had disciplined Liu Qingshan and Zhang Zishan had applied to today's communists, nine out of ten should have been killed...

Before we said Russia's today was our tomorrow, now it is still true: Russia's today is our tomorrow.

(2) Mao Youshan and Mao Shuzeng:

Mao Shuzeng had a dispute with his southern neighbour Mao Youshan for years (Mao Youshan's house adjoins Mao Shuzeng's house).

The cause is very trivial indeed. In 1974, Mao Youshan borrowed 70 jin of corn from Mao Shuzeng. In 1976, Mao Shuzeng finally asked him to return the corn, Mao Youshan said that he had already done so. Mao Shuzeng asked him when he did that and Mao Youshan said when the team distributed 40 jin of corn per person. However, according to the accounting record, the team did not distribute 40 jin of corn that year. Finally, through Mao Youshan, the village arbitrator, Mao Youshan returned the corn.

Since then, the two families have been in conflict. In June 1985, Mao Shuzeng's son Mao Zongliang was beaten up by Mao Youshan and his son when Mao Zongliang ran over some of the corn seedlings with a tractor.

In 1986, Mao Youshan ran over Mao Shuzeng's apple orchard and Mao Youshan was asked to compensate the damage

after village arbitration. After this, Mao Shuzeng and his daughter were beaten up again by Mao Youshan and his three sons, and Mao Youshan paid 30 yuan for medical expenses.

Finally on a rainy day on July 10, 1987, Mao Shuzeng was streamlining his ditch since grass and leaves blocked the ditch. Mao Youshan saw him and accused Mao Shuzeng of blocking his ditch. They fought again and Mao Shuzeng's forehead was hurt by a three pronged pitchfork and had a lot of bleeding. After a few minutes, Mao Shuzeng appeared to go insane and was later taken to the hospital.

After the medical examination, Mao Shuzeng was diagnosed as "seriously ill".

On that day, the village security director and township security chief confiscated Mao Youshan's pitchfork, and Mao Shuzeng's bloody hat. Mao Youshan's son Mao Guochen teaching at Shandong University was immediately called back to find ways of dealing with this.

Mao Shuzeng went to court directly to sue Mao Youshan. It seemed to the villagers that Mao Youshan should be punished. But Mao Yuoshan's second son Mao Guochen's higher status and connections in the township allowed him to manoeuvre the court into saying that there was not enough evidence because there was no witness, though the pitchfork and medical records etc. should have been enough to prosecute Mao Youshan.

During the investigation, Mao Youshan's wife claimed that she was beaten up by Mao Shuzeng, and in order to frame her, Mao Shuzeng hit his head on the wall on purpose.

Mao Shuzeng spent a lot of time on the lawsuit. When I interviewed him, he said he decided to give it up. He took out all the materials and records and asked me to keep them.

Among these records, I saw a letter from Laizhou County court which says: "Since you did not pay the lawsuit fee on time, ..., so your case is considered an automatic withdrawal". I quickly said, "You did not pay the fees". Mao Shuzeng said, "but nobody told me".

I have heard that Mao Shuzeng was quite thrifty with money, and he did not bribe anyone. I was not sure whether he had not paid the fees for the lawsuit. Mao Shuzeng explained:

If I win the case, Mao Youshan at most will pay me 1,000 kuai for compensation, but who can guarantee I will win the case? Even I spend 2,000 kuai, maybe it is not enough to pay people off, so I gave it up. Am I a fool or what?

(3) Mao Weiguo

Mao Xueqi has three sons and one daughter. Villagers ridiculed Mao Xueqi since he remarried just a few days after his ex-wife died. According to the villagers, Mao Xueqi's present wife told people that Mao Xueqi had a sexual relationship with his daughter Mao Weihua. This has been on-going gossip all the time.

Anyway, Mao Xueqi's second son Mao Weiguo works in Pinglindian, a nearby township. One day in a quarrel with his

wife, Mao Weiguo punched his wife. She fell down and died immediately.

It happened that the family of Mao Weiguo's wife is very tough. They put the body on ice and carried the corpse to Mao Village, five miles away from Peace Mile Inn. The corpse was put on the kang (bed) with water and blood flowing all over the place.

Somehow, Mao Xueqi had connections in the court. One of his relatives, on his ex-wife Shi Jun-e's side, works in the court. A medical examiner from the coroner was sent to inspect the body and the report said that the woman had a heart attack or something like this. The point is that the sudden death was not attributed to the obvious beating by Mao Weiguo.

(4) Lin Yamin and Zhang Kedong

In the train, I heard people saying that now with money people can buy a life, meaning that a murder can be paid off one way or another with money.

At home, I was told that Zhang Kedong, former village head and now party secretary of Zhang village, once went to the elementary school to retaliate upon a female teacher Lin Yamin of Mao Village. In the presence of the teachers and students (including Lin's teenage son), Zhang slapped Lin's face twice, and chased her with a broom handle in his hand,

and tried to run over Lin with his car. I myself was shocked and outraged since this was unimaginable before.

I went to see Lin one day through the introduction of a school teacher Lin Zhanlin. At the end of the interview, Lin was in tears.

Lin is twenty-nine years old, she was sent to Mao village elementary school when the village needed a teacher. She went there in December 1991 and taught Chinese. The class she was teaching became number one in the whole township after she took it over. Zhang's son was in another class of the same grade. Zhang Kedong then asked the principle Shi Mingbi (Zhang's former classmate) to move his son to Lin's class.

A few incidents occurred: Zhang's son Zhang Zhen did not do his home work; Zhang Zhen did things that students were not allowed to do; Zhang Zhen was dismissed as a group leader.

One day, Zhang Zhen said that his homework was left home when he was asked to hand it in. Lin knew he was lying. When she criticized him, her waving hand touched Zhang Zhen's nose and it was bleeding. Lin decided to visit Zhang Zhen's parents, first to tell his parents that Zhang Zhen did not do the homework, second she wanted to explain the bloody nose.

Zhang Kedong was not at home, his wife told Lin not to worry about the nose and said that sometimes Zhang Zhen's nose bled even when it was not touched, and confirmed that she would pay more attention to her son's studies.

On March 2, 1993, Zhang Zhen told his classmates that a female student, Pang Junling, married someone in the class. This was a form of ridiculing Pang Junling. Pang cried, and Lin decided to ask Zhang Zhen's father Zhang Kedong to come to school.

On March 5 in the afternoon, Zhang Zhen's mother came to school, she suggested to Shi to dismiss Zhang Zhen from school in order to scare Zhang Zhen. Shi agreed, but Lin did not. Zhang Zhen would lose his face in front of his classmates plus Lin would have to lecture him for those classes that Zhang Zhen did not attend.

Zhang Zhen did not come to school on Saturday, March 6 (there are still six working days a week in China). Monday, Zhang Kedong drove his son to school and did a lot of cursing at school.

On Saturday afternoon, March 9, Lin was going over assignments with students. Zhang Kedong came through the back door of the classroom, told Lin angrily: "Teacher Lin, sorry about this", and then he slapped Lin's face twice. Lin was shocked. Zhang Kedong continued, "I will beat you to death to retaliate for my son". Before Lin could escape, Zhang used a broom handle hitting her on the head. Lin rushed to the office, other teachers tried to stop Zhang, two teachers were hurt by Zhang Kedong.

Lin hid herself in the school store (run by the school to sell things to the students thus using the profits to

compensate teachers' low income). Zhang searched every classroom, and saying "I'll beat you to death, you the Model teacher. You and your husband Lu Guowen are incapable of putting me in prison. As long as you are not, I want to smash your eye balls".

People pushed Zhang into the car. When Lin came out, Zhang came back with the car saying, "I'll run you over you and will only cost me 30,000 kuai." Lin's colleague Shan pulled Lin, and the car almost ran over other teachers. Zhang jumped out of the car and chased Lin again.

Zhang's buddies including Shi the principal, two from the local court, and an assistant from the education office pushed him in his car (Five of them had a feast just before this).

Lin had tears in her eyes when she stopped at this point. She then continued:

Zhang was a party member in probation when this happened, and he was village head of Zhang village. After he beat me up, he was formally accepted by the party and promoted to be the village party secretary.

"What is the resolution of this?" I asked.

The township legal office claimed that it is not their business (remember two officers are wine and meat friends with Zhang). The township party committee first said they would resolve it, then they said they did not know what to do.

I reported to Laizhou city but the city thinks that this case is unprecedented. Later, vice mayor in charge of education came to see the township party secretary, and he visited me too. He thinks that the whole society is like this, there is nothing he can do.

The township education office asked Zhang to pay me 4,000 kuai, half for the medical expenses and the other half for the compensation of my work, and formally Zhang did a criticism in front of the teachers. Zhang said maybe what happened was true, but did not admit any wrongdoing. The township vice party secretary in charge of education said that I was partly responsible for this too.

The leaders from the city education bureau came to see me. They said that Education Bureau did not have any power and money to help this case. They asked me to forget it. And they rushed to resolve other cases. They told me that one teacher's eyes were hurt badly in County High School, a teacher in Yidao High School was also beaten up by a student's parent and buddies, a teacher Geng Jucheng from Dalang Elementary school was taken to the hospital after he was hit and he is deaf now.

I now teach at Lianguoji elementary school. There is no way to win the case.

"No," Lin Zhanlin who introduced me to Lin Yamin interrupted, "only if you can spend more money. I guarantee that will put him to prison."

Lin Yamin looked at me sadly, "but where can I find the money?"

From these four cases, we find that both the quantity and quality of intra-community conflicts have changed since the reform.

In the preform period, cadres had more effective means to resolve a conflict, the resolution was usually fairer than that of the postreform period, and villagers generally accepted the resolution. Conflict resolution led to relative satisfaction for parties involved.

In the postreform period, however, cadres are too busy making money through illegitimate means, and villagers do not

find them trustworthy, thus cadres have lost the legitimacy that they used to enjoy. Villagers do not bother to ask for help from cadres any more. In most cases, it is indeed true that cadres are more interested in their own interests than fairness. Therefore, nowadays, conflicts instead of being resolved generate more conflicts, and resolutions hardly lead to community harmony. As soon as public officials are in the world of money making, even their disinterestedness becomes suspect, and for good reason. In the past, in the resolution of a conflict, a good cadre would try to distance herself or himself if s/he was connected to the parties involved. Now, cadres openly try their best to benefit relatives.

C. THIEVERY:

When asked about thievery in the prereform period, villagers usually said that there was only petty thievery such as stealing cornstalks from a public field, and nothing serious. The village arbitrator, Mao Yushan, said:

There were no big cases before, people just stole a little bit of peanuts, wheat, corn, things like that. Now people usually steal money and expensive items, because they have grain and firewood at home.

Before the system was strict. For example, if the team did not distribute fresh peanuts but your family had fresh peanuts, then you must have stolen it from the public field, since peanuts were not allowed on the market.

In the prereform period, people received grain from the village. And people were not allowed to buy or sell grain on the market. After the harvest season, when villagers got

peanuts, they used to exchange them for peanut oil to be used for stir frying. Thus, people did not keep husked peanuts. However, Mao Mingshan's son, nicknamed Guaiguai, stole about 50 jin of peanuts which were found in his house.

The brigade cadres put peanuts into his two trousers and hung them around his neck, and forced him banging a drum to go around the village while chanting "I am Guai-guai, dang dang dang; I am a thief, dang dang dang; I stole peanuts, dang dang dang." That was almost the only example that almost every older villager would mention to me when I asked about thievery.*

In China, people always say "rabbits do not eat grass around their houses", an English version of "you should not shit where you eat", it therefore seems that they are not concerned about the thefts in their own village.

It is true that in big cities thievery is more rampant. When I was a teacher in Xiamen University three years ago, people were almost always talking about housebreaking. The Secretary in my Department complained that they lost three new bikes in a year. The reason that not much thievery happens between villagers is partly due to the fact that most villagers live in the village almost their whole life time. It would be a terrible disgrace to steal from a neighbour with

*Thievery was more difficult for me to investigate, since more recent cases are related to current experience and can not be told as a joke. Villagers consider thievery a serious loss of face too. whom you would live for many years.

However, that is not to say that villages are immune to thievery. Otherwise it would be hard to explain the expansion of apparatus of private security. Nowadays, people tend to lock their doors right away when they leave the houses, and most villagers raise dogs to guard the house. Before, people would leave their money in the drawers, now there are all kinds of ways to hide the money. The sense of insecurity is definitely a sign of increased community tension. There is more to steal, and more people are stealing.

I did manage to learn about a current thievery case. Mao Guozhi, a man in his thirties, once worked in the township welfare factory (the factory supposedly only hires handicapped people so that it gets a tax exemption. As a matter of fact, handicapped people are paid to show up at the factory only when people from higher authority come to inspect). After he quit the job, he opened the window of the factory's office with a metal stick one night, and stole 2,000 kuai. Unfortunately for him he lost his identification card on the spot, and was arrested the following day.

His family quickly found a villager who worked in the county seat to find some connection and pay this off. In the county prison, however, Mao Guozhi heard about the sentencing of a prisoner because of stealing bikes. He boasted to other prisoners: "you poor guys, I had no problem with stealing motorcycles, but you have problems with bikes".

Involved Niu Yuguang himself. Niu, Mao Brain, Mao Shuzai,

After he was released, the prisoner reported his claim to the police in order to get a pardon. Mao Guozhi thus was arrested again. He admitted that he stole a motorcycle from Zhang Xuelian of Zhang village (who rented Mao village's houses). Mao Guozhi admitted that he first got acquainted with Zhang Xuelian so that Zhang's dog would not bark at him. Then one night, he fed the dog poisoned food and stole Zhang's motorcycle. He also admitted that he stole another motorcycle in the county seat while his wife was watching for him.

Mao Guozhi was released again after he paid some money. I could not get the figure. People say that the police bureau has the right to levy a fine between 1 kuai to 50,000 kuai before they charge someone and turn the case over to the court. Within this range, they have tremendous flexibility, thus creating tremendous opportunities for receiving bribes.

As mentioned above, people now raise dogs for protection. In the past two years, people started raising dogs for selling. People are especially fond of a special species called "German black". An adult "German Black" is worth about 2,000 kuai. A friend of mine, Niu Yuguang who is mining gold in the mountains, told me casually one day that three of his puppy "German blacks" were stolen. I asked him whether he reported to the police and he said it is not worth it. He also claimed he knew who did it.

Later on, I learned of a dog stealing case which involved Niu Yuguang himself. Niu, Mao Ermin, Mao Shuzai,

Dazhu from West Qiu Village, and Lin Zhansheng stole Mao Shisong's "German black". After Dazhu was caught stealing trees, he was threatened by security people. They scared him by mentioning the dog case too.

Dazhu admitted he stole the dog with Ermin, so each of them was fined 300 kuai. Niu and Lin Zhansheng felt grateful to these two, so they privately shared the fine, and it ended up each of them paid 150 kuai.

Another case involves public trees. The village had planted many trees around and within the village in the prereform period. In the past few years, public trees had become the target of thievery. According to Mao Shibin, trees were mainly hewed by two groups of people: Zhao Desheng and Niu Yuguang. They need trees for their mines. Mao Shibin, of course, did not mention that his brother Mao Shijin (former team leader of group four) also stole trees for building his mother-in-law's house.

Niu Yuguang is a person who is not interested in pocket money, he only wants to make big bucks. He raised some money to mine gold in a mountain about five kilometres from the village. He hired people from other provinces to dig the mine.

At the beginning, he paid 240 kuai for one meter of depth they dug. Now he pays about 300 kuai, since the deeper the mine, the harder it is to dig. I went to see him and saw the mine which used a lot of wood.

I asked him whether he has some scientific evidence that there is gold beneath the mountain. He said that in an old book, his ancestors had mined gold here. And I asked him how he raised the money. He said he first had five shares at 5,000 kuai each. After he spent all the money he asked the shareholders to increase their investment. Those who did would keep their shares, those who did not would be out of their business without refund. However, he managed to attract other people to invest. He also admitted that some village cadres had their "power share" too for convenience.

I know what he meant. Since cadres have shares in his mine, whatever Niu does (like using village trees), the cadres will not give him any trouble. According to Mao Shibin, the trees that had been cut are worth at least 20-30 kuai each, but the village cadres charged these gold miners only 10 kuai for each tree. Mao Shibin said:

Whether those miners did pay 10 kuai each tree and how many trees they say they have cut, nobody knows. But one thing is clear for the cadres: they will benefit if those miners find gold.

Mao Shibin also told me that one of the four former "iron brothers" Lin Xuhua built his four room house using the public's trees.

The township security station did arrest two people who stole trees after someone "reported" (In Chinese, people use "gao", which means that usually a reporter is taking revenge).

Mao Shibin told me:

Ermin and West Qiu village's Dazhu stole trees and were reported. Since it was winter, there was frost on the ground. People from security station followed the wheel marks and came to Ermin's family. The cart was seized and fined one or two thousands kuai. But there are many people who are not caught.

He also said that small trees are not taken care of and are ruined by cows and sheep. He told me that the newspaper claims that trees are planted every year but there are no trees.

D. Gambling:

In the prereform period, villagers used to play poker during a break in the field, or during the Spring Festival, and stakes were only a few cents. This was more an entertainment than gambling and did not cause serious problems. Thus the cadres usually ignored it.

However, gambling is rampant now, people are all playing majiang now and it is non-seasonal. Mao Shijie, whose daughter Mao Lingzi is fighting with her husband Lin Yuede, told me:

Even government officials who come to our village to collect grain taxes gamble. When no villagers sell grain, they will lay out a piece of cloth and start gambling.

The village arbitrator Mao Yushan said:

Before, only some old men on special occasions played for a few cents for fun, now men and women, old and young, winter and summer, they do it anytime and anywhere.

I asked her why, and she said because of more money people have. Mao Shibin gave me a relatively complete answer. He said:

Before, the commune would organize all kinds of activities when villagers were not busy, such as basketball and a ping pang tournament, or a singing competition between villages. Now the township does not care about this, and neither does the village.

Before, when it was a holiday, people were organized to clean up the streets. The village was divided into different sanitary districts, and people were assigned to be responsible for their own district. When it snowed, we swept snow. When it rained, we dug the ditches.

Who cares about this now? Dead pigs and mice are thrown on the streets, garbage is thrown wherever it is easy to throw them. Pollution is terrible.

He reminded me about the lower western part of the village where vegetables roots and bad apples are floating on a dirty pool, while kids are playing around it.

He continued:

Now people's ethical level is too low, nobody cares. Mutual help is just between friends. Cadres are using and fighting with each other. People are too selfish, nobody yields. This is what is called 'people only shovel their own snow' (Zi-jib-zi-sao-men-qian-xue).

Before, all able-bodied villagers would work on village infrastructure, building wells and levelling land, and they did not pay too much attention to the payment. At that time, sacrifice was glorious. These days, without money people will not move. People are the same people, but the systems are different.

Mao Yushan also told me about a couple, Lin Yuede and Mao Lingzi, who are fighting all the time because Lin gambles. Lin works in a township factory and makes about 250 kuai a month. He loses money all the time, about 1,500 a year.

Mao Yushan said:

Once Lin Yuede beat up Lingzi. Lingzi took her seven year old child with her and wanted to commit suicide. It was raining heavily that day. She and the child jumped into the well, and fortunately they were saved by Mao Youchen. Mao Wenxiang and Wang Honghua joined Mao Youchen to save them.

"Is that resolved?" I asked.

No. I talked to Lin Yuede and did not convince him not to gamble. The other day, Lin Yuede gambled in Mao Zongzhi's house (rich peasant Mao Xuzeng's son). Lingzi went there and turned over their table. Lin came home and beat her up. You can see Lingzi's black eyes. Nowadays people are hard to manage.

If Deng Xiaoping had not had this reform, people's mind would not have been so hard to manage. And with the growth we had in the commune period, we would have had realized mechanization long time ago. And our life would not be like this.

I asked her whether it is more difficult to be a cadre now than before. She answered:

No, it is easier. As a cadre, you do nothing since you do not care. You try to make money when in power, and this is called competent, otherwise you are not qualified as a good cadre.

Some people die of hunger, and some die of stuffing (meaning a growing polarization among villagers). Older people who cannot move are finished. I watched a movie last night. Chairman Mao led the revolution and fought with Kuomintang, so many people died, why do those people (bad cadres) not watch it?

Oh, I heard the other day that the Kuomintang came to our township, and they want to buy our flour mill.

I learned that Mao Yongzheng, former rich peasant Mao Junmin's second son, is a gambler too. Yongzheng had an affair with a woman, and his wife quarrelled with this woman. Yongzheng always beat up his wife. One day, Mao Yongzheng's wife drank poison and died. The Government did not

investigate. Apparently Yongzheng paid a few thousands kuai to his wife's family, and had her corpse cremated.

Yongzheng's brother Mao Jizeng also often beats up his wife. He gambles with Mao Qiuping, the director of the village women's league. Villagers had it that Mao Qiuping wears a transparent skirt without underwear when she gambles. If she loses, she will use her body to pay it off. A few villagers told me that Mao Qiuping wears a pair of sunglasses in the market asking 100 kuai for one night.

These two villages were both considered good villages by Chinese authorities. This creates unnecessary difficulties for China scholars even before they start their fieldwork.

In this sense, I am fortunate to do my fieldwork in a village which I know firsthand. But this does not mean the fieldwork is easy for me to do. As a matter of fact, before I started my fieldwork in China, I was planning to interview about ten key informants, including the former and current party secretaries. I thought the interview would be relatively easy since I knew them quite well. The fact that they know I know quite a lot about the village makes it hard for them to fool me.

To my surprise, things did not go as planned. At the beginning the former party secretary was cooperative about the general situation in the village. But when I asked him about a specific event, he always tried to find an excuse not to

Chapter V: Conclusion

A. Problems of Method:

Doing fieldwork in China is no easy task. Until now, a foreign China researcher is allowed to travel only in certain approved areas and the length of stay is also limited.

The two most recent books documenting rural change are Stephen Endicott's Red Earth and Huang Shu-min's The Spiral Road. Endicott was given three villages to choose to carry on his field work, and Huang was assigned to only one village. These two villages were both considered good villages by Chinese authorities. This creates unnecessary difficulties for China scholars even before they start their fieldwork.

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To my surprise, things did not go as planned. At the beginning the former party secretary was cooperative about the general situation in the village. But when I asked him about a specific event, he always tried to find an excuse not to

talk about it. Some other informants would only give short answers when being asked.

Thus I changed my plan. I decided to chronicle all those pertinent events, and interview the villagers involved. In this way, I gathered extensive materials. I usually found the victim, learned the event, and then ask around to verify. Thus, the stories chronicled in this study are true to the best of my knowledge.

Is Mao village representative? This is hard to say. Since even if it is representative in the township, it might not represent all the villages in the province, let alone the whole country.

I interviewed Mr. Shan, the police head of Liang-Guo Township Security Station. He first cautioned me not to pursue this kind of topic, since it might bring trouble. Then he told me that the increase of crime in the reform period over the commune period is unbelievable. Regarding the representative nature of Mao village, he said Mao village is better than average in the township, for example, there is less thievery in Mao village than the others.

I also talked with a vice police chief Yesheng He in a nearby county. He reassured me of similar problems existing in his county. He denied that crime and social problems are the result of opening the door to the outside world which has been propagated by the official media. He argued that Mao did not simply close the door without good reasons. When

surrounded by the strong capitalists, how can you open the door to them while having wars such as Viet Nam War, Korean War with the U.S., perpetual confrontation with Taiwan, and border conflict with former U.S.S.R.?

I also had a chance to talk to a former mayor of Qingdao prefecture, Zhou Mou, who is a chairperson of the Chinese version of a senate. As to the general reform, he said that those good collectives probably should not have divided up the land. He jokingly said about the situation in China, "when the up level feels hot, the down level is already burned", meaning that when the central government realizes that there is a problem, the situation is already hopeless. As to the increasing crime wave, Mr. Mu admitted that "it is inevitable, because good things and bad things are coming together to China from the west". He did not think polarization is a problem, since "we still have the political power to tax the rich and give it to the poor". Obviously, so far the poor have not seen that happen.

As Mao village is in northern China, it would be helpful to introduce Shumin Huang's finding on a southern Chinese village. This should give us a better indication of the general situation across China.

Huang did his fieldwork in Lin village, Fujian province, China. He interviewed the party secretary and wrote the book titled The Spiral Road: Change in a Chinese village Through the Eyes of a Communist Party Leader (Westview Press,

1989). Under the title "More Village Crime", Huang listed theft, gambling and sex-related crimes narrated by the party secretary, are increasing at an incredible rate.

I believe that in terms of the social problems and crime Mao village is probably a fairly typical Chinese village. How typical will depend on more extensive research on this relatively untouched topic.

B. Summation:

The official Chinese explanation for the crime wave during the reform period is that the Chinese have been influenced by western bourgeois ideology and life style after China opened its door to the outside world. As Deng Xiaoping put it, when you opened the door, you have fresh air coming in, but you also will have flies coming in, it is just a matter of killing the flies.

I believe that the major problems in China are directly and indirectly caused by the reform, although there are other major problems which are the legacy of the commune system. No doubt, there were crime and social problems in communal China, and some of them were obstacle to the building of socialism. However, there were structural constraints which limited these problems. The communal mechanisms controlled both cadres and villagers reasonably well though we can disagree how inhumane or feudal that system was. The reform period definitely sees a quantum leap as far as crime and social problems are

concerned. We can also argue, as it is officially argued, that this is the price that China has to pay for the freedom they now have and for their future wellbeing. The fact of the matter is that rural China now appears to be in chaos; and the undermining of village solidarity through reform is the major reason for the chaos. for inflation, peasant incomes have

fallen The epidemic of corruption and the squeeze of fees are directly related to the reform policies. Because of the reform, collectively owned enterprises were taken over by a small group of people connected to power, while the majority have to face the future almost alone instead of relying on the enterprises built over thirty years of collective effort. As there is no mechanism to keep officials in check, those with power or connected to power are taking their chances to enrich themselves. In this transitional process, they have been transforming themselves from socialist bureaucrats to capitalist bureaucrats. And both public corruption and the squeeze of fees are inherent in the transitional process to privatization. As the majority of the Chinese are facing poverty, the reform is not leading the Chinese out of but in to poverty. could have achieved similar if not better results

than I have talked with many villagers, and asked the following question: if the land had not been divided up, would they have been better off? Although this is a hypothetical question, many of them answered "at least not worse". Since they have not seen much increase in terms of the overall

wealth, what they have experienced is the unfair redistribution of the wealth accumulated in the past thirty years by collective efforts. Indeed they have more money than before, but if the inflation factor is taken into account, they actually do not have more money than before. As quoted above, when adjusted for inflation, peasant incomes have fallen since mid-1980's (Wilhelm, 1994). I can not draw conclusions about urban China, but rural China relying as it does on agriculture, is in a serious condition.

The Chinese official media and some western reporters have used some coastal areas to praise the reform in China. It is true that the coastal areas benefitted from the considerable expansion of economic exchange, and between 1979 and 1991, foreign investment amounted to \$80 billion (People's Daily, 21 April, 1992). But when we consider the stagnation of the rest of the country, it is not hard to see that the booming in coastal areas is only part of the story.

For many villages like Mao village, the better way still lies in collective agriculture especially after thirty years preparation. Under a set of flexible economic policies, communes could have achieved similar if not better results than that under the reform policies. That way, villagers could enjoy prosperity together.

As a matter of fact, some villages which have not broken up are doing much better than other villages. Huang village in Liang-guo Township is an example. Huang village's

leaders just divided up the land on paper, but have maintained successful cooperative agriculture. Now villagers do not pay any fees except their electricity bill. School children from Huang village commute to school by a village bus free of charge.

The government has tried very hard to break up Huang village. During my stay in China, the Township party committee had just given up their efforts to dismiss the party secretary from Huang village. It is said that this party secretary has affairs with many women. When Township officials came to investigate, they were told by the villagers that "it is none of their business" and "the whole village supports him". Saying a cadre having an affair with someone in order to dismiss him or her is an old trick in China.

I was told that Huang village is not the most successful one though. Chin Yu village from Ping-lin-dian Township in Laizhou county and Xia-Ding Village from Huang County are far better cooperatives. But those villages which have not broken up can be counted on the fingers of one hand.

The Chinese government has claimed that the reform will make China a strong independent socialist country. The fact is that instead of having democratic socialism, Chinese are facing bureaucratic capitalism with feudal characteristics. As Eastern Europe and Russia are on the edge of economic and political collapse, it becomes increasingly clear that the most likely outcome for the Chinese is what DuRand predicts:

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