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THE STUDY OF CHINESE POLITICS: Toward a Third Generation of Scholarship

By HARRY HARDING

Lucian Pye, *The Dynamics of Chinese Politics*. Cambridge, Mass.: Oelgeschlager, Gunn & Hain, 1981, 307 pp.

Frederick C. Teiwes, *Politics and Purges in China*. White Plains, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, 1979, 730 pp.

I

THE study of contemporary Chinese politics in the United States has been suffering from a curious languor lately. At the end of 1982, it had been more than five years since the Joint Committee on Chinese Studies (formerly the Joint Committee on Contemporary China) of the Social Science Research Council and the American Council of Learned Societies—traditionally the chief sponsor of research on modern China—had held its last conference on Chinese politics. Few books that are widely regarded as setting new directions for research have been published in the last half-decade. What is even more surprising, relatively few articles on post-1949 Chinese politics have appeared in the major journals in the field, including the *Journal of Asian Studies*, *Modern China*, and even *The China Quarterly*.¹

The apparent exhaustion in the analysis of Chinese politics stands in stark contrast to the dramatic developments taking place inside China itself. The death of Mao Zedong, the purge of the “Gang of Four,” the inauguration of the Four Modernizations, the movement to “seek truth from facts,” the short-lived “Democracy Wall” and “Peking Spring,” Deng Xiaoping’s skillful demotion of Hua Guofeng, and the reevaluation of Mao Zedong—all these events have been just as dramatic and significant as the Cultural Revolution of the late 1960s, but they have not stimulated as much scholarly analysis.

¹ Determining which articles fall into this category is, of course, a somewhat arbitrary exercise. But if, as seems reasonable, we exclude review essays, research notes, and trip reports, and if we also exclude essays not written by political scientists, we obtain the following results for the last five years: in *Journal of Asian Studies*, two articles, or 0.1 per issue; in *Modern China*, ten articles (two of which actually constituted a single essay which had been divided into two parts for publication), or 0.5 per issue; and in *China Quarterly*, eighteen articles, or 0.9 per issue.

Why this intellectual malaise? One set of explanations is sociological and economic in nature. With shrinking job markets in the United States, particularly in area studies, graduate programs in Chinese politics are attracting fewer students; therefore, there are fewer doctoral dissertations and fresh research monographs. With tighter university budgets and the decline in foundation funding for Chinese studies, it is more difficult to obtain financial support for large research projects. The continuing lure of corporate consulting and government advising diverts some of the best scholars from academic research into activities that provide more money, status, and influence. All these elements create a situation in which less basic research is being conducted now than a decade ago, and (although this judgment may be more debatable) in which the research that *is* being done is of somewhat lower quality and lesser breadth than in the past.

But the causes of the current lethargy in study of Chinese politics are as much intellectual as they are sociological or economic. The basic thesis of this essay is that the study of Chinese politics is displaying all the symptoms of a transition between two generations of scholarship. The paradigms and concepts that informed the earlier generation have been challenged, but they have not yet been fully replaced. The data that provided the underpinnings of the earlier period have been exhaustively exploited, but new sources of information have not yet been systematically tapped to take their place.

Although the study of Chinese politics is in a state of intellectual depression, recovery may be just around the corner. A new generation of scholarship—the third since the early 1960s—is now beginning to appear in print. This new generation of research will be based on a significantly wider range of sources than its predecessors; it will include interviews and participant observation in China, provincial and ministerial publications, and perhaps archival information. In addition, the third generation may well be of a more comparative bent than the scholarship of the 1970s.

The two books under review here, Lucian Pye's study of factionalism and Frederick Teiwes's analysis of Party purges and rectification campaigns, are very much products of the current transition in the study of Chinese politics. Both works are firmly grounded in the generation of research that is now coming to a close. And yet both, in significant ways, move beyond that earlier period, identifying new directions for the field. In so doing, they provide some clues as to where the third generation of scholarship will be taking us.

II

Research on contemporary Chinese politics can be divided into two fairly distinct generations since its initiation in the early 1960s. The first encompasses most of the studies of Chinese politics produced in the 1960s, when the field was starting to grow, but was not yet in its period of most rapid expansion. The second includes the scholarship of the 1970s, during which the field was strongly influenced by the Cultural Revolution in China and the dramatic growth of area studies in the United States. These two generations—as well as the third that is just beginning to emerge—can be differentiated above all by the breadth of their research, their sources of information, their level of conceptualization, and their relationship to the broader field of comparative politics.

Because the first generation was small, it produced relatively few landmark studies. These include Lewis's *Leadership in Communist China*, Barnett's *Cadres, Bureaucracy, and Political Power in Communist China*, Townsend's *Participation in Communist China*, Schram's *Mao Tse-tung*, and, although not written by political scientists, Schurmann's *Ideology and Organization in Communist China*, Vogel's *Canton Under Communism*, and Skinner and Winckler's article on "compliance cycles" in rural China.² All of these pathbreaking works were published between 1963 and 1969.

These seven studies, and other important works of the first generation, share several features that distinguish them from the scholarship of the later period. One is their breadth of inquiry. In a single book, for example, Franz Schurmann found it possible to deal with the content of ideology, the structure of the Party, the operation of government, the control of the bureaucracy, the management of factories, the administration of cities, and the reorganization of the village—a combination that no scholar of China has attempted since. Ezra Vogel produced a comprehensive history of a Chinese province between 1949 and the eve of the Cultural Revolution, an undertaking that has been replicated only once in later work. And Doak Barnett provided a magisterial overview

² John Wilson Lewis, *Leadership in Communist China* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1963); A. Doak Barnett, *Cadres, Bureaucracy, and Political Power in Communist China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967); James R. Townsend, *Political Participation in Communist China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967); Stuart R. Schram, *Mao Tse-tung* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1966); Franz Schurmann, *Ideology and Organization in Communist China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966); Ezra Vogel, *Canton Under Communism: Programs and Politics in a Provincial Capital, 1949-1968* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969); and G. William Skinner and Edwin A. Winckler, "Compliance Succession in Rural Communist China: A Cyclical Theory," in Amitai Etzioni, ed., *A Sociological Reader on Complex Organizations* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1969), 410-38.

of the operation of the Chinese bureaucracy at every level, from the central ministries to the rural production brigades.

Even the somewhat narrower works took on ambitious topics. Stuart Schram's book on Mao, for example, was a comprehensive biography of China's principal leader. John Lewis's study of Chinese leadership techniques provided a fairly complete overview of the official doctrine of the Chinese Communist Party. And James Townsend's monograph on political participation examined the relationship between the ordinary Chinese citizen and the organizational network created by the Party. In other words, the studies of contemporary Chinese politics produced by first-generation scholars were wide-ranging in scope, sometimes awesomely so.

They were mainly works of description, most of which eschewed any attempt either to build grand theories of Chinese politics or to compare China with other Communist systems. In the preface to *Canton Under Communism*, for example, Ezra Vogel acknowledged that he was writing a "socio-political history" of Guangdong province, and would leave any analysis of the structure and operation of Chinese organizations, let alone any general theory of Chinese politics and society, to a projected (but uncompleted) second volume.³ Similarly, Franz Schurmann's *Ideology and Organization in Communist China*, while full of details about Chinese bureaucracy and society, contained no concluding chapter that might have woven the author's insights about ideology and organization in China into an overall model of the Chinese political system. Only Skinner and Winckler produced a true theory of Chinese politics: a highly abstract, stylized model of the cyclical oscillation between mobilization and consolidation, produced by the interaction between a relatively unified Party leadership committed to "big pushes" toward collectivization and a peasant mass that rapidly became alienated from utopian attempts to change the status quo.

The first generation did not produce much comparative analysis. To be sure, the roots of the Chinese Communist system were traced back to traditional China, the revolutionary period, the Soviet experience, or the Party's Marxist-Leninist heritage. But there was little systematic effort to compare the Chinese experience with that of the Soviet Union or with other developing countries or Communist regimes. Although there were one or two conference volumes on comparative communism—including those edited by Donald Treadgold and Chalmers Johnson—they took the form of juxtapository comparison, in which chapters

³ Vogel (fn. 2), viii.

on one aspect of China were placed next to chapters on comparable aspects of the Soviet Union or some other Communist country.⁴

Rather than placing China in comparative perspective or building general theories of Chinese politics, then, most of the work of the first generation was self-consciously descriptive, relying primarily on official Chinese sources. Because Chinese society was closed to most Western scholars at the time, and the flow of information from China to the outside world was carefully controlled by the Chinese government, the most important source of data was the official Chinese press, including central newspapers, news services, and theoretical journals. During the 1950s, additional information was available from the provincial press and ministerial publications. In the early 1960s, after the distribution of provincial newspapers outside China was halted, scholars began to rely increasingly on monitored provincial radio broadcasts. Although interviews with Chinese refugees played a role in first-generation scholarship—providing a major source of information both for Vogel's study of Guangdong and for Barnett's analysis of the Chinese bureaucracy—the main source of information about China was whatever Chinese officials chose to make available.

Because of their reliance on official sources, first-generation scholars tended to describe Chinese politics in the same terms as did the Chinese Communist leadership. Thus, John Lewis's book was a masterful glossary of Chinese leadership doctrine, providing explanations of such concepts as the mass line, the theory of contradictions, and the theory of practice. Both Schurmann and Barnett identified the basic principles of Chinese organization—including the distinction between "branch" and "committee" organization, Party penetration of the state bureaucracy, the use of campaigns to implement policy, and the combination of "redness" and "expertise." In addition, Schurmann explained the analytical categories used by Communist leaders to describe their socio-economic policy: the contradictions between industry and agriculture, the individual and the collective, production and accumulation, and so on. But for all their merits, these works were less an analysis of Chinese political practice than an exegesis of the formal doctrine of the Chinese Communist Party.

⁴ Donald W. Treadgold, ed., *Soviet and Chinese Communism: Similarities and Differences* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1967); Chalmers Johnson, ed., *Change in Communist Systems* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1970). Richard Lowenthal's article in the Johnson volume, which compared competing political tendencies in the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, and China, is a major exception to this generalization; see Lowenthal, "Development vs. Utopia in Communist Policy," *ibid.*, 33-116.

III

This first wave of studies of Chinese politics, then, produced bold, groundbreaking works, setting a standard for breadth and range that has rarely been duplicated. By the end of the 1960s, however, it came under increasing criticism for formalism, overgeneralization, and under-conceptualization. In retrospect, some of these criticisms appear a little exaggerated. Even so, they helped define the second generation of scholarship that began to emerge in the early 1970s.

One of the earliest charges made against the first generation was that its scholarship was disposed to formalism. Because of their reliance on official sources, the authors had been in a better position to describe Communist doctrine, policy, and organizational tables than to analyze the actual operation of the Party and the state. By extension, John Fairbank's remark, in his review of Franz Schurmann's *Ideology and Organization*, that the book is "less a record of what has happened in the Chinese revolution than of what the revolutionaries have tried to do,"⁵ holds true of all first-generation scholarship. In the same way, there was little understanding of the factional and policy divisions among China's leaders. Kremlinological techniques were applied to the purges of Gao Gang, Rao Shushi, and Peng Dehuai, but so little contemporary information was available about these incidents that the accounts could only be tentative and speculative.⁶ What is more, the small number of leadership purges led first-generation scholars to the conclusion that there was much more unity and consensus among China's leaders than actually existed.

Moreover, as Fairbank also noted in his review of Schurmann, first-generation scholars tended to write sweeping descriptions of all of China, without seeking to understand the variation between organization and organization, or between province and province.⁷ Even when their focus was on a particular organization or a particular province, they regarded their object of inquiry as a microcosm of China as a whole. Thus, Erza Vogel examined Canton as a way of learning, not how it differed from the rest of the country, but rather how its experience illustrated the

⁵ John K. Fairbank, "The State That Mao Built," *World Politics* 19 (July 1967), 664-77, at 669.

⁶ See, for example, Harold C. Hinton, *The "Unprincipled Dispute" Within the Chinese Communist Top Leadership*, LS-98-55 (Washington: U.S. Information Agency, July 1955); Schurmann (fn. 2), 498-517; and David A. Charles, "The Dismissal of Marshal Peng Teh-huai," in Roderick MacFarquhar, ed., *China Under Mao: Politics Takes Command* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1966), 20-33.

⁷ Fairbank (fn. 5).

broader political history of the People's Republic. And Doak Barnett studied "Ministry M" and "County X" not as unique entities, but rather as examples of all agencies of the Chinese government.

Although the criticisms were fully justified, the shortcomings were understandable. Without some comprehension of the whole, it would have been premature for first-generation scholars to study the parts in detail. Fairbank himself acknowledged that "to talk about 'China' as a holistic entity is the bane of China studies, yet it seems inescapable."⁸ By the late 1960s, however, when the first generation had completed its preliminary mapping of Chinese politics, second-generation scholars proceeded to disassemble the Chinese political process and examine its individual parts.

Not only was the earliest generation of scholarship found guilty of overgeneralization, it was also accused of underconceptualization. Its critics charged that students of Chinese politics examined China as a unique case and failed to apply more general concepts and models from the broader field of comparative politics. In reviewing the three-volume compendium, *China in Crisis* (edited by Ping-ti Ho and Tang Tsou, and published in 1968), Richard Wilson charged that the chapters making up the work were notable for their conceptual impoverishment, their ignorance of developments in the social science, and their stubborn adherence to a Sinological tradition. Taking the book as representative of the entire field, Wilson concluded that it was not only China, but also Chinese studies, that were "in crisis."⁹

Wilson's critique may have been appropriate for the Ho and Tsou compendium, but it was somewhat of an overstatement, even at the time, for the field as a whole. Of the seven works listed above as the landmarks of the first generation of scholarship on Chinese politics, several were noteworthy for their use of comparative concepts. Townsend applied the notion of political participation to the study of the relationship between elites and masses in China, and Skinner and Winckler applied ideas of compliance and power to the analysis of the same phenomenon. Schurmann's massive work was replete with references to sociological studies of organization and ideology. Still, first-generation scholarship was not noted for attempts at comparison or at the construction of general positive theory. Criticisms such as Wilson's did help to ensure that the next generation would be more self-consciously conceptual—if not, as we will see, necessarily truly comparative.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 664.

⁹ Wilson, "Chinese Studies in Crisis," *World Politics* 23 (January 1971), 295-317.

IV

The late 1960s and early 1970s saw not only a Cultural Revolution in China, but an intellectual revolution in American scholarship about China. In those years, China studies expanded rapidly, large numbers of younger scholars were trained, and a virtual explosion of dissertations, books, essays, and monographs ensued. The Red Guard movement provided a wealth of new information, revealing facets of Chinese politics that the official publications, and even most refugee accounts, had concealed. Most important, there was an unexpected and unprecedented phenomenon, the Cultural Revolution, that demanded explanation. Since the first generation of scholars had failed to predict the Cultural Revolution, and since their assumptions of leadership unity and institutional stability were cast into doubt by the events of the late 1960s, the time seemed ripe for a new approach. In response to these developments, a new wave of younger scholars began to produce a second generation of studies on the politics of the People's Republic.

Where the first generation had been based largely on the official press, supplemented by interviews with refugees, the second relied principally on Red Guard materials—a rich if somewhat untrustworthy body of documents that purported to give outside observers, for the first time, a behind-the-scenes look at all levels of the Chinese political system. Red Guard newspapers and periodicals offered the first evidence that policy was made at central work conferences rather than at formal Central Committee plenums. They provided intriguing fragments from classified speeches and reports, and extensive collections of previously unpublished writings by Mao Zedong. They contained the raw materials for histories of the evolution of socioeconomic programs across a wide range of policy areas. And they offered tantalizing glimpses of life among the Chinese elite: the factional connections between central and local leaders, the maneuvers for power and influence during the Cultural Revolution, and the relations between Mao and his lieutenants throughout the 1950s and early 1960s. All this new information made it possible to move the study of Chinese politics from the general to the specific, and from the formal to the informal.

It was, therefore, the second generation of American scholars that began to disaggregate China. If the scholarship of the first generation had been characterized by breadth, the scholarship of the second was notable for its depth—or, at least, for its specialization. Although some general histories of the People's Republic were published in the 1970s,

few of them were by Americans,¹⁰ and these were written by historians rather than by political scientists.¹¹ And though some general textbooks on Chinese politics also appeared in the 1970s, only one—James Townsend's—was of a level of sophistication that advanced the field.¹²

China was dissected for scholarly analysis along three separate dimensions. The most fruitful of these was the examination of different areas of public policy. Inspired largely by the Red Guard materials, many of which contained histories of “two-line struggle” in various sectors of the bureaucracy, American scholars wrote a series of historical descriptions and analyses of the most important areas of socioeconomic policy in China: education, public health, agricultural mechanization and development, industrial management, science and technology, bureaucratic management, the rustication of youth, and so forth.¹³ In the main, these were attempts to describe the evolution of policy over time and to learn whether there were enduring philosophical contradictions or organizational rivalries in the issue area under consideration.

A second dimension of disaggregation was geographic. The 1970s produced a plethora of studies of individual provinces and cities.¹⁴ To

¹⁰ The majority of general histories of the People's Republic were written by Europeans and Australians. See, for example, Jean Chesneaux, *China: The People's Republic, 1949-1976* (New York: Pantheon, 1979); Jacques Guillermez, *The Chinese Communist Party in Power, 1949-1976* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1976); Jürgen Domes, *The Internal Politics of China, 1949-1972* (London: C. Hurst, 1973); Bill Brugger, *China: Liberation and Transformation, 1942-1962* (London: Croom Helm, 1981); and Bill Brugger, *China: Radicalism to Revisionism, 1962-1979* (London: Croom Helm, 1981).

¹¹ Maurice Meisner, *Mao's China: A History of the People's Republic* (New York: Free Press, 1977); James P. Harrison, *The Long March to Power: A History of the Chinese Communist Party, 1921-72* (New York: Praeger, 1972); Richard C. Thornton, *China: The Struggle for Power, 1917-1972* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1973).

¹² James Townsend, *Politics in China* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1974).

¹³ On education: Robert I. Taylor, *Education and University Enrollment Policies in China, 1949-1971* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1973). On public health: David M. Lampton, *The Politics of Medicine in China: The Policy Process, 1949-1977* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1977). On agricultural mechanization and development: Steven Butler, *Agricultural Mechanization in China: The Administrative Impact* (New York: East Asian Institute, Columbia University, 1978); Benedict Stavis, *The Politics of Agricultural Mechanization in China* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1978). On industrial management: Stephen Andors, *China's Industrial Revolution: Politics, Planning, and Management, 1949 to the Present* (New York: Pantheon, 1977); Chong-wook Chung, *Maoism and Development: The Politics of Industrial Management in China* (Seoul: Seoul National University Press, 1980). On science and technology: Richard P. Suttmeier, *Research and Revolution: Science Policy and Societal Change in China* (Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books, 1974). On bureaucratic management: Harry Harding, *Organizing China: The Problem of Bureaucracy, 1949-1976* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1981). On the rustication of youth: Thomas P. Bernstein, *Up to the Mountains and Down to the Villages: The Transfer of Youth from Urban to Rural China* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977). On national minority policy: June Teufel Dreyer, *China's Forty Millions: Minority Nationalities and National Integration in the People's Republic of China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976).

¹⁴ Lynn T. White, III, *Careers in Shanghai* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978); Dorothy Solinger, *Regional Government and Political Integration in Southwest China, 1949-*

a degree, these were the successors to Ezra Vogel's classic analysis of Canton and Guangdong province. But, compared to Vogel, the scholars of the second generation were interested in their localities not so much as examples of general nationwide trends, but rather as clues to understanding the political variety that exists in a nation of one billion people. Nor did they have the scope of Vogel's pathbreaking effort. Only one of these studies—Donald McMillen's analysis of Xinjiang—is a comparable attempt to chronicle through a single locality the entire history of the People's Republic. In some cases, studies were limited to either a specific time period¹⁵ or a particular set of issues¹⁶ in the locality in question.

For the sake of detailed analysis, contemporary Chinese political history was also divided into smaller time periods. One type of analysis characteristic of the 1970s was the intense investigation of a particular piece of contemporary Chinese history. Some of these were comprehensive analyses of discrete periods. Examples include Roderick MacFarquhar's work on the middle 1950s, Byung-joon Ahn's analysis of the early 1960s, and Thomas Fingar's study of the early 1970s.¹⁷ Somewhat more narrow studies—focusing on one set of issues in a particular time period—include Vivienne Shue on agricultural policy during the middle 1950s, Richard Baum on rural organizations during the early 1960s, and Hong Yung Lee on the Red Guard movement of the late 1960s.¹⁸

In addition to moving their attention from the general to the specific, these scholars now shifted their focus from the formal to the informal. As we have seen, the first generation had examined formal structures and official doctrine in order to learn how the Chinese political system

1954: *A Case Study* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977); Kenneth G. Lieberthal, *Revolution and Tradition in Tientsin, 1949-1952* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1980); Donald McMillen, *Chinese Communist Power and Policy in Xinjiang, 1949-1977* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1979); Gordon Bennett, *Huadong: The Story of a Chinese People's Commune* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1978).

¹⁵ Both Solinger (fn. 14) and Lieberthal (fn. 14), for example, limited their studies to the early 1950s.

¹⁶ White (fn. 14) discussed the opportunities for personal mobility in Shanghai.

¹⁷ MacFarquhar, *The Origins of the Cultural Revolution, 1: Contradictions Among the People, 1956-1957* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1974); Ahn, *Chinese Politics and the Cultural Revolution* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1976); Fingar, "Domestic Policy and the Quest for Independence," in Thomas Fingar and the *Stanford Journal of International Studies*, eds., *China's Quest for Independence: Policy Evolution in the 1970s* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1980), 25-92.

¹⁸ Shue, *Peasant China in Transition: The Dynamics of Development Toward Socialism, 1949-1956* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980); Baum, *Prelude to Revolution: Mao, the Party, and the Peasant Question, 1962-66* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1975); and Lee, *The Politics of the Chinese Cultural Revolution: A Case Study* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978).

was supposed to operate. The second generation, relying on Red Guard materials and other sources from the Cultural Revolution, could now learn substantially more about the informal mechanisms and norms by which the Chinese political system worked in practice.

The exemplars of this genre include a series of studies of the central work conferences of the Chinese Communist Party.¹⁹ Previously, scholars had assumed that political power in China rested primarily in such formal organizations as the Central Committee, the Politburo, and the Party Secretariat. But materials from the Cultural Revolution suggested that, although these bodies were not unimportant, they were not the principal arenas in which major decisions were taken. Rather, policies were determined in a series of *ad hoc* central work conferences, which appeared in no constitution and on no formal organizational chart. A central work conference, attended by representatives of the central Party administration, the state bureaucracy, the military, and local Party committees, might either consider problems in a specific issue area, or establish guidelines for all major issues.

The materials that became available during the Cultural Revolution and during the struggle to succeed Mao Zedong in the mid-1970s also made it possible to analyze the flow of information within the Party and state bureaucracy. In particular, second-generation scholars produced pathbreaking studies of the process by which central Party documents (the so-called *zhong-fa* series) are commissioned by Party leaders, drafted by central Party staff, reviewed at central work conferences, and then circulated to lower levels of the Party and state bureaucracy.²⁰

Finally, the second generation showed a substantially greater interest in conceptualization than had its predecessors. As if in response to Richard Wilson's accusation that the first generation of China studies had been "theoretically impoverished," scholars in the 1970s applied a variety of concepts and methods from the social sciences to the study of contemporary Chinese politics. Richard Solomon and Lucian Pye took up the analysis of Chinese political culture; Victor Falkenheim drew from the comparative study of political participation to identify

¹⁹ Parris H. Chang, "Research Notes on the Changing Loci of Decision in the CCP," *China Quarterly*, No. 44 (October-December 1970), 169-94; Michel C. Oksenberg, "Policy Making Under Mao, 1949-68: An Overview," in John M. H. Lindbeck, ed., *China: Management of a Revolutionary Society* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1971), 79-115; Kenneth Lieberthal, *A Research Guide to Central Party and Government Meetings in China, 1949-1975* (White Plains, N.Y.: International Arts and Sciences Press, 1976).

²⁰ Michel C. Oksenberg, "Methods of Communication within the Chinese Bureaucracy," *China Quarterly*, No. 57 (January-March 1974), 1-39; Kenneth Lieberthal, *Central Documents and Politburo Politics in China*, Michigan Papers in Chinese Studies No. 33 (Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies, University of Michigan, 1978).

the methods by which individual Chinese sought to pursue their political interests; Byung-joon Ahn used theories of political development in his analysis of the Cultural Revolution; Andrew Nathan applied models of patron-client relationships to his study of Chinese factionalism; and the present author used organization theory to analyze the ways in which Chinese leaders sought to manage their bureaucracy.²¹

Similarly, a small number of scholars began to employ more sophisticated analytical techniques. Solomon used thematic apperception tests to study attitudes toward authority; Cell employed Guttman scales to study the effectiveness of mass campaigns; Hiniker utilized content analysis to study changes in doctrine; Ting and Wong developed aggregate elite data to examine the composition of Chinese leadership; and Lowell Dittmer applied semiotics to an analysis of the Cultural Revolution.²² More broadly, specialists on Chinese politics began writing in the language of social science: they developed “hypotheses” and “propositions,” applied “data” and “methods,” constructed “models,” and tested “variables.”

The second generation also passed beyond the mere accumulation of historical, ideological, and organizational data to construct more general models that could explain, or at least describe, the changes in policy and leadership between the establishment of the People’s Republic and the onset of the Cultural Revolution. The late 1960s and early 1970s produced, in fact, a proliferation of models of the Chinese political process.²³ Through these models, scholars attempted to identify the fundamental actors and forces in Chinese politics—and the shifting balances among them which resulted in changes in leadership, doctrine, and socio-economic programs.

One group of scholars argued that the principal actors in Chinese

²¹ Solomon, *Mao’s Revolution and the Chinese Political Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971); Pye, *The Spirit of Chinese Politics: A Psychocultural Study of the Authority Crisis in Political Development* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1968); Falkenheim, “Political Participation in China,” *Problems of Communism* 27 (May-June 1978), 18-32; Ahn, “The Cultural Revolution and China’s Search for Political Order,” *China Quarterly*, No. 58 (April-June 1974), 249-85; Nathan, “A Factionalism Model for CCP Politics,” *China Quarterly*, No. 53 (January-March 1973), 34-66; Harding (fn. 13).

²² Solomon (fn. 21); Charles Cell, *Revolution at Work: Mobilization Campaigns in China* (New York: Academic Press, 1977); Paul Hiniker, *Revolutionary Ideology and Chinese Reality: Dissonance Under Mao* (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage, 1977); William P. Y. Ting, “A Longitudinal Study of Chinese Military Factionalism, 1949-1973,” *Asian Survey* 15 (October 1975), 896-910; Paul Wong, *China’s Higher Leadership in the Socialist Transition* (New York: Free Press, 1976); Lowell Dittmer, *Liu Shao-chi’i and the Chinese Cultural Revolution: The Politics of Mass Criticism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974); also see Solinger (fn. 14).

²³ For a somewhat longer summary of each of the models, see John Bryan Starr, “From the 10th Party Congress to the Premiership of Hua Kuo-feng: The Significance of the Colour of the Cat,” *China Quarterly*, No. 67 (September 1976), 457-88.

politics were personal factions, constructed by individual leaders in their attempts to acquire and retain political power.²⁴ Another group suggested that Chinese politics could best be described as a continuing conflict among different “belief systems” or “opinion clusters,” which applied different values and priorities to the major issues of public policy.²⁵ A third set of models assumed that the Chinese political process was characterized by competition among various bureaucratic,²⁶ societal,²⁷ or geographic²⁸ interest groups, each of which sought to influence the distribution of scarce political and economic resources in accordance with its own interests. In a fourth approach, the main actors on the Chinese political stage were described as political generations which had passed through different formative experiences, and therefore had different outlooks on major policy issues.²⁹ Finally, there were the “Mao-in-command” models, which assumed that changes in socioeconomic policy, organizational structure, the composition of national leadership, and Party doctrine reflected the changing attitudes of a Party Chairman who remained very much in control of his country’s affairs—at least until the beginning of the Cultural Revolution.³⁰

V

The scholarship of the 1970s considerably advanced the understanding of China as well as the level of theoretical sophistication of the writings about China. Still, it was not without flaws. Indeed, the time has come

²⁴ Nathan (fn. 21); Tang Tsou, “Prolegomenon to the Study of Informal Groups in CCP Politics,” *China Quarterly*, No. 65 (January 1976), 98-114.

²⁵ Michel C. Oksenberg, *China: The Convulsive Society*, Headline Series No. 203 (New York: Foreign Policy Association, December 1970); Oksenberg and Steven Goldstein, “The Chinese Political Spectrum,” *Problems of Communism* 23 (March-April 1974), 1-13; Edwin A. Winckler, “Policy Oscillations in the People’s Republic of China: A Reply,” *China Quarterly*, No. 68 (December 1976), 734-50.

²⁶ William W. Whitson, “Organizational Perspectives and Decision-Making in the Chinese Communist High Command,” in Robert A. Scalapino, ed., *Elites in the People’s Republic of China* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1972), 381-415; Lampton (fn. 13).

²⁷ Michel C. Oksenberg, “Occupational Groups in Chinese Society and the Cultural Revolution,” in Oksenberg and others, *The Cultural Revolution: 1967 in Review*, Michigan Papers in Chinese Studies No. 2 (Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies, University of Michigan, 1968), 1-44; Alan P. L. Liu, *Political Culture and Group Conflict in Communist China* (Santa Barbara, Calif.: Clio Books, 1976); Peter Moody, *Opposition and Dissent in Contemporary China* (Stanford, Calif.: Hoover Institution Press, 1977).

²⁸ Frederick C. Teiwes, “Provincial Politics in China: Themes and Variations,” in Lindbeck (fn. 19), 116-89.

²⁹ William W. Whitson, “The Concept of Military Generation,” *Asian Survey* 8 (November 1968), 921-47; Michael Yahuda, “Political Generations in China,” *China Quarterly*, No. 80 (December 1979), 793-805.

³⁰ Frederick C. Teiwes, “Chinese Politics, 1949-1965: A Changing Mao,” *Current Scene* 12 (January 1974 and February 1974), 1-15 and 1-18.

to identify those shortcomings clearly, so that the emerging generation can remedy them.

A number of critics have argued that the concepts that the second generation (and, to a lesser degree, the first) borrowed from Western social science were seriously misused in their application to China. Some even suggested that the study of social science theory had come at the expense of a sufficiently deep immersion in Chinese language and culture.³¹ This accusation is valid—to a point. It is true that there is a tension between social science and area studies, that scholars who consider themselves to be social scientists are less likely to delve deeply into classical Sinology than those who do not, and that social scientists who study contemporary China may therefore miss some of the nuances of Chinese tradition and culture. Unfortunately, there has also been a tendency to apply to China concepts that originally emerged from the study of very different political systems, and that may therefore refer to structures and processes that have no counterpart in the People's Republic.

On balance, however, the charge that recent scholarship on China has relied excessively on concepts drawn from comparative politics falls far short of the mark. Indeed, it would be more accurate to suggest that the process of integrating China studies and comparative politics has not gone far enough. For one thing, the seeming sophistication with which concepts and techniques have been applied to the study of China has been more apparent than real. What are called "hypotheses" or "propositions" may actually not be statements that are to be rigorously tested, but simply impressionistic conclusions stated in a superficially "scientific" form.³² Complicated statistical methods have been applied to data that are so partial, biased, and unreliable that the results can only be considered highly suspect.

While they have borrowed ideas from comparative politics, China scholars have yet to make a significant contribution in return. Not much of the second-generation scholarship has been truly comparative. Virtually none has sought to test systematically propositions or hypotheses

³¹ Pi-chao Chen, "In Search of Chinese National Character via Child-Training," *World Politics* 25 (July 1973), 608-35; Frederick Mote, "China's Past in the Study of China Today—Some Comments on the Recent Work of Richard Solomon," *Journal of Asian Studies*, 32 (November 1972), 107-20; Tang Tsou, "Western Concepts and China's Historical Experience," *World Politics* 21 (July 1969), 655-91.

³² This is true of an earlier version of one of the works under review here: Pye's *The Dynamics of Factions and Consensus in Chinese Politics: A Model and Some Propositions*, R-2566-AF (Santa Monica: Rand Corporation, July 1980). The author showed good judgment in eliminating the propositional framework when revising his manuscript for final publication.

drawn from the rest of political science. Concepts from comparative politics have been used to understand China, but China has not yet been used to help expand our understanding of comparative politics.

This continuing isolation from the rest of comparative politics stems in part from the remaining Sinological bias in China studies: the belief that China's history, culture, and politics are so complicated that they can be understood only by those who have devoted their entire careers exclusively to their analysis. In part, too, it is due to the fact that, as a result of the Sino-Soviet dispute and the Cultural Revolution, China has appeared to be unique, and consequently not legitimately comparable with any other political system. As a result, second-generation scholars virtually abandoned the task of comparing China to other Communist systems, let alone to other developing societies.³³ China was believed to be a country that could only be understood in its own terms. In Michel Oksenberg's words, most second-generation scholars believed that "China is China is China."³⁴

A second criticism of the scholarship of the 1970s has been that it was too greatly affected by the materials of the Cultural Revolution. It is said that second-generation scholars took Red Guard "revelations" at face value, and used them in a naive and uncritical fashion to revise our understanding of the first seventeen years of Communist rule. They are also accused of following the Red Guards in interpreting contemporary Chinese history as a series of struggles between the "proletarian" and the "revisionist" lines. As Andrew Nathan has summarized this kind of criticism, "That this drama [of two-line struggle] may have been written by Chinese polemicists and merely translated and edited by western scholars . . . does not alter its fictional character."³⁵

This criticism could more appropriately be applied to the earlier studies in this generation than to later ones. It is true that, in their attempt to work through the mass of Red Guard revelations, specialists on Chinese politics did initially accept the Maoist version of contemporary Chinese history, even though they used more neutral terms, such as "transformation versus consolidation" and "revolution versus modernization," to describe the competing lines. Within a few years, how-

³³ Virtually the only exception was the collaborative work of Schapiro and Lewis comparing the roles of leaders in mobilizational systems: Leonard Schapiro and John W. Lewis, "The Roles of the Monolithic Party under the Totalitarian Leader," in John W. Lewis, ed., *Party Leadership and Revolutionary Power in China* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 114-45.

³⁴ Oksenberg, *A Bibliography of Secondary English Language Literature on Contemporary Chinese Politics* (New York: East Asian Institute, Columbia University, n.d.), iv.

³⁵ Nathan, "Policy Oscillation in the People's Republic of China: A Critique," *China Quarterly*, No. 68 (December 1976), 720-34, at 730.

ever, there appeared careful attempts to subject the Red Guard accounts to a more critical evaluation.³⁶ Moreover, although some scholars did agree with Maoist interpretations that the controversies over specific policy issues in China could be combined into a few competing political tendencies, they frequently came to argue that these tendencies were not necessarily two in number, that they were not necessarily diametrically opposed on every issue, and that leaders could readily shift position from issue to issue or from year to year.³⁷

A related and more justifiable criticism is that Western scholars took over the political standpoint of the Maoists as well as their data and their models of Chinese politics. That is, much second-generation scholarship on China was characterized by an idealism about the Cultural Revolution that occasionally verged on apology.³⁸ The prevailing interpretation was that Mao Zedong was engaged in a praiseworthy struggle to preserve equality, commitment, and organizational responsiveness in China, as well as to combat elitism, alienation, and bureaucracy, and that these ends justified whatever means Mao used to pursue them. Despite contemporary evidence to the contrary, there was little willingness to entertain the notions that Mao's diagnosis of the situation in the mid-1960s was exaggerated, that the means he chose (intensification of class struggle, mobilization of Red Guards) would lead to an unjust persecution of intellectuals and officials without achieving the intended goals, or that the costs of the movement far outweighed any gains.

Finally, the competing models of the Chinese political process, though representing an important preliminary effort to provide a general analysis of national policy making in China, nonetheless gave the field a bit too much analytical diversity. Some scholars employed several different models in the course of their research without explaining why they felt it necessary or desirable to do so.³⁹ Almost no effort was made to define the models precisely, let alone to establish their relative explanatory and predictive power. As a result, as we will see below, the emerging third generation of scholarship appears to be taking on the assignment of weighing the relative merits of these competing theories and models, and developing some synthesis among them.

³⁶ Dittmer (fn. 22).

³⁷ Oksenberg and Goldstein (fn. 25).

³⁸ This paragraph is based on the more detailed argument found in Harry Harding, "Reappraising the Cultural Revolution," *Wilson Quarterly* 4 (Autumn 1980), 132-41.

³⁹ William Whitson's monumental study of the Chinese military, *The Chinese High Command: A History of Communist Military Politics, 1927-71* (New York: Praeger, 1973), employs, variously, factional analysis, generational analysis, tendency analysis, and bureaucratic analysis.

VI

The study of contemporary Chinese politics is at present in a period of transition to a third generation of scholarship. The two books under review reflect the changes that are taking place.

In a number of ways, both are firmly grounded in the second generation of scholarship. Like most of the studies of Chinese politics that were written in the 1970s, they rely primarily on the revelations about the victims of political purges that have appeared in both the official and unofficial Chinese press. Teiwes's book, which deals with the period from 1949 to 1965, is based largely on materials published during the Cultural Revolution; Pye's work, which focuses mainly on the 1970s, draws upon the criticisms of the "Gang of Four" that were published after their purge in 1976. To illustrate the conclusions, Pye relies substantially—and Teiwes occasionally—on interviews with refugees.

Like much second-generation scholarship, too, neither Pye nor Teiwes draws heavily on, or seeks to contribute to, the general corpus of literature in comparative politics. In his discussion of factionalism in China, Pye cites theoretical work on patron-client relations by such scholars as James Scott and Samuel Popkin, but he does so only to deny its applicability to the study of China. And though Teiwes, in his work on rectification and purges, is concerned with such broad issues as the control of a bureaucracy and the circulation of political elites, he makes little effort to draw on the comparative or conceptual literature available. Both Pye and Teiwes, in short, seem to regard China as a unique case, the study of which has no bearing on our understanding of any broader comparative questions.

Above all, both works reflect the orientation of second-generation scholarship in their attempts to describe the informal operation of Chinese politics at the national level. In *The Dynamics of Chinese Politics*, Pye argues that Chinese politics is essentially factional, formed of groups whose main purpose is less the adoption of policy than the search for power and who are bound together less by common opinions than by personal loyalty to the same set of leaders. Factional politics, Pye maintains, reflects the deep-seated Chinese need for protection and security in a world that is traditionally viewed as highly dangerous and competitive.

Pye also suggests that factionalism helps to explain some of the style and tone of politics in China. Chinese political culture does not encourage the open expression of divergent opinions; it favors conformity and consensus instead. As a result, each competing faction must claim to

represent the interests of the entire community, and must accuse its opponents of threatening the unity and harmony of the social fabric. Factional politics is, accordingly, highly rhetorical politics; and Pye argues that factionalism in China has helped to create a situation in which the careful consideration of detailed policy programs is replaced by the adoption of hyperbolic slogans, followed by "compulsive initiatives," followed in turn by "paralysis" (p. 180).

In similar fashion, Teiwes submits to careful scrutiny the official organizational norms concerning decision making and discipline—the norms that played so important a role in the formalistic scholarship of the first generation. He concludes that, between the creation of the People's Republic and the onset of the Cultural Revolution, there was a gradual erosion in the Party's standards. In the first eight years of the PRC's existence, national policy making was characterized, as Party norms required, by collective leadership, minority rights, and a low rate of purge of high-level officials; rectification involved the use of persuasive methods, leniency for errant cadres, and tight control over mass participation in rectification campaigns.

Between 1957 and 1965, however, these norms came under mounting stress. In Beijing, Mao's increasingly "arbitrary and despotic" behavior (p. 616) led to the collapse of collective leadership, the infringement of the rights of dissenting minorities within the leadership, and the identification of policy-making officials as the targets of purges. Elsewhere, rectification campaigns became ever more coercive as restraints on mass participation were loosened and lower-level cadres were blamed for carrying out the policy directives of higher-level leaders now under attack.

In many ways, then—in their reliance on the revelations of the Cultural Revolution decade, in their desire to reach behind the formal surface of Chinese politics to discover the informal political mechanisms by which leaders rise and fall and decisions are made, and in their general disregard for the concepts and theories of comparative politics—Pye and Teiwes are very much representative of second-generation scholarship on contemporary Chinese politics. In other ways, however, both authors hint at some new directions that should be of increasing importance in the study of China in the 1980s. In so doing, they demonstrate that senior specialists can play a leading role in identifying fresh approaches for a field of study. Lucian Pye, after all, began his career as one of the leaders of the first generation, and Frederick Teiwes is one of the best of the large number of second-generation scholars trained in the United States during the mid- and late 1960s.

In what new directions are Pye and Teiwes leading the field? Both of their new volumes are wide-ranging and ambitious—much more reminiscent of the breadth of the 1960s than of the narrower focus of second-generation scholarship. Pye's purpose is no less than to provide, as the title of his book indicates, a general theory of the "dynamics of Chinese politics." And Teiwes's book is a study of every principal Party rectification campaign between 1949 and 1965, and of the purge of every major Party leader. Because rectification and purge lie at the heart of Party politics in China, Teiwes has, in effect, written the most detailed and well-documented history yet published of elite politics in the People's Republic.

Second, both volumes represent important first efforts to provide some systematic comparison, testing, and synthesis of the competing models of Chinese politics that were developed in the 1970s. The authors have approached this task in very different ways. Pye rejects every model except factionalism as an inadequate description and explanation of contemporary Chinese politics. Teiwes, in contrast, suggests that all of the models have some validity, but that their relative applicability depends very much on the particular period of contemporary Chinese history under consideration.

In *The Dynamics of Chinese Politics*, Pye tests several of the competing models—bureaucratic politics, geographic politics, generational politics, tendency analysis, and factional politics—against the events of the late 1970s, and finds all but factionalism to be wanting. Bureaucratic cleavages, he concludes, are not a major feature of Chinese politics, since bureaucracies have not been sufficiently institutionalized to have stable organizational interests. What is more, the expression of organizational interests by the heads of bureaucratic agencies, or the articulation of regional interests by provincial and municipal leaders, is actively discouraged by the emphasis that both traditional political culture and contemporary Party norms place on consensus and selflessness. Pye believes that Chinese political culture is more tolerant of generational differences, but the utility of generational models is vitiated by the fact that members of the same generation often hold widely divergent views on major policy issues. And Pye suggests that the apparent debates over socioeconomic programs, so central to Western tendency analysis, do not really reflect genuine differences over policy within the Chinese elite, but rather serve merely as mechanisms by which competing leaders "test loyalties and force people to choose sides" (p. 162). Pye's conclusion, in short, is that Chinese politics is essentially factional, reflecting the "primacy of power" over policy preference and group interest in Chinese political culture.

Frederick Teiwes's theoretical synthesis is only implicit in *Politics and Purges in China*. It is presented more explicitly in a review article he published in 1979 in *Problems of Communism*⁴⁰—an article that, in fact, would have been a more stimulating conclusion for the book than the actual final chapter. In contrast to Pye, who sees Chinese politics as reflecting enduring themes in Chinese political culture, Teiwes presents a picture of a changing China for which different models are necessary in order to understand the transformations of national politics over time. Thus, according to Teiwes, models of bureaucratic and geographic politics are more appropriate to periods of relative political stability and leadership unity, such as the mid-1950s. Tendency models—which identify fundamentally different approaches to socioeconomic policy—work best in periods of policy debate such as the early 1960s. Factional models and analyses of societal interest groups are needed to explain the workings of politics during periods of intense struggle and upheaval, such as the Cultural Revolution and the early 1970s. Teiwes presents a dynamic model in which changes in the intensity of conflict and the degree of political institutionalization help determine which political cleavages will be most salient.

Pye's analysis is persuasive for the period he has analyzed, and provides some characteristically breathtaking insights into Chinese political culture. But Teiwes's more mundane approach is actually more successful as a general model of Chinese politics. Pye's evidence and examples are nearly all drawn from the mid- to late 1970s—a period of intense conflict when one would expect the rise of factions to provide leaders with political support and security. It is not clear whether Pye's factional model would be equally appropriate to periods of relative political stability. Indeed, in describing the more institutionalized situation that has emerged in China after the death of Mao and the purge of the Gang of Four, Pye begins to slip into the kind of bureaucratic analysis that he has denigrated elsewhere: he lists the "military," the "rural cadres," the "educational establishment," "propaganda cadres," and "economic planners" as bureaucratic interest groups that might "affect factional strife" (pp. 29ff.).

VII

If, as Pye and Teiwes suggest, the study of Chinese politics is indeed on the verge of a third generation, it is time to identify the directions that this new wave of scholarship should follow.

⁴⁰ Teiwes, " 'Rules of the Game' in Chinese Politics," *Problems of Communism* 28 (September-December 1979), 67-76.

To begin with, the third generation has an *explanandum* that is fully comparable in drama and significance to the Cultural Revolution. The reforms proposed by Deng Xiaoping in the late 1970s—including the liberalization of intellectual and cultural life, the restructuring of the economy, the democratization and legalization of the political system, and the rejuvenation of the Chinese bureaucracy—constitute a program for social, economic, and political change that is at least as sweeping as that proposed by the Maoists during the Cultural Revolution. The analysis of the content of these reforms, the sources of their support, their modification in the face of political opposition, the pattern of their implementation across the country, their ability to improve the economic and political performance of the Chinese system—the analysis of these and related issues will be a major task of the scholarship of the third generation.

Second, the new generation can utilize sources of information that have not been available in the past. These include the opportunities for field work and archival research, the greater range and variety of official publications now obtainable from China, and the official revelations in connection with the purge of the Gang of Four and the reassessment of Mao Zedong. These sources of information should provide much greater insight into the details of Chinese politics, both past and present. It will now be possible to observe the Chinese political process directly, to conduct interviews with Chinese officials and ordinary citizens, to gain a better understanding of the operation of particular bureaucracies, to delve more deeply into the problems that China faces in particular policy areas, and to use historical data to improve our knowledge of both traditional and revolutionary China. The third generation, in other words, should be able to produce further in-depth studies of localities, institutions, individuals, and policies, continuing the process by which China was disaggregated by the second generation.⁴¹ To do so effectively will require the compilation of better bibliographic guides to the new books, periodicals, encyclopedias, and compendia now being published in China, as well as the development of research guides to the archival materials now open to foreign scholars.

⁴¹ Examples of recent works based on field research in China include Tang Tsou, Marc Blecher, and Mitch Meisner, "Organization, Growth and Equality in Xiyang County: A Survey of Fourteen Brigades in Seven Communes," Part I, *Modern China* 5 (January 1979), 3-40; Part II, *Modern China* 5 (April 1979), 139-86; and Suzanne Pepper, "China's Universities: New Experiments in Socialist Democracy and Administrative Reform—a Research Report," *Modern China* 8 (April 1982), 147-204. The kind of information that can be obtained from interviews with Chinese officials is evident in Michel Oksenberg, "Economic Policy-Making in China: Summer 1981," *China Quarterly*, No. 90 (June 1982), 165-94.

Third, the emerging generation of scholars should continue the task of intellectual synthesis and generalization begun by Pye and Teiwes. This will entail synthesizing the insight and detail of the specialized scholarship of the 1970s into broad overviews of the political and institutional history of modern China, much as is being done by the contributors to the post-1949 volumes of the *Cambridge History of China* under the editorship of John Fairbank and Roderick MacFarquhar. It will also involve, along the lines identified by Teiwes and Pye, a continued sorting, testing, and amalgamation of the competing models of Chinese politics that were produced in such profusion by the second generation.

Fourth, the new generation should see to it that the study of Chinese politics will gradually become better integrated with the rest of comparative politics. Chinese exceptionalism—one of the factors that inhibited the comparative study of China in the second generation—has largely disappeared. Indeed, developments since the death of Mao have virtually compelled comparisons of reforms in China with similar efforts in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, while China's attempt to tap foreign technology and capital can be examined in light of such undertakings by other Asian nations. In addition, the declining fortunes of area studies within political science have been balanced by a greater demand for scholars whose work is truly comparative. It is a welcome development, therefore, that the SSRC conferences on Chinese politics scheduled for the summers of 1983 and 1984 will study the post-Mao reforms: first, by applying hypotheses derived from the literature on policy implementation in the Third World and the West, and second, by comparing those reforms with similar efforts in the Soviet bloc.

Finally, the new generation should study Chinese politics in an interdisciplinary manner. The Chinese themselves have now repudiated the Maoist slogan, "politics takes command." In so doing, they are implicitly acknowledging that the requirements of their economy and the demands of Chinese society now have an increasing effect on the Chinese political system. This means that the study of Chinese politics, in turn, must increasingly become the study of China's political economy and political sociology. Third-generation scholars will need to devote greater attention to the emergence of social differentiation and economic cleavages in rural and urban China and their effects on Chinese politics, as well as to the way in which the technical problems of economic modernization and economic reform constrain political choice.

In pursuing these goals, it will be necessary to be on guard against some intellectual pitfalls that are already becoming apparent. To begin

with, while the idealistic and utopian interpretations of much of the 1970s should be avoided, they should not be replaced with an equally emotional and one-sided cynicism.⁴² Despite its considerable virtues, Lucian Pye's book seems to suggest that debates over policy in China rarely reflect sincere differences of opinion over socioeconomic problems, but are simply mechanisms by which competing leadership factions can mobilize and measure support from below. To Pye, the Chinese policy process is little more than the manipulation of rhetoric in the service of personal power. Although it may well be true that Chinese leaders are not the selfless "statesmen" they were frequently portrayed to be during the Cultural Revolution, it is as great an exaggeration to describe them as selfish "conservers" and "climbers," interested solely in the preservation and maximization of their own status and power.⁴³

In addition, there is a need to avoid the pseudo-sophistication that was characteristic of much second-generation scholarship: the use of concepts from comparative politics without a thorough grounding in their meaning and without a careful consideration of their applicability to China. The new generation must understand the limits of the available information about China, and be sure not to imply, through the application of complex statistical techniques, that the data are more reliable than is actually the case.

While seizing the opportunity to use the new sources of information about China, scholars also need to understand their bias. Much of this information will be drawn from what the Chinese leaders choose to reveal about their political history since 1949. The revelations thus far—notably the reassessment of Mao Zedong, the criticism of the Gang of Four, and the memoirs and speeches of veteran Party leaders—suggest the possibility of a significant reinterpretation of the entire period from 1959 through 1976, particularly the origins of the Cultural Revolution and the struggle for power by the Gang of Four. The danger, however, is that the new revised version of official Chinese history may be uncritically accepted, translated into English, and presented as independent scholarship—much as the Red Guard materials were initially treated fifteen years ago. No matter how plausible the revelations seem to be, their validity must be checked against contemporary evidence. In other words, the same critical standards must be applied to the Dengist critique

⁴² For a fuller development of this point, see Harry Harding, "From China with Disdain: New Trends in the Study of China," *Asian Survey* 22 (October 1982), 934-58.

⁴³ This typology of leaders is drawn from Anthony Downs, *Inside Bureaucracy* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1967), chap. IX.

of Maoism that Lowell Dittmer applied to the Maoist critique of Liuism in his biography of Liu Shaoqi.⁴⁴

Another source of bias lies in the nature of the sources available to foreign scholars. Because opportunities for fieldwork will continue to be limited, political scientists will be driven into narrow studies of local political processes, at the expense of broad-gauged studies of national level politics. Since it is only historical records that are open to foreigners, archival research may improve our understanding of the past at the expense of our knowledge of the present. And, as the new journals are generally technical in nature, they may say more about the implementation of particular programs than about the formulation of broad national policy. In short, the new sources may encourage scholars to know more and more about less and less. Reliance upon them may lead to neglect of the broader and more sensitive questions of national policy that cannot be studied so readily in China, and may retard the development of stimulating and provocative generalizations that provide intellectual life to the field.

Perhaps the greatest challenge, however, is rooted not in China but in the United States. The development of a third generation of scholarship on Chinese politics will not be fueled by a rapid expansion in the size of the field, as was the case with the second generation. At best, the size of the China-studies community will remain relatively constant; at worst, the growing skepticism about the value of area studies to political science may mean that senior scholars will not be replaced on their retirement, and that the field will actually shrink. The fact that scholarly productivity is often inversely related to age and rank—that many scholars produce little of note beyond their dissertation or their first book—does not bode well. If the study of Chinese politics is to remain as lively as it deserves, ways will have to be found of sustaining the vitality and productivity of established scholars, as well as of maintaining a steady if limited flow of younger specialists into the field.

⁴⁴ Dittmer (fn. 22).