Political Power and Authority in Recent Chinese Literature*

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Introduction

One of the major changes in Chinese Government policy since the death of Mao Zedong has been the new emphasis on the need for stability and regularity in everyday life, to be achieved by the systematic codification of laws and the strengthening of institutions for administering them.[1] Since 1978 much legislation has been enacted with this end in mind, but the significance of this legislation is not self-evident. What the new laws minimally represent is a set of rules promulgated by the government which purport to govern social relationships in specified areas. Whatever else they might mean – that is, what social effects will follow from the declaration of particular rules – needs to be understood through a study of the individuals and institutions that will have to deal with these rules. Fundamentally, this is a matter of asking whether and why violations of "the law" should matter, and who has the power to find a violation and to remedy it.[2]

This article attempts to survey some basic features of the Chinese legal landscape – understanding the term "legal" in the broadest sense. This requires looking at relations of authority in China today and the operative principles of legitimacy, with a particular focus on ordinary citizens and the petty officials, usually Party members, immediately above them. One way of doing this is to examine a large sampling of recent literature, seeing what patterns can be found and what assumptions the writer seems to expect the reader to share. The relative loosening of controls on literature since 1979[3] has made it a richer source than before for the study of Chinese attitudes and values, not only in politics but in other areas of life as well. For as Whitehead remarks, "[i]t is in literature that the concrete outlook of humanity receives its expression."[4]

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1. For a general survey of developments in this area, see Stanley Lubman, "Emerging functions of formal legal institutions in China's modernization," *China Law Reporter*, Vol. II, No. 4 (autumn 1983), pp. 195–266.

2. It would be impossible, for example, to understand the social significance of the words "due process" as used in the fifth and 14th amendments to the United States constitution without knowing who decides what process is "due," how the decision is reached, and what the paradigmatic sets of circumstances are under which deprivations have historically been found – to say nothing of knowing why it has ever mattered.

3. W. J. F. Jenner writes that the Third Plenum of the 11th Central Committee and the preceding preparatory conference in which the Beijing Municipal Party Committee reversed its verdict on the Tiananmen Incident "gave a licence to virtually all the literary developments, both official and unofficial, that followed." See his "1979: A new start for literature in China?", *The China Quarterly*, No. 86 (June 1981), p. 278.

4. Alfred North Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1938), p. 5.

Status

Organs of state power and their local representatives play a very large role in deciding what Chinese citizens may or may not do. This power extends far beyond decisions in criminal cases or civil disputes which fall under the provisions of law or even Party policy.[5] To understand how and in what circumstances various organs can exercise power, it is necessary first to understand how the citizen stands before these organs.

The question of status is essentially one of asking: What aspects of an individual's background are pertinent to his identity in a particular situation? When the law is applied to social facts, how are those social facts characterized? For example, *Minzhu yu fazhi* (*Democracy and the Legal System*) reports the case of an old man severely beaten by his daughter-in-law. But in this case there is no suggestion that the law against beating "persons" should apply. The community might equally well have seen the victim as an "old person," "male," or perhaps "peasant." In fact, people saw the familial relationship as key, and defined the victim as a "father-in-law." The woman responds to criticism by saying that "giving my old father-in-law a little cut on the head doesn't break any law (*fanbuliao guofa*)." To the cadre in charge, she has indeed broken the law, but it is the Marriage Law he is thinking of, which stipulates that sons and daughters have a duty to "provide for" (*shanyang*) their parents.[6] If the old man had been beaten in the streets by hoodlums, the authorities would probably have considered it a case of criminal violence pure and simple, but the existence of a family relationship between the victim and the accused changed the set of applicable norms.

There are other kinds of status which will apply more consistently. Persons of bad class background have long suffered under disabilities quite unconnected with anything they personally may have done (the suspect categories have widened or narrowed with the times), and it seems that this kind of status differentiation has by no means disappeared. "Hao Daren settles a case"[7] is the story of Wang, an amnestied ("uncapped") historical counter-revolutionary (*zhaimao lishi fangeming*) whose house is claimed by Zhang Da'an, a poor peasant, in spite of Wang's holding the deeds. Zhang quotes Mao to the effect that whoever opposes the poor peasants opposes the revolution,[8] and when Hao, the brigade mediator, reminds him that "nowadays we stress that everyone is equal before the law," Zhang retorts, "Equal? You're speaking up for a counter-revolutionary." Eventually Hao awards the house to Zhang.

The poor peasant and the worker have about the highest status that is directly connected to birth. A more interesting status is that which accrues

5. In one story which takes place in 1980, for example, young peasants are forbidden by the production brigade leader to sing local songs on the grounds that it will make them "lascivious" and "greatly interfere with planned parenthood work." Gu Hua, "Sizhuyuan genü" ("Songstresses of the bamboo garden"), in Gu Hua, *Gu Hua duanpian xiaoshuo ji* (*Collected Short Stories of Gu Hua*) (Changsha: Hunan renmin chubanshe, 1982), p. 298.

6. *Minzhu yu fazhi* (*Democracy and the Legal System*), No. 6 (June 1983), p. 41.

7. Qian Jide, "Hao Daren duanan" ("Hao Daren settles a case"), *Xi hu* (*West Lake*), No. 10 (October 1981), pp. 20–25.

8. See Mao Zedong, *Selected Works*, Vol. I (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1975), p. 33.

to cadres, especially Party cadres. The fundamental mark of this status is the right to be treated according to Party disciplinary rules rather than under a regime of legal rules of universal applicability. This is prohibited under current policy, but there can be no doubt that the practice still persists.[9] In "Han Baoshan the pickhandle,"[10] it is 1979 and a production team leader, a notorious Lothario, is taken before the commune civil administrator (*minzheng ganshi*) by angry village women because he beat a young girl after she refused to submit to his advances. Geng, the administrator, tries to calm them down: "Of course, beating people is wrong, but this is a contradiction within the people." When the girl's mother insists on punishment, he says, "You don't understand! He's a Party member, a cadre. We must educate him through the organization!" He decides that as compensation the girl, Yuping, shall be given extra work points and two weeks' leave from work. The women are still dissatisfied and demand that the team leader have work points deducted. Geng replies, "Grown-ups beat their children at home, right? A commune member is disobedient (*bu ting hua*), the team leader uses a bit of force – you can understand that!... Go on home! Young people ought to listen to reason and pay attention to unity and stability, you know." When the peasant Han Baoshan then grabs the team leader by the scruff of the neck and knocks his head three times against a pile of bricks, Geng protests, "Don't you know it's against the law to beat people?" Han points out that he himself is a work group leader (*zuoye zu zhang*) and thus can be considered a kind of cadre. "Educate me through the organization."

This is enough of a synopsis – the story has a happy ending. The numerous similar cases to be found in literature and news reports attest to its basis in social reality. Most of the time, however, the punishment of Party members through disciplinary measures (with no mention of legal measures) is presented positively, as proof that Party members are no longer to be above the law. The *People's Daily*, for example, tells of Liu Wenxue, a Party member who stood by while a shaman he had hired to cure his wife's illness tormented her for three days until she died. The shaman was sentenced to imprisonment under Article 165 of the Criminal Code, which provides for up to seven years in prison, while Liu was given a "serious warning."[11] (A man who drove his wife to suicide through maltreatment, however, was given five years.[12])

In "The last days of the tyrannosaurus," a Party member beats a Tibetan worker. Since relations with minorities are very sensitive, it is felt

9. See, for example, an article by Qiu Xueyao in *Guangming ribao* (*Enlightenment Daily*), 8 December 1981, p. 3: "When dealing with state workers who have committed crimes on the job, some comrades frequently use Party discipline or administrative discipline as a substitute for the legal code, as though crimes committed by cadres could be handled by Party discipline or administrative discipline as a substitute for the law. This is incorrect."

10. Zhang Shishan, "Juebing Han Baoshan" ("Han Baoshan the pickhandle"), in Renmin Wenxue Bianjibu (ed.), *1980 nian quanguo youxiu duanpian xiaoshuo pingxuan huojiang zuopin ji* (*Collected National Award-Winning Short Stories of 1980*) (Shanghai: Shanghai wenyi chubanshe, 1981), pp. 512–30.

11. *Renmin ribao* (*People's Daily*), 4 January 1983, p. 1.

12. *Renmin ribao*, 17 January 1983, p. 3.

that the offender must be dealt with seriously: he is punished administratively, through criticism and education.[13] In "The sound of weeping on a cold night,"[14] the hero discovers that some of his underlings have abused their power in order to extort dates from a poor peasant. Determined to punish them, he thinks sternly to himself, "Those who are Party members shall be disciplined within the Party. . . ."

Even when Party members are actually subjected to criminal sanctions, their submission to punishment is often shown as voluntary, an example of their goodness. The manager of a reservoir makes an error leading to the death of another. He accepts five years' imprisonment because of what he calls his "communist's conscience" (*gongchandangyuan de liangxin*).[15] In another story, which takes place in 1981, a boat captain and probationary Party member is required to bear criminal responsibility for negligence leading to a death. The fact that a relative is coming to visit from abroad at just this time makes him more determined than ever not to hush up the case or evade punishment: "Our law can take a probationary member of a ruling Party and subject him to the law – this is the socialist sanctity of law."[16]

The difference in status between Party cadres and ordinary citizens is reflected also in the metaphors used by cadres in literature. The story of Han Baoshan has already shown that the civil administrator Geng thought it not unreasonable for the team leader to strike one of "his" peasants – he even compared it to a parent striking an unruly child. A striking corroboration of this paternalist metaphor appears in the story "The pillar comes to life,"[17] in which some Yi nationality people have made a "direct transition" from slave society into socialism (this is admittedly not necessarily a representative case).[18] The production team leader, Tian, even lives in the former master's house. He tries to suppress the new *baochan daohu* system (that of assigning farm output quotas for individual households), since once it is in effect, "the Nuozha Production Team won't be named Tian any more."

More typical perhaps and more illustrative of the sort of rights over "their" peasants enjoyed by team leaders is a scene in the story "Cripple

13. Gu Gong, "Bawanglong de mori" ("The last days of the tyrannosaurus") *Yan shan* (*Mount Yan*), No. 1 (1981), pp. 4–26.

14. Wang Runzi, "Hanye li de ku sheng" ("The sound of weeping on a cold night"), in Zhongguo Zuojia Xiehui Jiangxi Fenhui (ed.), *Xiaoshuo nianjian* (*Short Story Yearbook*), Vol. I (Nanchang: Jiangxi renmin chubanshe, 1981), pp. 272–82.

15. Li Dong, Wang Yungao, "Shenpan" ("Trial"), in *Beijing lai de jianchaguan* (*The Procurator From Beijing*) (Beijing: Qunzhong chubanshe, 1981), pp. 34–54.

16. Xu Chaofu, "Chaoying" ("Shadow on the waves"), *Zhong shan* (*Mount Zhong*), No. 2 (1983), pp. 72–107.

17. Su Xiaoxing. "Shizhu tongling" ("The pillar comes to life"), *Hua xi* (*Flower Brook*), No. 8 (1981), pp. 20–26.

18. Not representative, that is, among the Han. When socialism came to the Norsu people of the Sichuan-Yunnan border, the Central Committee directed that the living conditions and political status of the "slave-owners" (generally those with over nine slaves) should not be reduced as a result of reform. "[One official] cited a number of nobles occupying high positions: the county head and his deputies, members of the County People's Congress, vice-chairman of the Political Consultative Congress." Alan Winnington, *The Slaves of the Cool Mountains* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1959), p. 83.

Chen and team leader Qiu."[19] Chen is a cripple who agrees to work an orchard under the responsibility system. He works hard and succeeds in turning a large profit. Qiu, the backward team leader, is jealous and refuses to let him run the orchard the following year, even under terms more advantageous to the team. The leader of the neighbouring team, Shui, is a progressive young intellectual who came first in the university entrance examinations in the *xian*, but was refused admission because of his tuberculosis. One day he talks to Qiu about getting Chen to join his team as an adviser:

> We want Mr Chen to join our team. You won't object, will you? We want him to be the adviser of our orchard. We'll provide his food and give your team 30 *yuan* a month for his work points. The contract is for three years, OK?

And so, says the author, "the bargain was struck." Interestingly, this transaction is presented neither positively nor negatively. It appears to be simply a credible device by which the author can account for Chen's switching teams.

Authority

The stories surveyed above say something about the importance of the perceived relevant identity of individuals in deciding what shall be done in case of a conflict between them. The way the community thinks about authority will determine what aspects of one's identity are considered important when a conflict arises, and what consequences flow from the characterization of persons in certain ways.

Why is it, for example, that Party members enjoy the power they do? Part of the answer lies in the prevailing view of political power, which might be described as fundamentally Platonic.[20] In this paradigm, the basic question is, "Who shall rule?" The search is not for ways of limiting the ruler's exercise of power, but rather for ways of making sure that the right person holds it so that it will be used well.[21]

This way of looking at questions of political power is widespread and is often shared by critics of the government as well as supporters. Mao Zedong was quoted in 1967 as comparing the public security organs to a knife in the hands of the proletariat, which could "easily be used against us" if not properly grasped.[22] His concern, however, was not with the sharpness of the edge, but with the character of the wielder:

> Hence public security work can only be under the direct leadership of the Party Committee and cannot be under the vertical leadership of the relevant government department.[23]

19. Jing Fu, "Cripple Chen and team leader Qiu," *Chinese Literature*, No. 8 (August 1982), pp. 33–48; originally published in *Yan he* (*Yan River*), No. 1 (1982).

20. See Francis M. Cornford (trans.), *The Republic of Plato* (London, Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1945), p. xxix.

21. Karl Popper criticizes this "theory of (unchecked) sovereignty" in *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, Vol. I (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966), Ch. 7.

22. "Chairman Mao's latest instructions," *Wenge tongxun* (*Cultural Revolution Bulletin*), No. 1 (6 October 1967), in *Survey of the Chinese Mainland Press*, No. 4060 (15 November 1967), p. 1.

23. *Ibid.*

Li-Yi-Zhe, the writers of the famous wall-poster "On socialist democracy and law," expressed much the same point of view in 1974:

> The basic task of the Chinese people during the entire historical stage of socialism is to consolidate, under the guidance of a correct line, the dictatorship of the proletariat. But this revolutionary programme of proletarian dictatorship becomes, in the hands of the reactionaries, a mockery of the revolutionary aspirations of the masses, thus becoming in the hands of our irreconcilable enemies the most ferocious of murder weapons.[24]

The fundamental question was: "How can we guarantee that party and state power will be in the hands of Marxists?"[25]

In essence, then, political power is seen as something more or less absolute, and *given* to some person or persons with the expectation that they will use it for the benefit of the people, that is, those who gave it. Power-holders are to be judged morally on whether or not they betray this trust – and a moral judgment, of course, is meaningful only when the person judged could have done other than what he did. Wang Heshou, the permanent secretary of the Central Committee's Discipline Inspection Committee, said in a speech of 30 January 1983:

> After our Party achieved political power over the whole country, each Party member was faced with a new test: whether to use correctly the power which the people had given us, to struggle earnestly for the flourishing and prosperity of the state, the wealth and happiness of the people, the establishment of socialism and the realization of communism, or to rest proudly on our laurels, to turn from the servants of the people to the "masters" of the people, and to use power to scheme for private advantage.[26]

And the poet Feng Yu condemned the power-holders for failing this test:

> *Two Cents*
> Bureau head, factory manager, Party secretary
> When you meet the
> Withered, begging hands
> Of an old man, a woman, or a child,
>
> Please don't bring out
> Two cents.
> That won't quiet your conscience.
> For in your hands
> Is the power
> They gave you.[27]

Often criticism can be as revealing as literature itself. The story "Angel," like "In the dossier of society,"[28] involves a girl who is taken

24. Li-Yi-Zhe, *Guanyu shehuizhuyi de minzhu yu fazhi* (*On Socialist Democracy and Legality*) (Hong Kong: Bibliotheque Asiatique, 1976), p. 94.

25. *Ibid.* p. 92. Strikingly similar is Cornford's version of Plato's problem: "How can the state be so ordered as to place effective control in the hands of men who [truly understand how to make society and the individual happy]?" Cornford, *The Republic of Plato*, p. xxix.

26. *Renmin ribao*, 2 February 1983, p. 1.

27. Feng Yu, "Erfen qian" ("Two cents"), *Shi kan* (*Poetry*), No. 12 (December 1979), p. 58. The translation is from Jenner, "A new start for literature?" p. 298.

28. Wang Jing, "Zai shehui de dang'an li" ("In the archives of society"), in Li Yi (ed.), *Zhongguo xin xieshizhuyi wenyi zuopin xuan* (*Selections From Chinese New Realist Literature*)

into the army as a nurse and is subsequently raped by a powerful cadre. Yet the cadre, Xie, is not treated as all bad – he is anxious to make amends after the girl has an abortion and promises to be responsible for her all her life.

In fact, he is truly fond of her, and she comes to have sympathy for him as well. In the end, he accedes to her request to be transferred out of the army. There are no "evil" people in the story – the author is out to show how the system perverts normal people, changing social relationships into those of tormentor and tormented. This might indeed be grist for the mill of orthodox critics, yet at least two of these did not look at it that way. They saw Xie as a thoroughly bad person, and interpreted the author's message as a criticism of "the entire society which gave him power and a special position." In other words, the author's criticism must have been directed at a society which gave unchecked power to *bad* people, not at a society which gave *unchecked* power to people, bad, good or otherwise.[29]

The paradigm in which the important question about power is whether or not it is in the hands of the right people has clear historical roots. The traditional ideal was for local power to be held in the hands of one man (although he had to rule in co-operation with local gentry). Mary C. Wright has observed that the Qing system of civil government sought

> to place all local control in the hands of a single man who would be free of local pressures and above narrow technical preoccupations, a microcosmic philosopher-king whose humanistic vision would encompass horizontally the whole of the Empire and vertically the whole of society.[30]

In the face of this concentration of power in the hands of one official, it is not surprising that many people felt they had to put their faith in the man and not in the law he was supposed to execute.[31] A writer in *Tansuo* made this comment:

> The common people in China in general did not dare to put any hope in the law; they could only hope that the people carrying it out would uphold justice, and thus all sorts of stories about "blue skies" [*qing tian*: upright official] have been circulated from olden times up to the present. This more or less shows the Chinese common people's traditional conception of law.[32]

(Hong Kong: Qishi niandai zazhishe, 1980), pp. 160–81. This controversial screenplay was first published in *Dianying chuangzuo* (*Film Creations*), No. 10 (October 1979).

29. "Feitian" ("Angel"), by Liu Ke, was originally published in *Shi yue* (*October*), No. 3 (1979), and is reprinted in Li Yi (ed.), *Chinese New Realist Literature*, pp. 136–59. The critical article, "Bokai yong xiangzhu bianzhi de miwu" ("Clear away the miasmal fog of incense and candles"), is by Tian Jun and Liang Kang, and appeared in *Shidai de baogao* (*Report of the Times*), No. 2 (1980). The citation is from Yu Qing, "Piping he liangwen de chi" ("Criticism and the yardstick for literature"), *Shi yue* (*October*), No. 1 (1981), p. 213.

30. Mary C. Wright, *The Last Stand of Chinese Conservatism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1962), p. 145.

31. "In all types of control the quality of the local official was of prime importance." *Ibid.* p. 126.

32. Qiu Mu, "Weishenme li fa er nan yi xing?" ("Why is it that legislation is difficult to put into practice?"), *Tansuo* (*Explorations*), No. 4 (September 1979), reprinted in Claude Widor (ed.), *Documents on the Chinese Democratic Movement 1978–1980: Unofficial Magazines and Wall Posters*, Vol. I (Paris: Editions de L'Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales/Hong Kong: The Observer Publishers, 1981), p. 175.

Another unofficial writer held that the Party had deliberately encouraged this type of thinking as a means to power:

To meet the needs of the struggle in the countryside, the Party allowed the masses to place their hope in itself as the "great saviour" while it was setting up its own leadership. It was on such a basis that the leader was defined and that was how the "great saviour" came to replace the "true son of heaven." Thus the idea that "there has never been any saviour" and that "we can only rely on ourselves instead of gods or emperors to emancipate ourselves" as sung in the "Internationale" have all along failed to take root in people's minds.[33]

It would be tedious to list all the examples in recent literature where the downtrodden are rescued by a justice-loving official, but it is worth noting that the very word *qing tian* (blue sky) is still widely used. In one story a family is wronged by a local official; the son declares that they must "go to Deng the Blue Sky (*Deng qing tian*) in Beijing" and lodge an accusation (*gao*).[34] In another, an honest procurator, in the name of justice, helps an enemy from Cultural Revolution days against an old army friend who is a police chief. The masses are reported as saying, "With this kind of 'blue sky' in charge, the masses can dare to speak."[35]

The stories surveyed reveal the attitudes not just of the led, but of the leaders as well. A reasonable summary of the official view is perhaps the following passage:

The essence of socialist democracy is that every worker has the right to participate directly in the management of state affairs; because of the limited cultural level (*wenhua shuiping*) of the workers, however, for a certain period of time it is only possible for their advanced representatives to manage state affairs directly.[36]

Dictatorship and democracy are not seen as two different political universes, the inhabitants of one of which possess no rights while the inhabitants of the other control the government. They are rather two different methods of governing, either of which can be applied depending on the object of government and the circumstances. This conception comes through clearly in an article in *Faxue yanjiu* (*Legal Research*):

When the objects of dictatorship, having gone through a long period of reform, have definitely relinquished their reactionary standpoint and become self-supporting labourers, they can change from the objects of dictatorship to the objects of democracy.[37]

33. Zhou Xun, "Whither the Democracy Wall?—also on socialist democracy," *Si-wu luntan* (*April 5th Forum*), No. 8 (1 April 1979), p. 7, in Joint Publications Research Service (JPRS), *China Report: Political, Sociological and Military Affairs*, No. 8 (9 August 1979), p. 7.

34. Sun Jianzhong, "Wo de laoshi he ta de airen" ("My teacher and her husband"), *Furong* (*Lotus*), No. 3 (1980), p. 103.

35. Lu Tongyao, "Disange renying" ("The third shadow"), in *Beijing lai de jianchaguan* (*The Procurator From Beijing*) (Beijing: Qunzhong chubanshe, 1981), p. 110.

36. Ye Ruxian, "Socialist democracy is the broadest form of democracy," *Nanfang ribao* (*Southern Daily*), 27 June 1979, p. 3, in JPRS, *China Report: Political, Sociological and Military Affairs*, No. 13 (29 August 1979), p. 16.

37. Han Mingli, Guo Yuzhao, "Minzhu shi yizhong guojia zhidu – jian tan minzhu yu fazhi de guanxi" ("Democracy is a type of state system – also a discussion of the relationship between democracy and the legal system"), *Faxue yanjiu* (Studies in Law), No. 3 (1980), p. 6.

What do characters in fiction have to say? A typical example might be the remarks of Wang Wenkai, vice-secretary of a local Party committee, concerning student protests against Party interference with elections as the Hunan Teachers' College:

Our Party puts great efforts into promoting democracy, but our democracy is socialist democracy, and certainly not capitalist democracy! We give the people the broadest (*zui da xiandu de*) democracy, but we will never allow anybody to exploit democratic slogans in order to contest with the Party over leadership power (*he dang zhengduo lingdao quan*). Hunger strikes, stopping classes – who do you want democracy from? You want democracy from our Party? You want to take turns being the leader?[38]

A more interesting comment comes from the fictional character Wang Guangming, a cynical Party branch secretary in "Uncle":

Democracy, you know – it's just a means: the end is centralization. Lower levels obey upper levels and the masses obey the leadership. As a matter of fact, these days, except for a few clamorous youths, if you gave democracy to us Chinese, there might not be anybody who would take it.[39]

With respect to elections, literature confirms what the Hunan Teachers' College incident and Chinese newspapers themselves tell us: it is difficult for officials to refrain from interfering, even when they are well-intentioned; and if they choose to do so, no one can stop them. In "The First Election," incumbent Party branch secretary Liu Guangjin is conducting the election for a new secretary:

I will announce the list of candidates.... First, Communist Party member Liu Guangjin.... All in favour please raise your hands, now.... If you really think I'm not suitable, of course, you can elect somebody else – but I'm still going to keep on making revolution.[40]

In "Election," the organization department of the municipal Party committee announces the suspension of elections within a factory because the workers want to elect the wrong person. They quickly realize the hopelessness of their position:

Democracy, democracy, in the end it's still "cadrocracy" (*minzhu, minzhu, daotoulai haishi guanzhu*).[41]

In fact, neither method need be applied consistently to the same person, since the characterization of who one is changes with circumstances.

38. Zheng Yi, "Miwu" ("Miasma"), *Hua cheng* (*Flower City*), No. 5 (1981), p. 70. The scene is based on an incident at Hunan Teachers' College in October 1980. Over 80 students went on a hunger strike to protest interference by college authorities in procedures for the election of four school delegates to the district people's congress. For a participant's account, see Gregor Benton (ed.), *Wild Lilies: Poisonous Weeds* (London: Pluto Press, 1982), pp. 106–111.

39. Lu Xinhua, "Biaoshu" ("Uncle"), *Renmin wenxue* (*People's Literature*), No. 4 (April 1980), pp. 106–107.

40. Wang Zhongming, "Diyici xuanju" ("The first election"), *Xi hu* (*West Lake*), No. 4 (1981), p. 32.

41. Lin Jingjia, "Xuanju" ("Election"), in *Liu shui wanwan* (*The River Flows Curving*) (Guangzhou: Hua cheng chubanshe, 1981), p. 217.

Even "good" cadres, it seems, have difficulty in adjusting. In "Choosing the chief procurator," a young man is convicted of being the head of a gang of hoodlums. Before the sentence can be carried out, however, his father, Yu Ting, is rehabilitated and made first secretary of the municipal Party committee. Since he goes directly to work on the day of his release, he is unaware of his son's situation, but he fortuitously overhears the conversation of two judges involved in the case. One of them wants to free the son now that his father is in a position of power, but the other, Pan Shi, insists that justice be upheld. Yu Ting returns to his office where preparations are being made for the election of a chief procurator (presumably by the local people's congress):

> [H]e took the list of candidates for chief procurator, and above Pan Shi's name drew a thick circle in red.... He then called to his secretary Wang: "Pass this down (*ba zhe wang xia chuan*)."[42]

In a sense, it is only natural that where the Party monopolizes all power at the national level, its representatives should monopolize all power at the local level, and that this should furthermore be seen as natural by all concerned. In fact, the local cadre is more than the representative of the Party: he *is* the Party, and what he commands is more or less by definition the Party's command. In "Li Shunda builds a house," the author describes the title character's thoughts in the 1950s:

> To obey Chairman Mao and follow the Communist Party – this he could do resolutely and completely. One word from any Communist Party member was to him a command.[43]

The peasants in another story resign themselves to the command of the local Party cadre not to sing folk songs with the comment, "In these mountains, he *is* the Communist Party."[44]

Thus opposition to the acts of a particular cadre has often led to the reply: "To oppose cadres is to oppose the Party; to oppose the Party is to oppose the revolution."[45] The first equation is more than just a talismanic phrase used to protect local power-holders: it has its basis in social reality, and has only recently been systematically, if somewhat cautiously, refuted in official organs. The Communist Party did not inherit from the Kuomintang a modern, fully-fledged bureaucratic state. Communications over the country were poor, and it had little experience with complex administrative structures. While it was possible to centralize policy-making power, it proved impossible to do the same with executive power. One does not have to be a partisan of the "new dynasty" theory of

42. Xu Shaowu, "Jianchazhang renxuan" ("Choosing the chief procurator"), *Renmin wenxue* (*People's Literature*), No. 8 (August 1979), p. 57.

43. Gao Xiaosheng, "Li Shunda zao wu" ("Li Shunda builds a house"), in Renmin Wenxue Bianjibu (ed.), *1979 nian quanguo youxiu duanpian xiaoshuo pingxuan huojiang zuopin ji (Collected National Award-Winning Short Stories of 1979)* (Shanghai: Shanghai wenyi chubanshe, 1980), p. 130.

44. Gu Hua, "Songstresses of the bamboo garden," p. 356.

45. Mo Yingfeng, "Laobaixing de jieri" ("The commoners' festival"), in Zhu Shucheng (ed.), *Mi hu wai zhuan* (*The Story of an Absent-Minded Man*) (Changsha: Hunan renmin chubanshe, 1982), p. 82.

Chinese Communism to notice the parallel with Qing administrative practices, suggestive of the way economic and technological conditions limit the choice of governmental techniques. The best the Party could do was to give local cadres large amounts of power, to make them personifications of the Party, while trying to ensure through non-bureaucratic means such as political campaigns and thought reform that they would make the correct decisions. The underlying assumption (or perhaps hope) was that central policy was more likely to see effective execution under politically strong cadres who *could* oppose it, but *would* not, than under politically weak cadres who had less independence from those above them but also less power over those below them. It would thus in a sense be beside the point to object that a cadre acted against Party policy: his ability to do so was inherent in the system deliberately adopted by the Party. The power of the Party backed up the local cadre as a whole individual, not just to the extent of his legal powers however defined.

The unsatisfactory imprecision of the term "local cadre" is itself the result of the imprecise delimitation of official powers. Especially in times of little positive law, civil disputes and what might be called criminal cases are handled in literature by a bewildering variety of cadres: team leaders, brigade leaders, commune secretaries, police chiefs, civil administration cadres (*minzheng ganshi*), army officers, neighbourhood committees, and so on.[46] Nor is the locus of authority determined by the nature of the problem – not least because that would still require a decision by someone as to what kind of problem it was, or indeed whether it was a problem at all.

In the story of Han Baoshan the pickhandle mentioned earlier, a case of beating was brought before a commune civil administrator for judgment. Yet in a story set in about the same time (1978–79), the procedure is much different. A young man beats the son of a "gang of four" follower; the brigade Party branch secretary, his father, is an upright official and calls in the commune police to arrest him. The father explains,

> You have beaten someone, which is a violation of criminal law. It must be dealt with by the public security bureau; the brigade can't deal with it.[47]

In another story set in 1980, it is a park administration committee which forbids dancing in a teahouse on the grounds that it is a violation of security regulations (*zhian tiaoli*), meaning presumably the Security Admistration Punishment Regulations promulgated in 1957.[48] Not everyone accepts the committee's power to make such a rule, however:

46. Shao-chuan Leng mentioned reports in 1968 of judgments rendered and sanctions imposed variously by "political and legal organs," "organs of dictatorship," "revolutionary committees," "police-procuracy-court organs," or "military control committees." See his "The role of law in the People's Republic of China as reflecting Mao Tse-tung's influence," *Occasional Papers/Reprints Series in Contemporary Asian Studies*, No. 5 (School of Law, University of Maryland, 1978), p. 5.

47. Chen Zhongxi, "Xinren" ("Trust"), in Renmin Wenxue Bianjibu (ed.), *Award-Winning Short Stories of 1979*, p. 310.

48. This and a number of other laws mentioned here are conveniently collected in Gonganbu Zhengce Falü Yanjiushi (ed.), *Gongan fagui huibian 1950–1979* (*Compendium of Public Security Laws and Regulations 1950–1979*) (Beijing: Qunzhong chubanshe, 1980).

What kind of organization is this Longtan [Dragon Pool] Park Administration Committee? An organ of dictatorship? What right does it have to detain and fine people? So you see, it's just a scarecrow.[49]

In "Crimson clouds," some lumber is appropriated from a factory storehouse with the connivance of certain influential people. The factory director, Liang, who is also the Party committee secretary, calls this a crime and orders the deputy director to investigate and find the ringleaders. He then discovers that the woman he loves, Wen Jiemiao, has also been involved. Later, the deputy director hands Liang

an official paper that he had just drawn up – the decision to punish some ringleaders – in which the fat team leader and some others were named. After a moment's hesitation, Liang... with a slightly trembling hand... took up a pen and added to the list another name: Wen Jiemiao.[50]

In the end, Wen returns the lumber and is punished with a serious warning by the Party. It is not clear whether Liang acted in his role of factory director or in his role of Party secretary.

One of the key factors operating to sustain the power of local officials is the weakness of any system of appeal from their decisions. In many areas the institutional framework that could make such appeals effective simply does not exist,[51] and even where there is a way, personal relations may interfere with the will. A lower official may be a client of a higher one or perhaps a relative; he may be able to procure special goods for his superior; the superior might simply feel that it would set a bad example if it were to be shown that decisions at lower levels could be easily overturned; or things may be much more complex altogether. In "News of my native village,"[52] brigade secretary Cao Fugui beats a man to death. Yet he is exonerated by the commune secretary because Cao's cousin suppressed imminent proceedings against the secretary's wife for corruption. "In spring flower clusters" is only one of many other stories telling of prejudiced decisions. The secretary of a commune Party committee disregards an engineer's warnings and insists that the boards around the still-unset concrete of an aqueduct be removed, in order to make a provincial secretary think it has been completed. The engineer then insists on removing the last, sensitive boards himself, with all others well clear, but when he does so, the entire structure collapses, killing him.

49. Gan Tiesheng, "Xiandaipai chaguan" ("The modernist teahouse"), *Hua cheng* (*Flower City*), No. 5 (1981), p. 115.

50. Lü Lei, "Crimson clouds," *Chinese Literature*, No. 8 (August 1982), p. 27. It is interesting to note that there was never any mention of calling in the police to deal with this "crime." A curious recent case is that of the Beijing Medical College, where hooligans terrorized the campus for several days in March of 1983. Eventually the Youth League committee and the students' union sent a joint letter to *Guangming ribao* requesting the "relevant departments" (*youguan bumen*) to apply "legal sanctions" (*falü zhicai*). Had the police refused to take action? Or were they not even called? It is a mystery – the letter contained no mention of the police whatsoever. See *Guangming ribao*, 30 March 1983, p. 1.

51. See the discussion of "Local lord" and "The procurator from Beijing" below.

52. He Shiguang, "Guxiang shi" ("News of my native village"), in He Shiguang, *Guxiang shi* (*News of My Native Village*) (Chengdu: Sichuan renmin chubanshe, 1982), pp. 203–30. The title is from a line of a poem by Wang Wei.

The people on the work site indignantly demand action against the secretary from the provincial people's court. Yet the court, full of cadres who are friends of hers, decides to take no action. The author laments, "When the law is weak, sentiment (*renqing*) outweighs justice."[53]

This kind of favouritism is often reinforced by concrete ties of kinship. Liu Binyan in "Between man and demon" pointed out the tendency of cadre families to intermarry, tightening further the web of connections (*guanxi wang*):

> As soon as they meet, they really call each other "elder brother" and "younger brother"....[54]

Even where no visible relationships exist, the official to whom an appeal is made may simply not want to make trouble. He may be surrounded by the friends of the official whom it is in his power to correct, and he must work with them every day. Liu Binyan reports the conclusion of some people familiar with the investigation of the corrupt Wang Shouxin:

> The affairs of China have all been messed up by people afraid to offend people.[55]

For whatever reason, appeals are frequently simply sent back to the organ or person who made the original decision. A young peasant in "Local lord"[56] comes to blows with Secretary Lei of the commune Party committee who has destroyed his rice sprouts while drunk. The local court, headed by Lei's friend, sentences him to six years' imprisonment on a charge of "beating revolutionary leading cadres." (Needless to say, there was no such law on the books in 1977.) The peasant appeals to the county court, the regional court, the provincial court, and even the Supreme Court, but each court's instruction is the same: "Pass back to local court [for review]."

In "Hao Daren settles a case," mentioned earlier, the uncapped counter-revolutionary Wang threatens to take his case to the commune level.

> Hao: "The commune secretary (*mishu*) is Da'an's brother-in-law."
> Wang: "I'll take it to the county."
> Hao: "The county always has to ask the commune and ask the brigade – it's impossible...."[57]

Finally, in "The procurator from Beijing," a local court decides not to pursue the case of Du Jun, a young man who killed someone while driving a car, because he is the son of the municipal Party committee secretary. The title character investigates the case, decides that a crime has been

53. Gu Hua, "Chuntian de huacong li" ("In spring flower clusters"), in Gu Hua, *Collected Short Stories*, p. 292.

54. Liu Binyan, "Ren yao zhi jian" ("Between man and demon"), in Wang Meng, Chen Rong *et al.*, *Xiaoshuo qipa* (*Outstanding Short Stories*) (Fuzhou: Fujian renmin chubanshe, 1981), p. 360. The story is translated by James V. Feinerman under the title "People or monsters?" in Perry Link (ed.), *People or Monsters? and Other Stories and Reportage From China After Mao* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983), pp. 11–68.

55. Liu Binyan, "Between man and demon," p. 361.

56. Gu Hua, "Tudi ye" (Local lord"), in Gu Hua, *Collected Short Stories*, pp. 78–89.

57. Qian Jide, "Hao Daren settles a case," p. 24.

committed, and upholds justice by demanding that the case come to trial – in the same court.[58] Even where the officials are not biased, it seems, the system limits what they can do.

It is likely that the new rural policies, coupled with an expansion of the court system, will reduce the prominence of local commune officials. A *People's Daily* article in February 1983 noted that there was a need for more courts in rural areas, since the system of independent household production meant that many disputes could no longer be resolved by commune and brigade cadres. Because courts were almost exclusively in cities and towns, lawsuits were difficult and time-consuming. One-third of the backlog of civil cases had been pending for over a year, and 60 per cent of serious criminal cases were said to have resulted from unresolved civil disputes.[59]

The advent of rural free markets has also undermined the authority of local cadres, since most of this authority is based upon control over the distribution of goods. When grain, for example, is sold only in the brigade-run store, a brigade official might order it not to sell to someone who had offended him. If one can procure grain on the open market, however, even at higher cost, it becomes less necessary to worry about offending people. In "In the village street," two women are quarrelling over a fight between their sons. One of them, Luo Erniang, is the wife of the accountant at the village food station where pork is sold. The dispute is being settled in the street by brigade Party branch secretary Cao Fugui, who attempts by various implied threats to force Feng Yaoba, the only witness, to support Luo Erniang's false version of the events. Feng finally summons up the courage to tell the truth after considering that the Luos and their friends no longer control the food supply:

> Anyway now on market days villagers have pigs to kill, too. This time it's not all monopolized by your one food station, it's opened up. It may cost a bit more, but you can choose fat or lean as you like![60]

Nor was Feng Yaoba the only one to realize the implications of the responsibility system. Team leader Tian in "The pillar comes to life," it will be remembered, did his best to block the implementation of the system because he realized it would mean that "the Nuozha Production Team won't be named Tian any more."[61]

Legitimacy

Since the authority of the cadre is so closely tied to Party membership, the perceived legitimacy of this authority will be closely tied to the perceived legitimacy of Party rule. What serves to support and what to

58. Su Dezhen, Li Yanzhu, Lan Yangchun, "Beijing lai de jianchaguan" ("The procurator from Beijing"), in *The Procurator From Beijing*, pp. 1–33.

59. See "Hengshui diqu fangbian renmin 'da guansi'" ("Hengshui prefecture makes it easier for the people to sue"), *Renmin ribao*, 7 February 1983, p. 3.

60. He Shiguang, "Xiangchang shang" ("In the village street"), in He Shiguang, *News of My Native Village*, p. 120.

61. Su Xiaoxing, "The pillar comes to life," p. 24.

undermine popular perceptions that the authority of the Party is legitimate, that it has a right to rule?

The Chinese press has spoken frequently of a "crisis of faith,"[62] although it does not, as one writer has implied, date from the ascendancy of the Dengists.[63] Nowhere is this reflected so fully as in the attitude of the general public toward Communist Party members and those who want to join up. It seems to be generally assumed that their motives are self-serving. Obtaining Party membership is now commonly spoken of as *lao dang piao (dang piao*: Party ticket) where *lao* by definition means "get by improper means." For example, in January 1981 the *People's Daily* reported that a schoolboy fell through the ice at Longtan (Dragon Pool) Lake. A crowd watched him struggle for more than 20 minutes before some air force men appeared on the scene and went to save him, to the accompaniment of jeers. When two workers came also to help, several people hooted, "These people want to join the Party!"[64]

In "Fallen in the rosy light of dawn," a piece of reportage literature (*baogao wenxue*), a girl in 1976 asks her boyfriend, "You're a physics student – why should you be so interested in politics? Unless you have some personal [wild] ambition (*yexin*)!"[65]

More interesting is that this view is shared by some Party members themselves. In "Between man and demon," Liu Binyan wrote of the worker Shi Huailiang, who conceived a plan to expose Wang Shouxin and her cronies by sending 10 *yuan* directly to Chairman Mao as Party dues. His unit leadership found out, and he was grilled by the Party people:

> You're obviously not a Party member; how can you pay Party dues? What do you mean by sending Party dues to Chairman Mao?

They answered their own question:

> You are obsessed with entering the Party, so obsessed that you can't think of anything else.[66]

Liu added the following comment:

> Why should being "obsessed with entering the Party" be a crime, then? It must be because "entering the Party" is not for the good of others but for the good of oneself. On what grounds could they say that it was in order to become an official and get rich and not in order to devote himself to the communist cause that Shi Huailiang requested to enter the Party? One judges others by oneself.[67]

In addition to this lack of faith in the motives of individual Party members and those wanting to join, there is widespread recognition that

62. See, for example, Guo Luoji. "Ping suowei 'xinnian weiji' " ("A comment on the so-called 'crisis of faith' "), *Wen hui pao* (*Wen Hui Daily*), 13 January 1980, p. 5.

63. Maurice Meisner, *Marxism, Maoism and Utopianism* (Madison, Wisconsin and London: University of Wisconsin Press, 1982), p. 238.

64. *Renmin ribao*, 19 January 1981, p. 1.

65. Li You, "Dao zai meiguise de chenguang zhong" ("Fallen in the rosy light of dawn"), in Li You, *Chi qing* (*Infatuation*) (Chengdu: Sichuan renmin chubanshe, 1981), p. 156.

66. Liu Binyan, "Between man and demon," p. 366.

67. *Ibid.* p. 367.

the tragedies of the past and a large amount of crime have their basis in the social system, a system for whose structure the Party cannot escape responsibility. Indeed, it is hard to find good literature any more which lays everything at the door of Lin Biao and the "gang of four," although this was common enough for a few years after 1976.

The common theme of a number of stories is that the system drives people to crime and cruelty. This was the message of "In the dossier of society": Li Lifang was beaten lower and lower until she could find an identity only as a hoodlum. Similarly, "Angel" showed that even a man with some conscience, being only human, will be tempted to abuse his power if there is nothing to restrain him but that conscience. In particular, several stories have dealt with young people whose crimes were due to the moral anarchy of the Cultural Revolution.[68] These stories either look back from the present to crimes committed in the past, or deal with crimes committed recently but stemming from the past. A typical example is "Second encounter," the story of a young man who is to be prosecuted for a murder committed during Cultural Revolution fighting. The author is sympathetic towards the accused – the message is that it is the leaders who taught young people to kill who should be punished. They are the real guilty ones.[69]

One reason for the Party's ambivalent attitude to literature which exposes social evils is that having claimed a monopoly on all power in society, it must logically take the blame for the bad as well as credit for the good. Criticism of the Party is thus implicit in criticism of social evils. While few people would blame hunger in the United States on the current administration alone, for example, the Chinese Communist Party, after 34 years in power, cannot get off the hook so easily.

Yet on the whole, it does not appear that the Party has lost its mandate to rule. It can still count on a fair amount of, if not active, at least passive support. Even the Democracy Movement's activists were for the most part, initially at least, supporters of Deng and his line as they perceived it, and wanted reform, not revolution.

One of the most important factors behind continued support for the Party is simply the desire for order and the fear of chaos. Chinese who defend the government's restriction of the freedoms guaranteed in the Constitution will almost invariably do so in these terms, conjuring up visions of Red Guards running rampant through the land,[70] or perhaps

68. In "Li Shunda builds a house," Gao Xiaosheng remarked, "'All people can distinguish between right and wrong in their hearts' (*shi fei zhi xin, ren jie you zhi*) – this [saying] sounds very grand. In fact, it never went through the Cultural Revolution – it's too naïve." Gao Xiaosheng, "Li Shunda builds a house," p. 134.

69. Jin He, "Chong feng" ("Second encounter"), in Renmin Wenxue Bianjibu (ed.), *Award-Winning Short Stories of 1979*, pp. 410–32. Other examples of this genre are Cong Weixi, "Dishige dankong" ("The tenth bullethole"), in Cong Weixi, *Cong Weixi zhongpian xiaoshuo ji* (*Collected Novelettes of Cong Weixi*) (Beijing: Zhongguo qingnian chubanshe, 1980), pp. 82–151; Liu Xinwu, "Yin he" ("Milky Way"), in Wang Meng, Chen Rong *et al.*, *Outstanding Short Stories*, pp. 77–101; and Shi Tiesheng, "Xiongdi" ("Brothers"), in *The River Flows Curving*, pp. 107–115.

70. This image was frequently invoked to justify the elimination of the Four Great Freedoms from the most recent constitution.

warlords dividing up the country. The Communist Party, is, in effect, the only party in town, and the alternative in this view to party dictatorship is not democracy but anarchy. Moreover, whatever the weaknesses and hesitancy in the Party's recent steps to strengthen the legal system, this is undoubtedly an improvement on what went before. That portion of a local cadre's power which stems from his control over the allotment of goods will be weakened to the extent that those under him gain a measure of economic independence. Similarly, while the legal system is being strengthened with a view to making it a more efficient instrument of social control than previously, this instrument is to be used by those higher in the Party hierarchy than the local cadre. If a county court *under central supervision* decides criminal and civil cases formerly decided by the brigade leader or commune secretary, it is less necessary to flatter and appease him at every turn, as his personal biases will have less influence on the outcome of the case. Consequently his ability to secure voluntary compliance with his arbitrary decisions in a hundred petty matters diminishes as well.

In several stories, characters express the belief that they can defy the local cadre more or less with impunity, either because a court will uphold their rights or because they have some economic independence. In "Cripple Chen and team leader Qiu," mentioned earlier, Qiu sees that Chen has brought in a much larger harvest than was expected when the contract to manage the orchard was made, and demands that Chen hand over more than the stipulated amount. Chen refuses, saying that if Qiu wishes, they can "take it to the county court."[71] Feng Yaoba in "In the village street" stands up to Secretary Cao, saying "If you're an official for 10 years I won't steal oxen [i.e. give you any excuse for persecuting me] for 10 years. Nowadays side production is permitted by the state, so what can you do to me?"[72] Feng and Chen may be a bit premature in their optimism, but it is unlikely nevertheless that their statements could have sounded totally absurd to their readers.

Not everyone supports the Party based on a rational calculation that Party authority is better than no authority. It is likely that a large number of people simply do not give the matter much thought. Authority is seen as necessary and natural; its absence is unimaginable. Thus, practically any authority that presents itself will be accepted. When the Cultural Revolution came, Li Shunda, who had always been a "close follower" (*jingen pai*), wanted to keep following, but was perplexed by the plethora of conflicting claims of true loyalty to Chairman Mao.[73] As for promises of democracy, perhaps some people do not take them too seriously, and are thus not overly disappointed when they are unfulfilled. An old worker in "Election" reacts with resignation to cadre interference with elections: China has had no democracy "since Pan Gu opened up heaven and earth" and there is no reason to expect it now.[74]

71. Jing Fu, "Cripple Chen and team leader Qiu," p. 41.
72. He Shiguang, "In the village street," p. 121.
73. Gao Xiaosheng, "Li Shunda builds a house," p. 134.
74. Lin Jingjia, "Election," p. 217.

There is one more factor which contributes to Party legitimacy and should not be underrated. This is the continued prestige enjoyed by the Party, despite its numerous errors, among the many for whom the revolution really did bring about a better life. In October 1980 Deng Xiaoping discussed the draft of the resolution on Party history:

If we do not mention Mao Zedong Thought and make an appropriate [i.e. generally positive] evaluation of Comrade Mao Zedong's merits and demerits, the old workers will not feel satisfied, nor will the poor and lower-middle peasants of the period of land reform, nor will a good number of cadres who have close ties with them.[75]

It is quite possible that he meant it. In "Han Baoshan the pickhandle," the commune civil administrator cadre Geng (who is really portrayed as more stupid than nasty) forces the peasants to grow sorghum, telling them at harvest-time that it is delicious and full of vitamins. The peasants mutter to themselves that he should try eating it himself some time. Yet when it comes to be their turn to prepare meals for him, they feel obliged to serve up something special:

Han Family Mountain was an *old Liberated Area* [emphasis added] – who wouldn't feel embarrassed making the [state] worker (*gongzuo yuan*) eat rough grain?[76]

Could the author have made such a comment if it were well known in China (as it would be) that the Party was, for example, particularly hated in the old Liberated Areas? Li Shunda dreams of building a three-room house, but for him it is only due to the revolution that he is able even to dream:

It was only through relying on the Communist Party and the people's government that he could have this lofty aspiration, that his lofty aspiration could become a reality. Therefore, he truly and sincerely wanted to follow the Communist Party to the end.[77]

It is often thought to be corny propaganda when characters in literature express feelings of love or respect for the Party and its leaders. Surely after all the suffering caused by the zigzags in line and political struggles of the Party, no such people could exist any more.[78] Yet such people do exist, and it would be a mistake to underestimate their number and influence. When Lu Xun lamented the storied patience of the Chinese people,[79] he was not, after all, merely baying at the moon. Democracy in the broad

75. *Beijing Review* Vol. 26, No. 30 (25 July 1983), p. 18.
76. Zhang Shishan, "Han Baoshan the pickhandle," p. 515.
77. Gao Xiaosheng, "Li Shunda builds a house," p. 127.
78. A summary dismissal, based on this view, of all Chinese literature that fails to carry a ringing denunciation of Party tyranny is contained in Ian Findlay, "A trail of literary corpses," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 21 July 1983, pp. 38–39.
79. Bertrand Russell had praised the Chinese after seeing porters who could laugh and smile in the midst of the most arduous toil. Lu commented, "If the porters had not been able to smile at those in the sedan chairs, China would long ago have left its present state." Lu Xun, *Lu Xun quan ji* (*Complete Works of Lu Xun*) (Shanghai: Renmin wenxue chubanshe, 1981), p. 216.

sense of popular control over the government is still far from being realized in China, and Party cadres still enjoy a large measure of immunity from the legal sanctions applied to ordinary people, except in cases where a superior Party organization has decided that legal sanctions shall be made to apply to them. Yet it must not be forgotten that the main opposition to Deng and his lieutenants comes from those who think not that the Party has too much power, but that it has too little.