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Authors

O'Brien, Kevin J
Li, Lianjiang

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CAMPAIGN NOSTALGIA IN THE CHINESE COUNTRYSIDE

Kevin J. O'Brien and Lianjiang Li

By the late 1970s, there is little doubt that most Chinese were relieved that the era of large-scale, mass movements had ended. The tens of millions who had been victimized by recurring campaigns were undoubtedly shaken, even traumatized; those fortunates who had escaped being targeted typically were weary, disillusioned, and unresponsive to new calls for mass mobilization.¹ After a generation of high-pressure politics, the novelty of political campaigns had worn off and mass participation had become little more than a tiresome obligation. The "stirring" rectifications that William Hinton witnessed in the late 1940s had disappeared, as villagers often dozed during struggle sessions, left early, and said little.² By all accounts,

Kevin J. O'Brien is Associate Professor of Political Science at Ohio State University, Columbus, and Visiting Associate Professor of Political Science at the University of California at Berkeley, 1997–99. Lianjiang Li is Assistant Professor of Government and International Studies at Hong Kong Baptist University. For generous financial support, the authors would like to thank the Asia Foundation, the Henry Luce Foundation, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Research and Writing Program, the Pacific Cultural Foundation, and the Research Grants Council of Hong Kong.

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1. On the public's "dread" of political campaigns, see Xu Wenxiu, "Buyao zai xiangwang gao zhengzhi yundong" [Don't yearn for launching political campaigns again], *Neibu wengao* [Internal manuscripts], no. 4 (February 25, 1992), p. 28. On apprehension over "political typhoons" and fears of being targeted, dating back to the 1960s, see Anita Chan, Richard Madsen, and Jonathan Unger, *Chen Village under Mao and Deng* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), pp. 144, 166, and 264; also Frederick Teiwes, *Politics and Purges in China*, 2nd ed. (Armonk, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, 1993), p. 428. For memories of persecution, see Jun Jing, *The Temple of Memories* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1996), p. 56. On weariness with politics, see Maurice Meisner, *Mao's China and After* (New York: Free Press, 1986), pp. 445–46; Huang Shu-min, *The Spiral Road* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1989), p. 109; and Marc J. Blecher and Gordon White, *Micropolitics in Contemporary China* (White Plains, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, 1979), p. 119.

2. William Hinton, *Shenfan* (New York: Vintage, 1983), pp. 381–86, 413–14. On ritualized participation, see John P. Burns, *Political Participation in Rural China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), p. 179; and Sebastian Heilmann, "Turning Away from the Cultural

most Chinese simply wanted to be left alone. According to one estimate, only 10% of the urban population was willing to participate in a political campaign by the mid-1970s. As Deng Xiaoping himself put it in 1980: “[The people] are fed up with large-scale movements.”³

Yet, 20 years later, long after scholarly attention turned to other matters, Chinese commentators report a “cry [*husheng*] for mass campaigns that at times is intense.”⁴ Assessments of public opinion, often appearing in “discussion and contention columns,” tell of a reluctance to leave campaigns behind and rate this feeling as “difficult to part with.”⁵ At the same time, direct evidence from the countryside suggests that a reappraisal of political campaigns is underway. In a questionnaire distributed in 1997 to 2,974 rural residents from 19 villages in Fujian and Jiangsu Provinces, many of the respondents attributed increasing corruption to the end of political campaigns (9.4%), deemed campaigns to be the most effective means to curb corruption (22.3%), and felt that they might again be needed (31.9%).⁶

What has changed? Why has the aversion to campaigns faded in some quarters? Who wishes to see mass mobilization return and how have the opponents of large-scale campaigns responded to this “important political trend?”⁷

Campaign Nostalgia

Needless to say, the scope of campaign nostalgia should not be exaggerated. In our interviews (mainly in the countryside of Hebei Province) and in the space provided for comments on our 1997 questionnaire, there was little evidence of an appetite for the upheaval of the Great Leap Forward or the vio-

Revolution,” Occasional Paper 28, Center for Pacific Area Studies at Stockholm University, September 1996, p. 33; cf. Gordon Bennett, *Yundong* (Berkeley: University of California, Institute of East Asian Studies, Center for Chinese Studies, 1976), pp. 35, 85–88.

3. Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping, 1975–1982* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1984), p. 330. For the 10% estimate, see Heilmann, “Turning Away,” p. 33.

4. Sang Xuecheng, “Tiaochu lishi ‘zhouqilü’” [Breaking the ‘historical cycle’], *Zhonggong Dangshi yanjiu* [Research on Chinese Communist Party history], no. 5 (September 1997), p. 53.

5. Liu Zuoxiang and Xiao Zhoulou, “Tiaochu zhouqilü, yao kao minzhu, gengyao kao fazhi” [To break the historical cycle, we must depend on democracy and even more we must depend on rule by law], *Zhongguo faxue* [Chinese jurisprudence], no. 2 (April 1995), p. 11, fn. 1. For events that led to a “longing for campaigns” in Tianjin’s suburbs, see Ding Lianxiang, “Dangqian nongcun ganqun guanxi de xin dongtai jiqi duice” [New tendencies in rural cadre-mass relations and countermeasures], *Tianjin jiancha* [Tianjin procurator], no. 3 (March 1995), p. 33.

6. See Lianjiang Li, “Support for Political Campaigns: Public Opinion in Rural China,” typescript, Hong Kong, May 1999. The questionnaire was distributed by high school students in purposively selected villages. Since this was not a nationwide probability sample, relationships between variables can be explored but inferences about the rural population writ large cannot be drawn.

7. Xu Wenxiu, “Buyao zai xiangwang,” p. 28.

lence and factional struggle that, in some areas, accompanied the Cultural Revolution. Villagers also made distinctions between types of campaigns.⁸ No one, for instance, was heard clamoring for incomprehensible ideological movements of the late Mao era, like the anti-Confucius, anti-Lin Biao campaign or the unintelligible criticism of the fourteenth-century novel, *Water Margin*. Nor was there any discernible enthusiasm for efforts to instill revolutionary values or improve public morality, such as was attempted half-heartedly during the rural socialist education campaign of the early 1990s.⁹ Most villagers, in other words, appear to be pleased that campaigns focusing on high politics, rural lifestyle, and value change have been scrapped or (with the exception of birth control and the anti-crime drive) are faint echoes of their pre-1976 forerunners.

But many villagers remain nostalgic for a type of mobilization common in the Maoist era but little seen lately—vigorous mass campaigns directed against cadre corruption. More specifically, they say they yearn for agents of higher levels appearing in their villages to clean things up.¹⁰ These people speak of campaigns as opportunities to attack cadre misconduct with the support of outsiders who spurred the populace into action and had the authority to suspend self-serving leaders from their posts. They longingly recall (or imagine) how grasping, partial, and cruel cadres were once held on a tight leash: how ordinary villagers could at least periodically call them to account for their misdeeds. They claim that the inclusion offered by anti-corruption campaigns was both enlightening and exhilarating¹¹; it was proof that problem cadres could be disciplined when the center chose to do so.

What villagers seem to find appealing about these rough-and-tumble methods of ensuring cadre discipline is that they drew in the masses and were decisive. Political campaigns are remembered as a means for ordinary peasants to help rein in the high and mighty, as well as a form of control that provided instant and gratifying results. As one Hebei villager explained: conducting a large-scale movement was like “setting up a pole and immediately seeing the shadow” (*li gan jian ying*).¹² Cadres may have found the rural anti-corruption Four Cleanups campaign of the mid-1960s a frightful experience that resulted in thousands of wrongful verdicts, but, in the memory of

8. For Western typologies, see Charles Cell, *Revolution at Work* (New York: Academic Press, 1977), pp. 8–9, 130, 166–67; Bennett, *Yundong*, p. 46.

9. On the weak response to the rural socialist education campaign, see Chen Weixing, “The CCP’s Socialist Ideology Campaign of 1990–1992,” *Issues and Studies* 29:5 (May 1993), pp. 70–88; Yun-xiang Yan, “Everyday Power Relations,” in *The Waning of the Communist State*, ed. Andrew G. Walder (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), pp. 223, 236.

10. Interviews, Hebei Province, summer 1994, December 1995; Shandong Province, summer 1994; and written comments by questionnaire respondent FJ0830.

11. Interviews, Hebei Province, September 1993, May 1994, and December 1995.

12. Interviews, Hebei Province, December 1995.

some country folk, such campaigns were a time of empowerment and improved governance. In fact, some villagers said they miss the “stability” and “harmonious relations” that prevailed in those halcyon days when grassroots leaders dared not be corrupt and the center’s commitment to check cadre misbehavior was the order of the day.¹³

Nostalgic villagers tend to view the intrusiveness and disruption of anti-corruption campaigns favorably rather than as a threat. With the end of class labeling and the dismantling of communes, their fears of being denounced as bad elements have lessened. They contend that arbitrariness and double jeopardy, if they were to arise again, would mainly affect cadres, most of whom they believe are guilty of one crime or another. Nostalgics do not dread open conflict with grassroots leaders or the prospect of participating in long, tense meetings and painstaking investigations, so long as they do not become targets themselves. Some, in fact, went so far as to praise the “storming atmosphere” of the Sanfan and Wufan movements of 1951–53 and tossed off surprising remarks, such as: “In the past, the Communist Party convened too many meetings and we were afraid of them. . . . Now we want more meetings.”¹⁴ Others, such as two primary school teachers from rural Hebei, spoke fondly of Mao’s willingness to rely on the masses and openly admired the fierceness and effectiveness of the Four Cleanups.¹⁵

What nostalgic villagers hope for varies, but it usually boils down to a focused campaign, reminiscent of the Four Cleanups, without the excesses. Some would force all cadres to “pass the gate” (*guoguan*) every three or four years, while others speak of reviving the four freedoms (speaking out freely, airing views fully, holding great debates, and writing big-character posters). Many would be satisfied with a serious, open-door Party rectification—a much more thoroughgoing effort than the tepid, closed-door rectification of 1983–87.¹⁶

13. Cf. “The farmers in Chairman Mao’s time had a greater sense of safety and security than they have now. Even though we did not have enough to eat in Mao’s time, we still thought Mao was great. Now we have enough to eat, but everyone curses Deng Xiaoping because there is no security and too much corruption.” Peter J. Seybolt, *Throwing the Emperor from His Horse* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1996), p. 127.

14. See, respectively, Liang Xianshi, “Guanyu fan fubai douzheng zhong qunzhong pingpan biao zhun de fenxi” [Analysis of the masses’ standards for evaluating the struggle against corruption], *Zhongguo Gongchandang (ZG)* [Chinese Communist Party], People’s University Reprint Series, no. 11 (November 1994), p. 137; and Si Xiong and Zheng Degang, “Shi shang” [Loss of soil moisture], *Shidai* [The times], no. 4 (1990), p. 46.

15. Interviews, Hebei Province, December 1995.

16. Interviews, Hebei Province, October 1993. On the limited impact of Deng’s last major rectification, see Bruce J. Dickson, “Conflict and Non-Compliance in Chinese Politics,” *Pacific Affairs* 63:2 (Summer 1990), pp. 170–90.

The Anti-Corruption Struggle: "Rely on the Masses but Do Not Launch Campaigns"

China's leaders are, of course, mindful of the grumbling that underlies campaign nostalgia. They know that cadre-villager relations are tense in many locations and ordinary citizens "detest graft, bribery, theft, and other dirty practices."¹⁷ Discussions of how to curb economic crime frequently note the "deep sense of pain" that unchecked corruption produces and the threat that such sentiments pose to social stability and Party rule.¹⁸ To allay public consternation and protect the Party's reputation, the center has devised a wide-ranging set of countermeasures. Broadly speaking, the official "anti-corruption struggle" (*fan fubai douzheng*) has four components, which are outlined below.

Ideological and Moral Education

Cadres are told to reject money worship and steep themselves in the Communist worldview. Leadership cadres in particular, are reminded of their obligation to set an example by exercising self-restraint and by controlling their children. For those who stray from Party norms, there is criticism and self-criticism.¹⁹

"Reliance on the Legal System"

"Reliance on the Legal System" (*yikao fazhi*) entails enacting new laws and regulations that punish corruption while strictly enforcing existing measures. All criminals are to be treated equally before the law, and the authoritative-

17. Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping, Vol. III (1982–1992)* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1994), p. 159.

18. Chen Wuming, "Fan fubai bixu yikao qunzhong" [We must rely on the masses when opposing corruption], *Zhenli de zhuiqiu* [Pursuit of truth], no. 1 (January 1994), p. 24. Hai Weishi, "Lianzheng jianshe fazhigua shi lishi de zouxiang" [The legalization of clean government construction is a historical trend], *Sifa xingzheng* [Judicial administration], no. 12 (December 1993), p. 6; Zhang Yangsheng, "Tongxiang lianzheng zhi lu" [The road to clean government], *ZG*, no. 7 (July 1997), p. 94.

19. Wu Yangmin, "Shilun Deng Xiaoping de lianzheng guan" [Discussing Deng Xiaoping's views on clean government], *Dangfeng yu lianzheng* [Party workstyle and clean government], no. 2 (February 1995), pp. 5–6; Dong Lei, "Fan fubai yao lizu yu jiaoyu, wanjiu, baohu ganbu" [Countering corruption must be based on educating, helping, and protecting cadres], *Henan ribao* [Henan daily], May 29, 1997, p. 2; Hu Changxi, Ge Baiwen, and Yu Shanying, "Dui yikao fazhi fan fubai de jidian sikao" [Several reflections on points concerning relying on the legal system to counter corruption], *Xuexi, yanjiu, cankao* [Study, research, and reference], no. 5 (May 1995), p. 50; Sang Xuecheng, "Tiaochu lishi 'zhouqilü'," pp. 53–54; Tian Kailin, "Shilun piping wuqi yu jufu fangbian" [On the weapon of criticism and resisting corruption and guarding against peaceful evolution], *ZG*, no. 6 (June 1996), pp. 115–16.

ness of anti-corruption statutes is to be increased. Big cases are to draw special attention, particularly those involving high-ranking cadres and their offspring. Efforts are to be made to break through "networks of personal relations" (*guanxiwang*) as Party leadership is put on a legal basis and anti-corruption work is systematized. On his 1992 Southern Tour, Deng Xiaoping gave his imprimatur to legal cures for corruption when he declared that relying on law was the guarantee of clean government.²⁰

Improved Supervision

The official anti-corruption drive also entails stepped-up oversight, from both within the bureaucracy and outside it. Internal supervision begins with enhancing the role of procurators and courts, and extends to strengthening discipline inspection committees. Recently, shortcomings in financial and auditing systems have received increased attention, with some analysts arguing that much can be learned from the experiences of Hong Kong and Singapore. Many Chinese commentators have applauded (admittedly highly compensated) top leaders in Hong Kong and Singapore for resisting the lure of corruption, and noted the demonstration effect it has had on their subordinates. Singapore's well-staffed and amply funded Corruption Investigation Bureau is often put forth as a model of rectitude and tenacity.²¹

Combating unhealthy tendencies also involves mobilizing democratic parties, mass organizations, and especially people's congresses, which are to employ their powers of appointment and recall to prevent unclean officials from

20. Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works, Vol. III*, p. 367; Wu Yangmin, "Shilun Deng Xiaoping," p. 6; Hu Changxi et al., "Dui yikao fazhi," pp. 48-50; Hai Weishi, "Lianzheng jianshe," pp. 5-6; Wang Xingning, "Qiantan jiaqiang dangfeng lianzheng zhidu jianshe" [Discussing the development of systems that strengthen party workstyle and clean government], *ZG*, no. 2 (February 1997), p. 56; Xie Wujun, "Guanyu fubai de benzhi, fenlei ji duice" [On corruption's character, types, and countermeasures], *ZG*, no. 1 (January 1997), pp. 117-18; Guangdongsheng Zhengfu Yanjiu Zhongxin Ketizu (Study Group of the Guangdong Province Government Research Center), "Fanfu baolian" [Countering corruption and guaranteeing cleanliness], *ZG*, no. 7 (July 1996), pp. 105-106; Zhang Dongjing, "Shenru, chijiu, geng you chengxiao de kaizhan fan fubai douzheng" [Deeply, lastingly, and more effectively unfold the anti-corruption struggle], *ZG*, no. 2 (February 1995), p. 136. On *guanxiwang*, see Li Xuewen, "Fan fubai" [Countering corruption], *ZG*, no. 7 (July 1996), p. 36. On "not being soft-hearted" and the Central Discipline Inspection Committee's 1993 decision to concentrate its forces on big cases, see, respectively, Liang Xianshi, "Guanyu fan fubai," p. 139, and Li Xueqin and Li Xuehui, "Xin Zhongguo fan fubai douzheng de licheng" [The course of new China's struggle against corruption], *Dang de wenxian* [Party documents], no. 5 (September 1995), pp. 48-49; also Chen Wuming, "Fan fubai," p. 24.

21. See Chen Shengluo, "Guanyu fan fubai wenti de jidian sikao" [Several reflections on the issue of countering corruption], *ZG*, no. 7 (July 1996), pp. 99-101; Xie Wujun, "Guanyu fubai," p. 117; and Guangdongsheng, "Fanfu baolian," p. 106.

retaining their posts.²² Some attention has also been paid to using the media to curb corruption. Greater transparency in government work implies prompt announcement of new anti-corruption measures and wide publicity of the results of major investigations. Ordinary people are to play a role in evaluating cadre performance, and efforts to prevent the media from revealing corruption are to be severely punished. Journalists must work hard to express and influence public opinion: their exposés should echo popular disgust with unscrupulous behavior and “frighten” (*zhenshe*) wayward officials.²³

“Reliance on the Masses”

Lastly, the anti-corruption struggle is to proceed in line with Deng Xiaoping’s injunction to rely on the masses (*yikao qunzhong*). As Jiang Zemin told the Central Discipline Inspection Committee in 1994: “Provided the leadership takes it seriously, relies on the masses, and makes a concerted effort to grasp this work, we can gradually reduce corrupt phenomena to the lowest possible level.” The argument here is that without popular involvement in anti-corruption work: (1) much cadre misconduct will never be discovered by the authorities; and (2) even if corruption is uncovered and snuffed out, it will rapidly return, like “the glowing embers of a fire,” particularly in locations where responsible officials themselves are unclean.²⁴

Reliance on the masses entails standardizing methods for dealing with mass “letters and visits” and institutionalizing the “reporting” (*jubao*) system. Report boxes and procedures for handling telephoned complaints are to be improved and popularized. The legal status of mass reports should be affirmed and the right to report corrupt activities must be legally guaranteed. Those who retaliate against complainants who disclose violations of law and discipline are to be punished, and popular fears concerning cadre reprisals are to be addressed.

Mass reports also are said to be more than harmless outlets for letting off steam. Officials responsible for ferreting out unhealthy tendencies have been

22. Guangdongsheng, “Fanfu baolian,” p. 107; Wu Yangmin, “Shilun Deng Xiaoping,” p. 6; Liang Xianshi, “Guanyu fan fubai,” p. 139; and Li Xueqin, “Fan fubai yao jianjue xiangxin he yikao qunzhong” [In opposing corruption we must resolutely believe in and rely on the masses], *Guangming ribao* [Guangming daily], May 11, 1994, p. 3.

23. Cheng Shengluo, “Guanyu fan fubai,” p. 103; Wang Xingning, “Qiantan jiaqiang dangfeng,” p. 57; Li Xueqin, “Fan fubai,” p. 3; Liang Xianshi, “Guanyu fan fubai,” p. 139; Guangdongsheng, “Fanfu baolian,” p. 107; and Li Xuewen, “Fan fubai,” pp. 35–36.

24. On corruption reappearing, see Chen Wuming, “Fan fubai,” p. 23. Jiang is cited in Liang Xianshi, “Guanyu fan fubai,” p. 139. For Deng’s views, see *Selected Works, Vol. III*, p. 44; also Fei Xun, “Dui shehuizhuyi shiqi qunzhong yundong wenti de lishi fansi” [Historical reflections on mass movements in the socialist period], *Yangzhou Daxue xuebao* [Yangzhou University academic journal], no. 2 (March 1997), p. 9; Wu Yangmin, “Shilun Deng Xiaoping,” p. 6; and Sang Xuecheng, “Tiaochu lishi ‘zhouqili’,” pp. 52–53.

instructed to welcome disclosures from the population at large while acting on leads the masses furnish. Though ordinary citizens are not permitted to dispose of cases themselves, measures such as ones drawn up by Guangdong's discipline inspection committee, procurator, and financial bureau to promote and reward mass reports reportedly have increased popular participation in anti-corruption work as well as the quality of reports. In fact, where reports have been encouraged, hundreds of thousands pour in every year and a number of malfeasant, high-ranking officials have been brought to justice. In the mid-1990s, according to nationwide statistics, about 80% of the cases handled by discipline inspection committees and procurators originated with mass reports.²⁵

It seems fair to conclude that the anti-corruption drive, as claimed, springs from a real concern with the "very existence of the Party and the state."²⁶ Although bursts of serious enforcement have been followed by long periods of relative inattention, the center has scored some successes and fashioned a reasonably comprehensive alternative to mass mobilization. The program is multifaceted, and each element conforms with Deng's edict: "Rely on the masses but do not launch campaigns."²⁷

The Origins of Campaign Nostalgia

For supporters of mass mobilization, however, the anti-corruption struggle is a disappointment. The line of attack espoused by the center is seen to be fine in principle but impractical in today's China. As one township Party secretary put it: "Everyone feels that current anti-corruption tactics fail to quench one's thirst."²⁸ Advocates of intense, open-door rectification argue that moral propaganda and cadre education do not restrain leaders who are inclined to line their pockets or favor their friends and family. They believe that legal remedies for corruption, including executions and arresting big

25. Li Xueqin, "Fan fubai," p. 4; Sang Xuecheng, "Tiachu lishi 'zhouqili'," p. 53; Ding Lianxiang, "Dangqian nongcun," pp. 33-34; Chen Wuming, "Fan fubai," pp. 24-25; Guangdongsheng, "Fanfu baolian," pp. 106-107; Peng Wende and Yang Ma, comp., *Zouchu zhouqili* [Escaping the historical cycle] (Beijing: Falü Chubanshe, 1995), p. 239; and Li and Li, "Xin Zhongguo," p. 48. On mass reports and investigations, see Zhang Yangsheng, "Tongxiang lianzheng," p. 94; Chen Wuming, "Fan fubai," p. 24; and Li Xueqin, "Fan fubai," p. 3.

26. See Jiang Zemin's remarks in *China Daily*, September 19, 1997, p. 1.

27. For analysis of Deng's comment, see Fei Xun, "Dui shehuizhuyi shiqi," p. 9; Wu Yangmin, "Shilun Deng Xiaoping," p. 6; Sang Xuecheng, "Tiachu lishi 'zhouqili'," pp. 52-53. On how current anti-corruption measures can replace campaigns, see Hu Changxi et al., "Dui yikao fazhi," p. 49; Chen Shengluo, "Guanyu fan fubai," p. 101; and Wan Xiaomei, "Fan fubai douzheng zhong de jige wenti" [Several issues in the struggle against corruption], *ZG*, no. 4 (April 1995), p. 112.

28. Interview, Hebei Province, October 1993. See also Seth Faison, "No. 1 Complaint of Chinese: All This Corruption!" *New York Times*, March 11, 1999.

"tigers," have virtually no effect on pesky "flies" deep in the countryside who misappropriate funds or take bribes. They are unimpressed by the media's inquisitorial vigor and say that the fruits of anti-corruption work are seen mainly on television rather than in everyday life. They know that pronouncements about impartial enforcement of the law and pursuing cadre offspring often have minimal follow up. As for Party discipline and bureaucratic oversight, nostalgics are prone to ridicule them as "scratching an itch from outside one's boot."²⁹

Even mass reports are often written off. Nostalgic villagers question whether networks of personal connection can be broken through without recourse to full-fledged campaigns. They note that appeals to procurators and disciplinary organs frequently close rather than open channels of access and that filing a report can easily lead to reprisals, such as the poisoning of one's livestock or breaking of one's windows.³⁰ These concerns are often well-founded. Individual, anonymous reports infrequently produce action, but identifying oneself and mobilizing others is risky and can lead to retaliation when, despite regulations to the contrary, a complaint is forwarded to the targeted unit.³¹ And even when a mass report generates results, worries about reprisals sometime persist. In 1990 in Shanghai, over one million yuan in rewards for uncovering corrupt activities were not picked up. Or in a celebrated Tianjin case, the author of an anonymous mass report exposed misappropriation in a construction bureau amounting to 160,000 yuan, but refused to collect a 3,000 yuan reward, even after the guilty party was executed. In the end, *Tianjin Daily* was forced to run a missing person's notice to locate the skittish whistle-blower!³²

For villagers who have been let down too many times, the anti-corruption drive remains altogether too polite. Progress has been slow and practice has not caught up with promise. According to one Chinese commentator, "quite a large number of people" now fear that the struggle will not be carried through to the end.³³ Many skeptics have concluded that the authorities cannot fight corruption alone and have become frustrated with the center's unwillingness to rely on the masses more fully. Ordinary citizens, it is said, know perfectly well who is clean and who is not, but they lack effective

29. See Xu Wenxiu, "Buyao zai xiangwang," pp. 28–29. Interviews, Hebei Province, October 1993. For popular criticism of anti-corruption work, see Liang Xianshi, "Guanyu fan fubai," pp. 137–39.

30. Ding Lianxiang, "Dangqian nongcun," p. 34; Liang Xianshi, "Guanyu fan fubai," p. 138; Peng and Yang, *Zouchu zhouqilü*, p. 238; and Chen Wuming, "Fan fubai," p. 24.

31. Some corrupt cadres have gone so far as to brag that they can wait out any investigation and have no reason to fear mass reports. See Ding Lianxiang, "Dangqian nongcun," p. 34.

32. Hai Weishi, "Lianzheng jianshe," p. 6.

33. Chen Wuming, "Fan fubai," pp. 23–24.

means to convey this information and prod sleepy disciplinary organs into action—they remain “outside the door.” These people want anti-corruption work to be a “large chorus” rather than a “one-man show” and are “full of enthusiasm” (*manqiang reqing*) to participate in a deeper, more inclusive struggle.³⁴

Nostalgic villagers are confident that a modulated campaign could be launched that spared them but snared corrupt cadres. They may be mistaken, of course. Mass mobilization, in the past, certainly had many unforeseen and unfortunate consequences. But nostalgia rests on perceptions rather than rigorous historical analysis; it relies, in Geremie Barmé’s words, “on collective memories, fantasies, and imagined pasts.”³⁵ Granted, only some campaigns “cut a tangled skein of jute with a sharp knife” (*kuaidao zhan luanma*) (i.e., produced a quick, bold solution to a vexing problem). Furthermore, some villagers view Maoist practices through rose-colored lenses and downplay aspects of campaigns they would rather forget. What is important is that nostalgics feel that only “shock tactics” and “crowd power” can control corruption.³⁶ As one admirer of Mao explained: “if you want to counter corruption, you must mobilize the masses, you must act like Chairman Mao did.”³⁷ Nostalgics pine for dishonest and predatory cadres to be made more vulnerable; they want them to walk on eggs around watchful community members who have been drawn into policy implementation and armed with powerful, essentially Maoist means to ensure cadre accountability.

Where does campaign nostalgia come from? Its roots appear to lie in unflattering comparisons between Dengist and Maoist approaches to cadre management.³⁸ Before proceeding further, it should be noted that there are many villagers who do not feel nostalgic about political campaigns. Some are unconcerned with corruption; they argue that shady behavior that in the past would have been defined as corruption is inevitable and essentially harmless.³⁹ Others regard the situation to be close to hopeless; they feel that little

34. Liang Xianshi, “Guanyu fan fubai,” pp. 137-38; Chen Wuming, “Fan fubai,” pp. 23-24; and interviews, Hebei Province, December 1995.

35. Geremie R. Barmé, *Shades of Mao* (Armonk, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, 1996), p. 39.

36. On using shock tactics and crowd power to fight corruption, see Zhang Yangsheng, “Tongxiang lianzheng,” p. 94.

37. Interviews, Hebei Province, September–October 1993.

38. On “recall[ing] fondly the incorruptible Party of the Maoist past,” see Liu Xiaobo, “The Specter of Mao Zedong,” in Geremie Barmé, *Shades of Mao*, p. 277. On using Mao as a symbol against today’s rulers, see Edward Friedman, “Democracy and ‘Mao Fever,’” *Journal of Contemporary China* 6 (Summer 1994), p. 91. For Mao as a “floating sign,” see Barmé, *Shades of Mao*, pp. 15–16.

39. On changing (mainly elite) understandings of corruption, see Richard Levy, “Corruption, Economic Crime and Social Transformation Since the Reforms,” *Australian Journal of Chinese*

can be done to check cadre misbehavior.⁴⁰ (A number of respondents to our 1997 survey expressed this sort of despair. They blamed the corruption of village cadres on higher levels, lamenting that the current central leadership will never adopt the measures needed, because they themselves are not clean.⁴¹) Still others put their faith in lawsuits or lodging collective complaints.⁴² Yet, others hold that contemporary personnel management is reasonably effective and recent grassroots reforms provide opportunities for inclusion based on rule by law. Members of this last group argue, for instance, that when cadres become more responsive through villagers' committee elections and improved financial accountability, self-serving behavior can be curbed and abuses limited. To these villagers, institutionalized means of holding cadres accountable are preferable to sporadic, unpredictable mass mobilization.

That said, for many rural residents, there is still ample cause to lack confidence in new ways to curb cadre misconduct. At a minimum, to realize the potential of recent reforms, central policies that promote rule by law and offer villagers various protections must be enforced. And, in many locations, it is not clear that they will be. Attempts to step up popular supervision of cadres, which are codified, say, in State Council regulations governing mass letters and visits, are often downplayed in deference to provisions in those same regulations that lay out villagers' legal responsibilities and facilitate social control. The same is true of reforms designed to promote grassroots democratization, which in some locations promise much but deliver little. Villagers in all too many places continue to be frustrated, for example, when township or village Party branches manipulate villagers' committee elections or hand-pick nominees. Violence, illegal detentions, and torture continue despite the Administrative Litigation Law's provisions allowing villagers to sue officials who violate their rights. Many villagers seem to feel that without recurring campaigns and their sandwich-like pressure from above and below, the center

Affairs 33 (January 1995), pp. 1–25; and Lynn T. White, III, "Changing Concepts of Corruption in Communist China," *Issues and Studies* 24:1 (January 1988), pp. 49–95.

40. In one villager's words: "It is hopeless. He is appointed by the township and can spend 24 hours a day defending himself. I am only an ordinary peasant and I have land to farm and side-line businesses to take care of." Interview, Hebei Province, September 1993. On "compliant villagers," see Lianjiang Li and Kevin J. O'Brien, "Villagers and Popular Resistance in Contemporary China," *Modern China* 22:1 (January 1996), pp. 32–35.

41. Some questionnaire respondents wrote comments such as "if the upper beam is not straight, the lower ones will go aslant" or "officials protect each other" when answering questions about corruption and political campaigns, e.g., respondents FJ0685, FJ0704, and JS1447.

42. On officials who exercise greater caution in their work as a result of the Administrative Litigation Law, see Minxin Pei, "Citizens v. Mandarins," *China Quarterly* 152 (December 1997), p. 860; also Kevin J. O'Brien and Lianjiang Li, "The Politics of Lodging Complaints in Rural China," *China Quarterly* 143 (September 1995), pp. 766–67.

lacks the wherewithal to control grassroots cadres and implement its own mass-regarding policies. They are aware that many potentially beneficial measures are "hot at the center, warm in the provinces, lukewarm in the cities, cool in the counties, cold in the townships, and frozen in the villages."⁴³ Such villagers often despise "local emperors" (*tu huangdi*) but feel powerless before them.

According to nostalgics, rural leaders know it is unlikely that inappropriate conduct will be detected or treated as a serious infraction. Fellow villagers may be aware that a cadre lives beyond his means, but officials above may not know, or they may turn a blind eye to such "trivial problems." Many villagers have concluded that corrupt leaders have much less to fear from higher levels than they did in the past. In the view of one Hebei villager: "Cadres think like this: now that there won't be any more mass campaigns, only a small minority of corrupt cadres will be detected by higher levels." Or in the words of another Hebei farmer: "What cadres feared most was campaigns. . . . Why are they so bold now? Simply because they believe that campaigns won't return."⁴⁴ Given flagging organizational controls and immediate superiors who are often corrupt themselves, grassroots cadres know that damaging information is generally not sought and, if found, is often buried.

And even when cadre misbehavior is brought to the attention of responsible officials, nostalgic villagers claim it rarely draws much in the way of punishment. They maintain that rural cadres have determined that the center itself no longer cares about many forms of misconduct and that beyond high-profile cases in which wrongdoers are sacrificed to appease public opinion, disciplinary organs are inclined to wink at incidents that would have brought harsh punishment in the past. With the threat of serious sanctions essentially gone "so long as," in one cynic's words, "cadres stop short of murder,"⁴⁵ villagers commonly believe that officials shield one another behind a sea of "protective umbrellas" (*baohu san*). Even leaders with an atrocious work style are said to assume that they have tacit approval for their actions and feel that there is little risk in engaging in the most outrageous behavior.

Some older and retired cadres claim that their younger counterparts are particularly bold in this regard. They are easy to corrupt, care little about

43. For this phrase, see Duan Zhiqiang and Tang Jinsu, "Gansusheng nongcun jiceng zuzhi zhuangkuang diaocha baogao" [Investigation report on the current situation of grassroots rural organizations in Gansu Province], unpublished report of the Ministry of Civil Affairs, 1989, p. 13.

44. Interviews, Hebei Province, December 1995. On cadres who are "unimpeded by fears of anti-corruption campaigns," see Jonathan Unger, "State and Peasant in Post-Revolution China," *Journal of Peasant Studies* 17:1 (October 1989), p. 134.

45. Interview, Hebei Province, October 1993.

serving the masses, and mock honest cadres as timid, risk-averse Maoists who lack a pioneering spirit.⁴⁶ One retired village Party secretary recalled that in his days the prospect of mass mobilization fettered him, insofar as if he dared to take anything he was eventually "forced to throw up what he had eaten." He noted that younger cadres had never experienced a thorough rectification like the Four Cleanups and could easily fall prey to temptation. Some grassroots leaders, like this aging revolutionary, fervently believe that political campaigns are the only way to save the Party, revive the mass line, and deal with corruption.⁴⁷

Rural nostalgics, in sum, claim that Mao was hard on cadres and the current leadership is not, and that Mao had faith in the masses and the current leadership does not. One villager even said that Deng Xiaoping had been carrying out "class retaliation" (*jieji baofu*), while siding with the rich and powerful and indulging them.⁴⁸

Who Is Nostalgic?

Our 1997 survey does not allow us to estimate what proportion of the Chinese rural population feels nostalgic for campaigns. However, the local sample, which was drawn from 10 villages in Jiangsu and nine villages in Fujian, approaches a probability sample, and this makes it possible to explore the relationship between attitudes toward political campaigns and other variables.⁴⁹ In the results that follow, nostalgics are defined as individuals who (1) attributed increasing corruption to the cessation of campaigns, (2) deemed campaigns to be the most effective means to curb corruption, and (3) felt that campaigns might again be needed. Non-nostalgics are those who disagreed with nostalgics on each and every point.

Several patterns emerged in the data. Above all, campaign nostalgia seems to be related to one's evaluation of a village's present leadership team. Villagers who regarded incumbent cadres to be less honest than their communcera predecessors were more likely to be nostalgic than villagers who regarded

46. Interviews, Hebei Province, July 1994.

47. Interview, Hebei Province, November 1993. See also Chan, Madsen, and Unger, *Chen Village Under Mao and Deng*, p. 258.

48. Interview, Hebei Province, September 1993.

49. Insofar as the questionnaire touched on a number of sensitive topics, household registration records were not sought from local public security bureaus. In both provinces, after two days of intensive training and mock interviewing, interviewers were dispatched to pre-selected poor, middle income, and rich villages, where they interviewed all available adults from a randomly selected "villagers' group" (*cunmin xiaozu*). On using local probability samples to analyze relationships between variables, see Melanie Manion, "Survey Research in the Study of Contemporary China: Learning from Local Samples," *China Quarterly* 139 (September 1994), pp. 747-65.

current cadres to be more honest (odds ratio = 8.8).⁵⁰ Not surprisingly, current cadres found comparatively little to recommend in anti-corruption campaigns. Ordinary villagers and especially former cadres, on the other hand, tended to be better disposed toward campaigns.⁵¹

As might be expected, campaign nostalgia was also more common among older villagers. While the average age of the sampled rural residents was 38, nostalgics had a mean age of 44. Among the oldest and youngest, respondents between 58 and 70 years of age were significantly more likely to be nostalgic than respondents between 18 and 27 years of age (odds ratio = 8.9). Level of education also had an impact. Campaign nostalgia increased as years of schooling decreased. Respondents with six or fewer years of schooling, for instance, were more likely to be nostalgic than respondents with nine or more years of schooling (odds ratio = 2.1). In addition to age and education, income level also affected a person's perspective on campaigns. Less well-off people were generally more likely to be nostalgic than respondents from better-off families. At the extremes, respondents with family per capita annual incomes under 500 yuan were considerably more likely to be nostalgic than those whose family per capita income exceeded 6,000 yuan (odds ratio = 4.7).

The data also suggested a relationship between nostalgia and one's confidence in institutionalized methods for holding cadres accountable. Significantly more of those who felt that "suing cadres" (*min gao guan*) was ineffective were nostalgic than those who felt that lawsuits were very effective (odds ratio = 12.8). Along the same lines, campaign nostalgia was more prevalent among respondents who believed that lodging collective complaints was ineffective and less prevalent among respondents who thought complaints were a very effective way to hold cadres in line (odds ratio = 4.2). Finally, individuals who reported that their village had not held villagers' committee elections were more likely to be nostalgic than those who reported that elections with primaries had occurred (odds ratio = 6.0).

Unexpected Support for Mass Mobilization

Evidence of campaign nostalgia can also be found among China's intellectuals—a social group that suffered greatly from the mass movements of the

50. The odds of an event occurring are defined as the ratio of the probability that it will occur to the probability that it will not. "The odds ratio for a variable tells you change in odds for a case when the value of that variable increases by 1." See Marija Norusis, *SPSS Professional Statistics 7.5* (Chicago: SPSS Inc., 1997), p. 43. All estimated coefficients interpreted as odds ratios are significant at the 0.01 level. In the data analysis, "more likely to be nostalgic" should be understood to mean "more likely to be nostalgic than to be non-nostalgic."

51. Ordinary villagers and former cadres were respectively 5.6 times and 11.8 times as likely to be nostalgic as incumbent cadres.

Maoist era. What this nostalgia entails is difficult to pinpoint because pro-campaign sentiments rarely receive more than a brief treatment in mainstream publications (usually to be rejected), and are typically attributed to unnamed "some comrades." Still, in the 1990s, it became clear that a group of academics and researchers loosely centered around Party schools, discipline inspection committees, and the propaganda apparatus was gingerly proposing reconsideration of the benefits of mass mobilization.⁵² The heart of their argument is that corruption endangers the long-term viability of Party rule; it is a "malignant tumor on the body of the Party" that will respond only to the strongest medicine.⁵³ For these neo-leftists, the risk of failing to mobilize popular anger is that "contradictions will intensify" and ordinary citizens may feel compelled to rise up and fight corruption themselves. A disgruntled public may lodge more and more complaints, create public disturbances, and finally "declare war on corrupt power holders." Mass movements certainly have liabilities and should not be "recklessly" enlarged, but they nonetheless are needed to deter cadre misconduct, restore faith in the Party, and head off social unrest.⁵⁴

This viewpoint is often expressed in language that would do Chairman Mao proud. Sometimes Mao himself is quoted on the effects of corruption and the need to break the historical cycle of "rapid rise followed by quick decline."⁵⁵ In statements that bring to mind the rhetoric of the Cultural Revolution, campaigns are at times presented as part and parcel of the contemporary class struggle and a powerful weapon in the battle against revisionism and "peaceful evolution."⁵⁶ Some intellectuals prefer to cloak their calls for revived mass mobilization in praise of the Sanfan or Four Cleanups, arguing that these campaigns did wonders for the Party's prestige and should not be viewed "one-sidedly."⁵⁷ Others, more boldly, challenge opponents of

52. See Liu and Xiao, "Tiaochu zhouqilü," p. 11, fn. 1; Xu Wenxiu, "Buyao zai xiangwang," p. 28. On "a great number of comrades, even some leadership comrades . . . who hold the strange notion that to rely on the masses, we must conduct campaigns," see Hu Changxi et al., "Dui yikao fazhi," p. 49.

53. See Xu Wenxiu, "Buyao zai xiangwang," p. 28.

54. For the quoted text, see Peng and Yang, *Zouchu zhouqilü*, pp. 238–39; also Cao Guoying, "Nongcun zuzhi zhidu jianshe ruogan wenti tansuo" [Investigating certain problems in the institutional construction of rural organizations] (paper presented at Theory of China's Rural Basic-level Political Power Construction conference, n.p., n.d.), pp. 14–15.

55. Peng and Yang, *Zouchu zhouqilü*. For discussions of "the historical cycle" that conclude political campaigns are not called for, see Sang Xuecheng, "Tiaochu lishi 'zhouqilü'," pp. 51–54; Liu and Xiao, "Tiaochu zhouqilü," pp. 7–15.

56. Xu Wenxiu, "Buyao zai xiangwang," p. 28; Peng and Yang, *Zouchu zhouqilü*, p. 236.

57. For praise of the Sanfan Movement, unaccompanied by the usual statement that mass mobilization is now outdated, see Cheng Dafang, "Cong 'sanfan' yundong kan xin Zhongguo jianli chuqi fan fubai douzheng de lishi tedian he shenyuan yingxiang" [From the "sanfan" movement see the historical features and deep influence of the anti-corruption struggle in the

political movements to explain what commitment to the mass line means without mass mobilization.⁵⁸

It is rare to hear an unambiguous call to roll out a large-scale, mass campaign. More often, the advice is "to hold campaigns in reserve," awaiting the day other strategies are exhausted and measured, mass mobilization becomes a must.⁵⁹ Some modern-day leftists suggest relying on "traditional techniques," which have the "flavor" of campaigns, until a new system replaces the old. In this view, beefed-up rectifications are indispensable "fire-fighting methods" that can hold corruption at bay while the legal system is being perfected. Formalistic rectifications that probe no further than the surface are insufficient. Although all grassroots cadres need not be forced to "pass the gate," and "merciless attacks" must be avoided at all costs, popular indignation should be harnessed under Party leadership and then released within the confines of the Constitution and the law.⁶⁰

Casting the battle against corruption as a class struggle that calls for a campaign is certainly not the majority position within China's intelligentsia.⁶¹ Most analysts argue that mass mobilization, if it were to be revived, would draw attention away from economic construction, disrupt "stability and unity," and perhaps even weaken China's ability to compete with its economic rivals.⁶² They often dismiss campaign nostalgia as an emotional reaction rather than a reasoned position,⁶³ and hold that Party discipline, legal action, improved political education, and institutionalized mass reports will be enough to fight corruption, however serious it becomes.

early years after China was established], *Zhonggong Dangshi yanjiu*, no. 1 (January 1995), pp. 22–27. On learning from the lessons of past campaigns and not viewing the Four Cleanups "one-sidedly," see Cao Guoying, "Nongcun zuzhi," p. 14.

58. The relationship of the mass line and mass mobilization has produced much debate over the years. See Liu Shaoqi, *Selected Works of Liu Shaoqi*, vol. 2 (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1991), pp. 382–83; Fei Xun, "Dui shehuizhuyi," pp. 8–10; and Liu and Xiao, "Tiaochu zhouqili," p. 11.

59. Peng and Yang, *Zouchu zhouqili*, pp. 237–40.

60. See Li Xueqin, "Lun woguo xian jieduan fanfubai douzheng de jiben xingshi" [On the basic form of our country's current stage in the struggle against corruption], *Neibu wengao*, no. 9 (May 10, 1994), pp. 10–12. Li, who is a member of the Central Discipline Research Office, ultimately stops short of supporting large-scale mass movements.

61. Peng and Yang, *Zouchu zhouqili*, pp. 238–39.

62. Among many sources, see Fei Xun, "Dui shehuizhuyi," pp. 5–9; and Xu Wenxiu, "Buyao zai xiangwang," pp. 28–29.

63. Liu and Xiao, "Tiaochu zhouqili," p. 11; Liang Xianshi, "Guanyu fan fubai," p. 139; and Wang Shanzhong, "Jianguo chuqi sanfan wufan yundong shuping" [A review of the sanfan and wufan movements in the early years of construction] *Zhonggong Dangshi yanjiu*, no. 1 (January 1993), p. 71.

To this point, there is no indication that China's top leaders are contemplating anything approaching a large-scale mass movement (or even a focused, open-door rectification) to counter corruption.

Conclusion

Campaign nostalgia is an indicator of frustration and unmet expectations. Its origins trace to an unwillingness on the part of the Party leadership to rely on mass mobilization to check cadre corruption. Under Mao, political campaigns at least occasionally afforded ordinary Chinese opportunities to hold grassroots leaders who transgressed regime norms accountable. Nowadays, some villagers chafe at the lack of such opportunities. They see electoral reforms, potentially beneficial policies (such as limits on peasant burdens), and laws that grant them rights (such as the Administration Litigation Law and the Villagers' Committee Law) ignored or undermined somewhere in the hierarchy. These individuals long for a romanticized version of the rectifications of old and dismiss clean government drives and bureaucratic supervision as feeble replacements for centrally sponsored, direct struggle against wrongdoers. Particularly in places where "local emperors" lord it over them and anti-corruption efforts sputter without much effect, nostalgic villagers fondly remember the days when work teams swept in and malfeasant cadres shook with fear.

Although one may question whether nostalgics have underestimated the downside of mass movements while conjuring up an idyllic era of official probity, it is more difficult to fault their assessment of the current anti-corruption struggle. Compared with those who express unbounded confidence in legal remedies, nostalgics are sober realists. They understand that relying on propaganda and cadre education is a non-starter and that law in China, *such as it is*, is not the rule of law. They know that many laws and policies are poorly implemented and that, in a pinch, political exigency can trump nearly anything. Nostalgic villagers and like-minded intellectuals have recognized that treating legal punishment, Party discipline, and mass reports as cure-alls is equivalent to acquiescing to a high level of corruption.

Will campaign nostalgia wane with time? Perhaps. Where villagers' committee elections are run well and economic growth benefits the majority of villagers, nostalgia will not find a receptive climate in which to grow. Where lodging complaints or filing lawsuits check corruption and the imposition of illicit fees, villagers may gradually build up confidence in rule by law and find mass mobilization unnecessary. As today's nostalgics age, younger generations may find little to recommend in a form of inclusion characteristic of their elders. Even increasing mobility and the growth of a rural middle class may gradually shift the locus of political conflict away from the village.

At the same time, economic growth and reform continue to spawn fresh opportunities for self-serving cadre behavior. With more resources at stake, the mixing of public and private roles, and the sale or contracting of many collective assets, China may be entering a golden age of diverting public property to private uses. Consider an incident reported in *Tianjin Procurator* in 1995. A group of managers who ran a collective factory persuaded their village to purchase an automobile. Each of the managers then took turns contracting the car, allegedly to provide transportation for the factory. But when they were not using the vehicle for factory business they used it for various money-making ventures. And the contracting fee the managers negotiated with the village was so low that each of them could earn more in a month than was remitted to the village for an entire year. Furthermore, when repairs were needed, they submitted nearly all the bills to the factory. Finally, to protect themselves and legalize the scheme, the managers signed an agreement with the villagers' committee that awarded committee members preferred shares in the factory. These shares directed the bulk of factory profits to the managers and their friends in the village leadership and assigned any losses, should they appear, to the collective.

Stories like this are common in the new China and it is not surprising that this arrangement ultimately produced an outpouring of mass complaints and popular demands for a political campaign.⁶⁴ But even when similar occurrences fail to bring about a call for mass mobilization, it does not mean that the victims of financial shenanigans are apathetic and willing to forbear misrule. Chinese villagers generally know when they are being mistreated and many are adept at working the system to their minimum disadvantage. If campaigns return, some are ready and willing to exploit them.⁶⁵ If campaigns do not return, many citizens will persist in lodging complaints, filing reports, and engaging in assorted forms of resistance. They will make the most of available channels,⁶⁶ including village elections, and continue to develop a repertoire of contention that has been honed over decades, even centuries.

In a recent article, Elizabeth Perry has argued that ordinary Chinese played a more active role during Maoist campaigns than is usually assumed and that

64. Ding Lianxiang, "Dangqian nongcun," p. 33.

65. One farmer in Shandong was diligently recording the misdeeds of village cadres on the back of his front door. He wanted to be prepared should mass mobilization reappear. Interview, Shandong Province, July 1994.

66. This is also the message of Tianjian Shi, *Political Participation in Beijing* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997); O'Brien and Li, "The Politics of Lodging Complaints," pp. 756-83; Pei, "Citizens v. Mandarins," pp. 832-62; Kevin J. O'Brien, "Rightful Resistance," *World Politics* 49:1 (October 1996), pp. 31-55; and Kevin J. O'Brien and Lianjiang Li, "Selective Policy Implementation in Rural China," *Comparative Politics* 31:2 (January 1999), pp. 176-80.

they learned important rituals and tactics that may serve popular assertiveness in the future.⁶⁷ This article has suggested that giving vent to pent-up grievances was indeed a heady experience and that villagers weaned on Maoism have become less tolerant of graft, bribery, and other forms of official misconduct.⁶⁸ A generation of mass mobilization, in other words, altered people's expectations more than is often thought; it left a residue that provides palpable evidence that many Maoist values have not eroded away.⁶⁹ Nostalgia, at least in its rural manifestation, is thus something more than Maoist kitsch, altars, and the clever manipulation of an ironic icon; it is a sign of unease and insecurity in the countryside and a reminder that legitimacy cannot be secured through economic growth alone.

67. Elizabeth J. Perry, "To Rebel Is Justified: Maoist Influences on Popular Protest in Contemporary China," *Hong Kong Journal of Social Science*, forthcoming.

68. Cf. "[Campaigns] taught the peasants not to be so tolerant of Party cadres who spouted pious political slogans while eying the public trough." Chan, Madsen, and Unger, *Chen Village Under Mao and Deng*, p. 258.

69. See Perry, "To Rebel Is Justified"; Meisner, *Mao's China and After*, p. 393; Jacob Heilbrunn, "Mao More than Ever," *New Republic* 216:16 (April 21, 1997), pp. 20–24; and Charles Cell, *Revolution at Work*, p. 184.