

History 854: Seminar on Modern Chinese History

M. Meisner
Spring 1989
Wednesday 3:30-5;30

Topic: Problems in the History of Chinese Marxism

Your responsibilities for the work of the seminar are four-fold:

1. First and foremost is the preparation of a completed seminar paper to be presented and discussed during the period April 19-May 10. The presentation of papers will be performed in a fairly formal manner. Papers must be prepared, typed, xeroxed and distributed to all members of the seminar at least one week prior to the date they are scheduled for presentation. A discussant (one of the other members of the seminar) will present a written critique of the paper (about 5 pages in length/15-20 minutes) which will be followed by general discussion and criticism.
2. Readings on the topics outlined on the following pages should be done on a timely basis and you will be expected to have something of interest to say about each of the topics selected for discussion.
3. You will be expected to prepare a short theoretical-type paper (about 5 pages) on one or more of the topics listed below to serve as a basis or starting point for discussion. These essays can be prepared collaboratively by those who prefer to do so.
4. As implied above, in addition to presenting your own paper to the seminar, you will serve as discussant for one other paper.

The readings suggested on the following pages primarily are the writings of Western scholars who have worked on the history of Marxism and/or the history of Chinese Communist thought. In reading these, it is important for you to know who was writing when, i.e., the ideological-political-historical context of a particular work. Familiarity with the writings of Mao Zedong, other prominent Chinese Marxists, and relevant aspects of the Marxist-Leninist tradition is assumed. Pertinent texts will be noted as we proceed. Also assumed is familiarity with the history of Chinese Communism, both before and after 1949. Such deficiencies as you may have in these areas should be corrected by additional reading and reflection.

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Tentative Schedule

Part I: Selected Topics in the History of Maoism

Jan. 25: Organization/General Discussion

Feb. 1: The Origins of Maoism

Benjamin Schwartz, Chinese Communism and the Rise of Mao
(Harvard, 1951), pp. 73-78 and ch. 13 (pp. 189-204).

M. Meisner, Li Ta-chao and the Origins of Chinese Marxism
(Harvard, 1967), ch. 11 and Epilogue.

Isaac Deutscher, "Maoism--its Origins and Outlook," in Deutscher,
Ironies of History (Oxford, 1966), pp. 88-120.

Raymond Wylie, The Emergence of Maoism (Stanford, 1980),
chs. 2-4.

Stuart Schram, The Political Thought of Mao Tse-tung (Praeger,
1969), rev. and enlarged ed. "Introduction" (pp. 15-149)

Feb. 8: Maoism, Populism and Utopian Socialism

Catherine Lynch, Ch. I on Populism in China in Ph.D. dissertation
on Liang Shuming (UW Hist. Dept., 1988).

M. Meisner, "Leninism and Maoism: Some Populist Perspectives on
Marxism-Leninism in China" and "Utopian Socialist Themes in
Maoism," chs. 2 & 3 of Marxism, Maoism and Utopianism
(Wisconsin, 1982) (pp. 28-117).

Brenda Sansom, chapter on Deng Yenda in Ph.D. dissertation on
Guomindang Marxism (UW Hist. Dept., 1988).

On the Marxist theoretical background: Marx and Engels, Manifesto,
part 3; Engels, Socialism: Utopian and Scientific; Engels,
"On Social Relations in Russia;" Lenin's anti-populist polemics
("On the Economic Content of Narodism," "A Characterization of
Economic Romanticism," etc.); M. Meisner, "Marxism and
Utopianism" (ch. 1 of Marxism, Maoism and Utopianism).

Feb. 15: Maoism and the Leninist Party

Benjamin Schwartz, "The Reign of Virtue: Some Broad Perspectives on Leader and Party in the Cultural Revolution," China Quarterly No. 35 (July-Sept. 1968), pp. 1-17. Also in John W. Lewis (ed.), Party Leadership and Revolutionary Power in China (Cambridge, 1970), pp. 149-69.

Stuart R. Schram, "The Party in Chinese Communist Ideology," China Quarterly No. 38 (April-June 1969), pp. 1-26. Also in Lewis (ed.), pp. 170-202.

M. Meisner, "Leninism and Maoism: Some Populist Perspectives...", China Quarterly (Jan-March 1971), pp. 2-36. Also in Marxism, Maoism and Utopianism, ch. 3.

On the Leninist Concept of the Party and the Categories of "Consciousness" and "Spontaneity": Leopold Haimson, The Russian Marxists and the Origins of Bolshevism; V.I. Lenin, What Is to Be Done?; Rosa Luxemburg, "Organizational Problems of Social Democracy."

Feb. 22: The Theory of Permanent Revolution

John B. Starr, Continuing the Revolution: The Political Thought of Mao (Princeton, 1979)

March 1: Class and Class Struggle in Maoism

Richard Curt Kraus, Class Conflict in Chinese Socialism (Columbia, 1981)

March 8: The Concept of Cultural Revolution

M. Meisner, "Iconoclasm and Cultural Revolution in China and Russia," in A. Gleason, P. Kenez, and R. Stites (eds), Bolshevik Culture (Indiana, 1985), pp. 279-93.

Paul Sweezy and Charles Bettelheim, "Between Capitalism and Socialism," in Sweezy and Bettelheim, On the Transition to Socialism (Monthly Review Press, 1971), pp. 3-76.

March 15: The Maoist Vision of the Future

Bertell Ollman, "Marx's Vision of Communism: A Reconstruction," in S. Bialer (ed.), Radical Visions of the Future (Westview, 1977), pp. 35-83.

Robert C. Tucker, The Marxian Revolutionary Idea (Norton, 1969), chs. 1 & 7.

M. Meisner, "Utopian and Dystopian Elements in the Maoist Vision of the Future," in Radical Visions of the Future (also, ch. 7 in Marxism, Maoism and Utopianism)

Alternative Topics:

"Symposium on Mao and Marx," Modern China, Vol. 2, No. 4 (Oct. 1976) and Vol. 3, Nos. 1, 2 and 4 (Jan., April, and Oct. 1977).

"Maoism and Stalinism," E. Friedman, article in Telos

Part II: Topics in Post-Maoist Chinese Marxism

March 29: Economic Determinism and Ideological Deradicalization

Stuart R. Schram, Ideology and Policy in China Since the Third Plenum (London, Cont. China Inst., 1984), 81 pp.

M. Meisner, "The Chinese Rediscovery of Karl Marx," Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars (Fall, 1985), pp. 1-16

M. Meisner, "Marx, Mao and Deng on the Division of Labor in History," (in mss., in Italian, or in Dirlik and Meisner, eds., Marxism and the Chinese Experience)

Michael Sullivan, "C.C.P. Ideology Since the Third Plenum," in Bill Brugger (ed.), Chinese Marxism in Flux, 1978-84 (M.E. Sharpe, 1985), pp. 67-97.

Arif Dirlik, "Socialism Without Revolution: The Case of Contemporary China," Pacific Affairs, Vol 54, No. 4 (Winter, 1981-82)

April 5: The Debate on Alienation

Bill Brugger and David Kelly, "The Importance of Humanism," Ch. 6 of Brugger and Kelly book mss. "Considerations on Chinese Marxism, 1978-86"

"Wang Ruoshui: Writings on Humanism, Alienation and Philosophy," edited and translated by David Kelly, Chinese Studies in Philosophy, Spring 1985, Vol. 16, No. 3.

On the Marxist theoretical background: Marx, "Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts;" Marx, "On the Jewish Question;" Istvan Meszaros, Marx's Theory of Alienation; Bertell Ollman, Alienation: Marx's Concept of Man in Capitalist Society; Robert Tucker, Philosophy and Myth in Karl Marx; Erich Fromm, Marx's Concept of Man

April 12: The Debate on the Asiatic Mode of Production

Wu Dakun, "The Asiatic Mode of Production in History as Viewed by Political Economy in Its Broad Sense," in Su Shaozhi et al, Marxism in China (Nottingham, 1983), pp. 53-77.

John Rapp, "The Fate of Marxist Democrats in Leninist Party States: China's Aborted Debate on the Asiatic Mode of Production" (article mss. derived from Ph.D. dissertation -- UW Pol. Sci. Dept., 1987 -- on the Chinese Asiatic Mode debate.)

On the Marxian theoretical background: Karl Marx, "The British Rule in India;" Karl Wittfogel, Oriental Despotism; Perry Anderson, Lineages of the Absolutist State, appendix on the Asiatic Mode (pp. 462-549); Hal Draper, Karl Marx's Theory of Revolution, Vol. I: State and Bureaucracy (pp. 515-571, 629-664.)

Part III: Presentation, Critique and Discussion of Papers

April 19 -- May 10