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SKETCH OF XI JINPING'S PLANS FOR THE DIRECTION OF CHINA'S  
POLITICAL REFORM

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*[The author's name is almost certainly a pseudonym. This essay first appeared on a blog sponsored by Qiushi (Seeking Truth) magazine, an organ of the Party's more hardline leftists, and the transparent meaning of the author's name is Qiushi Ke, "Guest (ke) of Qiushi." While on its face anti-reformist (the author, for example, claims to want a return to collectivized agriculture), the proposals for political reform are surprisingly similar to those of the liberal Zhou Ruijin (see the "Missed Opportunities" essay). This document calls for a system of open factional competition within the Communist party, with the minority able to issue dissenting opinions on resolutions adopted by the majority, seems to accord legitimacy the factional activities of historic enemies—Jiang Qing, Lin Biao, and now Bo Xilai. The essay also purports to express the views of Xi Jinping, or, maybe rather, what Xi Jinping implied, although there is no reason so far to take this too seriously. The author has previously written against the "complete negation" of the Cultural Revolution, arguing there was some good in that set of events, and here he claims inspiration from the Cultural Revolution and from the Thoughts of Chairman Mao. In the Cultural Revolution there certainly was open acknowledgement of factional and other struggles within the Party, and the Maoist line was hostile to any attempt to claim that such struggles and differences of opinion, line, or interest did not exist. But the thrust of the Cultural Revolution struggle was to extirpate any hint of dissenting thought, not to institutionalize it in ongoing factional competition. All this is interesting and also*

*puzzling, not least in the way that the marginalized right and the marginalized left seem to approach convergence in their programs for political reform.]*

Lenin said, “Politics is the concentrated expression of economics.” Mao Zedong strongly urged that “politics take command.” There are unceasing calls from China’s left, center, and right for political reform. Xi Jinping has recently responded, stressing that the people be the masters of the house.

Whether or not China will have a glorious political future depends upon whether or not we thoroughly extirpate feudal despotism. It also depends on whether or not we can reform the old style socialist politics, with their one-sided focus on centralization, while extirpating the false democratic system of capitalism. It depends also on whether we can transform the old political system through the socialist system of democratic centralism, which makes the people the masters of the house. It depends too on whether we can raise the great banner of the new socialism in which all power is derived from the people.

### **1. Political Reform Must Be Clear About the Evolution of the Political System and the Way It is Trending**

Ever since there have been classes, the ruling classes of the various class societies have had different methods of rule and different political models.

There is a difference between the political model of slave society and that of feudal society, but basically both are forms of despotism. The set political relationship in both is one in which a minority uses violence to oppress and dominate the majority. That kind of despotism has played a progressive role in achieving levels of social production, cultural production, and the economic system.

As standards of living and cultural standards rose as a consequence of the development of the social forces of production, people came more and more to recognize the reactionary nature of despotism. Under capitalism the bourgeoisie took the stage, and people's enthusiasm for politics became ever greater. For the first time the basic political rights of the people were brought up and set in opposition to despotism—democratic politics were born. This kind of democratic system was related to the system of the bourgeoisie. This excellence of the democratic system lay in its collecting together the wisdom of the majority for the sake of governing the country. The wisdom of the people became reflected in the conduct of politics. Therefore, the basic political system under capitalism is democracy. The superiority of this socio-political system over that of feudal despotism goes without saying.

Feudal despotism and capitalist democracy each has its strong points and its defects. The strength of despotism is its ability rapidly to bring together world-shaking strength to be directed toward achieving particular goals. There is seldom a problem of delay and sometimes the work is done in a more efficient manner. But the system protects the interests of a minority while oppressing the great majority of the population, leaving the majority without power in society or any sense of social activism. Therefore, the natural efficacy of feudal despotism is very low, and socio-political and economic development remains backward for long periods of time. The strength of bourgeois democracy is in bringing together the wisdom of the majority and in obtaining the consent of the majority. Naturally, this is favorable to social development. But bourgeois democracy is not sufficiently thorough. In some respects it is empty and deceptive. Under conditions of private ownership it is very difficult to imagine that the social majority enjoy complete

democracy. This is because people's economic position does not match their political status and so not everyone has the same rights to expression. Thus, it is impossible for democracy to develop any further.

The appearance of socialist politics is made possible by the development of capitalism, to the point that it becomes a reality. The political system of socialism is necessarily superior to that of feudal despotism and similarly is superior to that of capitalist democracy. And what should be the form of that political system? It had to be that set up by Marx, Lenin, and Mao Zedong: the system of democratic centralism common to all socialist countries.

Socialist democratic centralism largely inherited the good points of despotism and democracy while avoiding their weaknesses, and consequently it was the most advanced political system in the world at that time. Unfortunately, democratic centralism in the socialist countries was not stipulated by law but was a kind of leadership method and was very flexible. Historical experience proves that genuine democratic centralism was never fully implemented in the old societies of the various countries. For the most part there was too much centralism and not enough democracy. This meant that the superiority of the socialist system could not be fully manifest, to the extent that there sometimes even feudal despotic tendencies. Given that in the traditional socialist political system, where democracy was seriously lacking, it was not difficult to understand how this or that kind of problem could develop in traditional socialist states.

Democratic centralism in the new socialist states necessarily had to become more nearly perfected in conjunction with historical developments. The ruling party (this still had to be the communist party) would truly (not in an empty, deceptive, sloganeering

manner) serve the people with its whole heart and mind, truly joining hearts with the people of the whole country. Working together we will build a true socialist state, without classes, without exploitation and oppression, without corruption, without authoritarianism, without black societies and brothels; one in which the people enjoy full democratic rights, a high degree of economic development, where social distribution is basically reasonable, where social guarantees and welfare enterprises are developed to a high degree. In this kind of society the superiority of socialism will really be on display.

A particular political base (political system) and a particular social system are mutually constitutive. The social system determines the political base and the political base, in its turn, reflects back to influence the social system. For example, although it was a slave-based society, ancient Rome had a republican political base, and as a result the slave system of ancient Rome was able to flourish for a time. Among feudal societies, why is it that in China was the strongest and most prolonged in the world? It is because in China despotism reached its highest degree of perfection, an achievement that traces back to the First Qin Emperor. (However, because it was *too* perfect it was also hard to eliminate completely, and it still exercises influence today.) It's the same thing for capitalism. All of them are democratic, but because democracy reaches closest to perfection in the American system of separation of powers, the United States leads the way for all capitalist countries. Therefore we can see that the extent to which a political base is good or bad will have an influence on whether the social system succeeds or fails. There have been lots of dynastic changes in Chinese history, but without any change in the country's political base; so with each of the upheavals the political base approached closer to perfection. Capitalism has also had many ups and downs, but its political form

came to fruition only with the birth of the United States. As for socialism, we can have complete faith that China is where it will and must reach its full maturity, all on account of the effort of the members of the Communist party.

The Chinese people have always had a deep revolutionary spirit. China did very well as a slave society and as a feudal society. It stood at the head of the world and had a tremendous influence on the west. Today China's political structural reform must staunchly oppose bourgeois democracy and bring to perfection the socialist democracy of the popular masses. The reform of China's political socialist political structure has been undertaken in accord with the strategic thinking of mass popularization and has had miraculous results. It will necessarily have influence over the west—a broad, deep, magnificent influence.

The study of political science must keep in view the whole globe. You can't simply study the west alone. You need to think about the whole picture.

While there has been great development and movement toward perfection in the political system of socialist democratic centralism, there is also one aspect in which it falls short. According to the principles of Leninism and the practice of the Stalin era, the interests of the people are expressed as class interest and the interest of the classes is expressed through political parties. The political party has a leadership group and that group has its leader. The leader often has supreme power and, taking this to the extreme, the leader, acting as a representative of the people or as the embodiment of the popular will and power, exercises sole authority without any check. Chairman Mao attempted to address this problem by means of the Cultural Revolution, but did not devise a method that

would go beyond the sphere of the political party and in the end he failed. Facts prove that up until today we have not truly resolved the question of socialist democracy.

Unless Chinese politics resolves the question of democracy, there cannot be a true rebirth of China. Where I differ from various right-wing scholars on this is in their claim that everything in the west is wonderful and all we have to do is to be like them. For example, the United States has the separation of powers and a two-party system. Is this a good thing or not? We must say it's fine—it's progress over dictatorship and autocracy. But it cannot be put into effect in China at the present time. How come? It is because conditions in China, whether historical, cultural, or economic, do not allow us simply to import the American model. China's particular national condition means the economy must continue to accord primacy to public ownership and in politics primacy to the system of democratic centralism led by the Communist party with the participation of a multitude of parties.<sup>1</sup> Following the development of the economy and the universal elevation of our national culture and our awareness of law, along with the impact of the trends of the world, we especially need for the majority of citizens to nod their heads in agreement; the water will then flow of its own nature into the channel of new socialist democracy. The only thing we can have is mass popular democracy on the basis of socialist public ownership.

If the Chinese nation wishes completely to transform itself and to soar to the heights, it must choose the correct road and style of thinking. Why do we need public ownership?

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<sup>1</sup> That is, there is official recognition given to several minor “democratic” parties who took the side of the CPC during the 1946-1949 civil war. In the official telling, these parties accept the “leadership” of the CPC, which in its turn consults with them. The democratic parties are coordinated through the CPC's United Front Work Department, and have as their forum the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, whose full session every year overlaps with that of the National People's Congress.

It is because political democracy requires a fair economic base. You're a big capitalist and I'm a beggar. You're a prostitute who has to sell her body in order to eat; I'm a customer who throws money around like water. How can we talk about democracy? I can buy a TV station for a hundred million dollars and every day send out advertisements for my goods. You are a bum in the streets, standing in traffic handing out leaflets to get a bite to eat. How can we talk of democracy? In this kind of social environment, what's the point of a parliamentary system, a two-party system, universal suffrage? Democracy under capitalism is not omnipotent. It's not at all rare to find in the United States the homeless, the unemployed, street people, people oppressed by the cares of life, those driven into despair by the troubles they face. What if you should ask them what they think of American democracy?

Our democracy, then, cannot be deployed simply as a cliché the way those rightist scholars who want to import the American model do. Nor is it a matter of certain people yammering about socialist democracy and socialist constitutionalism. That term democracy nowadays is used in all sorts of ways in a random and arbitrary fashion. The slogan of the new socialism is socialist popular mass democracy. The ideal political system for the new socialism is popular mass democratic centralism. This gives primacy to the will of the common people. The common people have full freedom of speech and full veto power. Naturally, sometimes there will be differences of opinion among the common people. That's why we need centralism. Things won't work without centralism—we'll become a sheet of loose sand.<sup>2</sup> Democracy and centralization need to be brought together organically, with democracy as the base. The political system sought

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<sup>2</sup> From an expression of Sun Yat-sen's: the Chinese people are like a sheet of loose sand—that is, naturally anarchic, not given to order and organization.



by Mao Zedong, uniting democracy and centralism, is different from feudal despotism and capitalist democracy. Democracy is the base. Without that base and with nothing but centralization, the system would be in opposition to the people; but without centralization it would become anarchy. Therefore, the political situation in the new society should be a system with democracy as its base but with a high degree of centralization. Strictly speaking, there is still no political system in the world that fully meets the theoretical requirements of democratic centralism.

In sum, the elites in Chinese political culture must come clearly to understand that the great affairs of state are always the number one political issue. The economy can advance only after the political question has been resolved. Why was China's feudal society backward? First of all there is the political question. What emperor did not always want to increase production? What emperor did not want always to improve the lives of the people? Then why were they unable to do it? It is because the backwardness of the feudal system itself restricted the productive forces and economic development. Take agriculture as an example. In a small peasant economy, "household-level contracts" will not lead to great developments in agriculture. In a small peasant economy, household contracts are a policy and collectivization is also a policy. Privatizing agricultural fields is also a policy. What is the best policy? In Old China the small peasant economy was centered on the single-family household. It went on for thousands of years and never got any better. The emperors who set the policy fostering this small peasant economy should have been kicked in the ass. In the same way, those who argue for household contracts should be kicked in the ass! Practice has already proved that household contracts are mistaken, a farce. If you study large-scale American agriculture, you will merge farms

and issue stock; the peasants will become workers for the owners, receiving wages and benefits. Another road is agricultural collectivization advocated by Mao Zedong or some sort of collectivization modified in accord with the demands of the times, so that everyone grows rich together. I think that for China's agriculture and rural life Mao Zedong's road of collectivization is still the best solution. Of course we have to take into account the difference in times and the development of science and technology in order to figure out concretely how to go about it. Some places in China have already begun to experiment with large-scale agriculture. That's a very good thing. In sum, the first thing that a state and a nation have to consider is what road to take in order to survive. This is politics—the greatest kind of politics.

## **2. For Political Reform It Is Necessary to Study Different Schools of Politics.**

### **A. Socialist multi-party system**

We can consider a system with a multiplicity of parties (for example, a Communist party, a Labor party, a Workers party) within a socialist framework, with the people deciding which party will control the government, to be a variation of bourgeois democracy.

### **B. The entire citizenry decides a consensus on the major policies**

Effective policies will be easy to implement and anti-popular policies will be thwarted. These include lay-offs, housing reform, education reform, medical reform, different retirement tracks, and other policies that do not win the consent of the people. They could all be eliminated. We may say that consensus politics also falls within the scope of bourgeois democracy.

### **C. One party, multiple factions**

This proposes that there be a multiplicity of factions within the Communist party (such as the Deng Xiaoping faction, the Mao Zedong faction, the Jiang Qing faction, etc.), and a popular vote determines which faction will control the government. A system of one party, many factions proposes that the internal struggles over line within the Communist party be opened up, with who should rule being determined through inner-party democracy. There would be no purge of political enemies: Deng Xiaoping and Jiang Qing would each have the opportunity to exercise power. This kind of system can also be considered a variation on bourgeois democracy.

One party, many factions is not a new thing, but very few people have elevated it to the status of political model. Japan is a multi-party system, but for a long time the Liberal Democratic Party held power, exercised through the various factions within the LDP. In the early and middle phases of the CPC, the inner-party struggle over party line was also a struggle among factions, with the Party's leadership core voting to decide which line (faction) would guide the entire Party. This was a covert kind of one party, multi-faction system. Later, however, we mistakenly took our cue from the Soviet Union in postulating anti-party groups, depriving Gao Gang, Peng Dehuai, Liu Shaoqi, Jiang Qing, Bo Xilai and others of the right to speak, greatly diluting inner-party democracy. Those who represent the correct line within the Party must have complete faith in the power of the great mass of Party members to make political decisions; they must allow opposition factions to speak, restoring the Leninist system of ancillary reports (副报告) (that is, reports critical of the main report of the Party), with the decision finally made by a ballot within the Party.

The definition of socialist politics with one party and a multiplicity of factions is: Under the premise of respecting the socialist constitution and the Party charter and opposing a fascist coup, we will allow a Deng faction and also a Mao faction, with decisions on which faction will prevail made by a vote of Party representatives or the whole body of Party members.

I have analyzed this system from the perspective of comparative politics; it doesn't mean that I completely approve of the system of one party, many factions, since that kind of system will tend toward becoming a multi-party system and will fall into the sphere of capitalist politics. Speaking from the current reality of China's political reform, it is impossible to implement either a bourgeois multi-party system or a system in which the people are masters of the house. Both would lead to great turmoil. Thus, it might not be too bad to have an experiment in which the choice among factions is made through inner-party democracy.

**D. A system of consolidated democratic centralism with the triple union of Party, government, and masses**

This is a brand new political model that I have devised through my own researches. A simple term for it would be neo-Maoism. It derives from the political experiment of the Cultural Revolution. It represents the political future of the human race (see Qiu Shike, "The Political Science of New Socialism"). The main political substance of the new socialist model is to allow the masses to organize themselves, with the full enjoyment of political power, and governmental institutions at all levels would have representatives of

the masses.<sup>3</sup> Any social structure requires the organization of mass organizations. Unless they organize the popular masses have no strength and therefore cannot form the political core. As the political level of the people becomes higher the strength of the masses will become the core while the rule by political parties will weaken, giving place to class politics and mass politics. That is to say, the masses will play the leading political role.

After the 1980s the communist movement was weakened, but this does not prove that the communist movement has come to an end. Rather, it proves there are faults in the theory and practice of the communist movement and these faults have brought the communist movement to bankruptcy. If we reflect upon and correct these faults, the communist movement will rise again and achieve even greater victories.

Socialism is a historical necessity, and therefore the production of its political model is also necessary. But socialist democratic centralism with a separation of powers between party, government, and masses is necessarily a choice of socialism. The political systems of human society are constantly undergoing mutation, development, and renewal, from the bottom up to the top. The democratic system of the new socialist society is different from feudal despotism and also different from capitalist democracy. There can be no simple historical restoration, only a ceaseless critical inheritance and development of political culture. Only in this way can we ceaselessly expel the old and bring in the new. We can predict that in accord with historical development the socialist political system, including democratic centralism, will constantly improve and development, retaining its essence while expelling its waste. It will gradually come to perfection,

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<sup>3</sup> During the Cultural Revolution, governments from the provincial level down to the grass roots were replaced by “revolutionary committees,” consisting of “representatives” of the old cadres, the military, and the “masses” (that is, persons not belonging to the Party).

finally becoming an advanced, ideal socialist political system accepted by the great majority of mankind, welcoming in the advent of world communism.

### **3. Mao Zedong Thought Must Take Command of Political Reform**

After earnestly summarizing the lessons of experience and synthesizing all sorts of issues dealing with international and domestic affairs, Mao Zedong through his thought and practice produced a great political study. The leadership by the Party over everything, the people's representative congress, the system of political consultation, and democratic centralism are all the creations of Chairman Mao.

Mao Zedong stressed democracy. On January 30 1962 at an enlarged central work conference, Chairman Mao said: "In our country, if we do not allow the flourishing of people's democracy and of inner-party democracy, if we do not permit a proletarian democratic system, we will be unable truly to implement proletarian democratic centralism. Without a high degree of democracy, it is impossible to have a high degree of centralization. And without a high degree of centralization it is impossible to establish a socialist economy. What will happen then to our country if we do not establish a socialist economy? We will become a country like Yugoslavia, be transformed to what is in reality a bourgeois country, and the dictatorship of the proletariat will become the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. More than that, we'll become a reactionary fascist-style dictatorship. This is a problem that deserves full attention. I hope you comrades will think about it."

Mao Zedong saw that genuine socialism had to limit bourgeois rights.<sup>4</sup> Those rights are manifest first in the superstructure, within the Party, government, and army. He used

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<sup>4</sup> 资产阶级法权. These included certain property rights and civil and personal liberties, and in practice they were at best sporadically protected in the era of the People's Republic. The PRC was established as a "New Democracy" or "People's Democratic

many different means to limit bourgeois rights. For example, several times he lowered official salaries; and he eliminated distinctions of rank within the army. He also put limitations on the higher-level intellectuals within the cultural sphere. He narrowed the gap in wages paid to workers.

In order to allow the popular masses to exercise supervision, election, and recall over government officials Mao Zedong implemented various formats—two participations-one change, the triple unity, rectification, socialist education, so forth—culminating in the Cultural Revolution’s four great freedoms and mass dictatorship.

Mao Zedong had deep insight into the reflection of the economic base in the superstructure. Therefore he continuously implemented reforms in the state structure, cadre participation in labor, setting up the people’s militia, the revolution in art and literature, the revolution in education, ultimately the Cultural Revolution. All of these are deep expressions of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Mao Zedong had deep insight into the reflective power of ideology. He believed it was not enough to change the economic base and the superstructure. It was still necessary for proletarian thought to take control of their brains, to exercise proletarian dictatorship

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Dictatorship’’: in the Marxist-Leninist-Stalinist scholasticism of the time, an equivalent of capitalism, except the ruling Party was the proletariat (read: the CPC) rather than the bourgeoisie. The economic base was, it was held, not yet sufficiently developed to allow a genuine proletarian revolution. The Cultural Revolution (in some versions of the time) was the proletarian revolution, establishing a dictatorship of the proletariat (which would abolish all “bourgeois rights.” At the beginning of 1975, however, the radical Maoist faction advanced the argument that given the low state of economic development, it was necessary temporarily to tolerate bourgeois rights (particularly the right of peasants to maintain limited private plots to supplement what income they could earn from collective agriculture), but that the tendency had always to be to limit these rather than expand them. From the radical perspective, the contemporary emphasis on rule of law and the disputes over “constitutionalism” represent a kind of institutionalization of bourgeois rights.

in ideology. Therefore, we had to learn from Lei Feng, to struggle against selfishness and criticize revisionism. Without that, the revolution in the end would fail.

In smashing the old state mechanisms, Mao Zedong was in accord with the Paris Commune and the October Revolution. But the contrasts between them are even more penetrating.

Mao Zedong believed that it was necessary to exercise full-scale proletarian dictatorship in the spheres of the superstructure and the ideology. Neither the Paris Commune nor the October Revolution gave this amount of attention to this. Mao's way has far-reaching creative significance.

In order to strengthen and consolidate proletarian dictatorship, Mao Zedong thought it necessary to promote a struggle to elevate the proletariat and smash the bourgeoisie. After the Communist party had seized power, lots of cadres who were Party members in name but fellow-travelling democrats in reality began to show their original nature. They gradually abandoned the original purpose of the revolution and became unwilling to continue the revolution. Some began to pursue corrupt pleasures, acting as grand officials lording it over the masses. The capitalist roaders inside the Party disregarded Mao Zedong's criticisms and warnings about these facts, gradually building up their own headquarters and interest group inside the Party, acting contrary to the line of Mao Zedong. By the eve of the Cultural Revolution, the power of the inner-Party opposition had become enormous.

Mao Zedong discovered that after decades of effort bourgeois rights not only continued to exist in socialist China, but that in fact there was a strong market for them. He also discovered that a new class was quietly taking shape. At various times Mao



Zedong this new class in different terms: the bureaucratic class, the privileged class, the capitalist roaders. Mao Zedong was alarmed that at any time a capitalist restoration was possible in China. He recognized this clearly and warned the Party: Socialism is a relatively long historical stage. All during this stage classes and class struggle continue to exist. There is a struggle between two lines; there is the danger of a capitalist restoration. Therefore, we must institute all kinds of struggles to elevate the proletariat and smash the bourgeois. It is unavoidable that we must establish and consolidate a perfected dictatorship of the proletariat.

It is precisely under these conditions that Mao Zedong brought up the theory of continued revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat. He resolved to initiate the historically unprecedented Great Cultural Revolution, with the duty to struggle, criticize, change (斗批改).

Only if Mao Zedong Thought takes command is it possible victoriously to accomplish socialist political reform.

#### **4. Xi Jinping Decides on the Direction of Political Reform**

On the morning of the 21<sup>st</sup> the Party Center and the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference held a ceremony in the Conference's auditorium celebrating the 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the CPPCC. Xi Jinping, General Secretary of the Party Center, State Chairman, and Chairman of the Military Affairs Commission, made an important speech.

Xi Jinping stressed that socialist consultative democracy is the special form and unique excellence of China's socialist democracy.

Xi Jinping stressed that carrying out people's democracy and assuring that the people are masters of the house demands that in ruling the country and administering the government that we consult with the full breadth of all those within the people (在人民内).<sup>5</sup> Within the scope of China's socialist system it is desirable to discuss matters. Things that concern lots of people should be discussed with lots of people in order to find out the majority consensus on the social will and demands. That's the true significance of people's democracy. We should persist in discussion of many matters, in discussing when we meet difficulties, in discussing when we are going to do something. The more discussion the better, promoting the development of the institutionalization of socialist consultative democracy.

Xi Jinping stressed that consultative democracy is a form of democracy unique to China. It has a deep cultural base, theoretical base, practical base, institutional base. Socialist democracy requires not only a complete institutional process but also a full measure of participation and practice.

Xi Jinping stressed that the people must be the masters. The people as masters must be concretely and in practice manifested in the rule of the Communist party and in the administration of government in all aspects of all departments in the work of all levels. When it affects the interests of the whole people of all ethnicities it requires broad discussion among the whole people and throughout society. When it has to do with the interests the popular masses of particular localities, there must be broad discussion with

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<sup>5</sup> The "people" here are to be distinguished from the "class enemy," over whom the people exercise dictatorship. Those Party leaders who had been purged and who have not yet been rehabilitated—Lin Biao, Jiang Qing, Bo Xilai perhaps—would, at least in the past, have been held to be representatives of the class enemy. It is not clear here whom Qiu Shike considers to be an enemy, outside the people.

the popular masses of those localities. When it has to do with particular segments of the people, there must be broad discussion with those people. When it has to do with matters of the masses at the base level, there must be broad discussion with the base-level masses. The process of engaging in broad discussions within the people is the process of developing democracy, of drawing on collective wisdom and sharing useful ideas; it is the process of unifying thought and firming up consensus; it is the process of scientific decision-making and democratic decision making, the process of bringing to reality the people as masters of the house. If we do things this way, there will be a deep foundation for the administration of the state and of society; we will then be able to consolidate all our strength.

Xi Jinping points out, the Communist Party of China comes from the people and serves the people. That is what is decisive in the CPC's leadership of the people in establishing the People's Republic of China and in the firm dependence upon the people in administering the government and managing society. Serving the people with our whole heart and mind and at all times representing the basic interests of the broad mass of the people is the main premise and basis upon which we implement and develop consultative democracy.

Xi Jinping stresses that democracy is not a decoration or a plaything; rather, it is the way of resolving questions. In everything the CPC does in exercising power and in all the administrative activities of the PRC it is necessary to respect the ruling position of the people, respect the creativity of the people, revere the people as teachers. The increase of our political wisdom and the strengthening of our governmental capacity must be deeply rooted in the creative practice of the people. Everyone, from all sides, must make use of

their clear perception and apply it to the governance of the country. We must persist in implementing, maintaining, and developing the basic interests of the broad mass of the people as our starting point and our foothold.

From what Xi Jinping said in his speech, the nature of his ideal political system is one in which the people are the masters of the house. The political form is a consultative democracy, with the people as the objects of consultation. Democracy cannot be treated as a plaything. Xi Jinping's speech amounts to setting up the standards for the direction of political reform. The problem is whether or not it will be put into practice.

Political reform must oppose the anarchic inclination to have democracy without centralism and also the autocratic tendency to have centralization without democracy. It demands hard work to assure that it achieves Mao Zedong's dialectical unity of democracy and centralism.

It would be a mistake to look simply at western experience and thought. There must be creativity. At first there should be localized democratic experiments and, on the basis of this experience, later on broaden the scope.

China's political reform should begin with some easy things.

**For example, there should first be set up a system of listening to all sides and a system of ancillary reports**

Listening to all sides means that the representatives of all the thought tides should meet together and listen to the different voices. The system of supplementary reports means that in all central meetings of the Party, government, or masses there should be, in addition to the main report, also supplementary reports devoted to voicing criticisms. In addition to listening to the General Secretary's Political Report and the Premier's Report

on the Work of the Government, the Center should also listen to special reports critical of the Political Report and the Report on the Work of the Government.

**For example, a referendum system should be set up**

Referenda are a means whereby the whole people can have a role in making the decisions on the line and on great matters of policy. For example, is there agreement on the Cultural Revolution or on reform? There might be referenda on policies concerning education, housing, medical care. Only in this way will it be possible to make correct choices.

**For example, popularize (群众化—“massify”) the people’s representatives**

The people’s congress is the great assembly representing the popular masses. It must be guaranteed that the majority of representatives are from ordinary workers, peasants, soldiers, and intellectuals. We can’t allow the majority to consist of officials, rich people, and celebrities.

**For example, restore to the people the Four Greats<sup>6</sup> and the right to demonstrate, strike, so forth**

Great contending, great loosening, great debates, and great character posters were long ago proven by history to be a powerful tool whereby the popular masses could exercise supervision over Party and government cadres. The right to demonstrate and to strike are basic rights of the people and must be guaranteed.

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<sup>6</sup> 大鸣, 大放, 大辩论, 大字报: big shouting, big loosening [these two phrases are usually translated *blooming and contending*], big debates, big character posters. These “freedoms” were incorporated into the post-Cultural Revolution constitution of 1973, but were later removed by Deng Xiaoping on the grounds that in practice they amounted to mob rule and anarchy.

The people hope that Xi Jinping and the Party Center will stand at a great historical juncture, with greater breadth of vision, greater magnanimity, mounting ever higher in courage and aspiration, rectifying the errors in reform and opening, carrying on the last wishes of Mao Zedong, bringing to completion China's unprecedented integration in politics, economics, culture, and everything else. They must unleash and depend on the broad popular masses, uniting to the greatest degree all forces that can be united, punishing the bourgeois revisionist power holders and their running dogs, fighting through to the great rebirth of the Chinese nation and of socialism!

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