

Tremor within the Chinese Communist Party

By [Socialist Project](#)

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By Ahmet Devrim

The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is holding a new congress, the 18th, due to start on November 8. The CCP is at the helm of the single-party system of the People's Republic. The nine-member Politbureau Standing Committee (PSC) acts as the supreme body that rules over this vast country with a population of 1.3 billion souls. The secretary general of the party, ranking number one in the PSC, automatically becomes the president of the country and the number three member the premier.

As is commonly known, under Mao Zedong, the country was ruled not only by a single party but simply by one single man. After the death of Mao in 1976, there was no question of one-man rule, although the rule of the single party was sustained. A tradition was developed whereby the PSC elected in one congress is authorized to rule the country for two consecutive terms. Given that the CCP convenes a congress approximately every five years, this implies that each president and premier serves for a decade. The vice-president and the deputy premier are also members of the PSC. These people are largely expected to take over the posts of president and premier in the future. In short, the elections to the PSC determine who will rule China over the next decade. That is why serious conflicts (and occasionally purges) occur in the period leading up to a congress within the party bureaucracy.

There are, of course, certain conflicts within the bureaucracy that cannot be reduced directly to class interests or questions relating to political orientation, conflicts that may simply be attributed to personal or small group interests. However, in those cases when the conflict has assumed unusually grave proportions, these should be traced to conflicting class interests and divisions over political orientation that go beyond mere turf struggles. A severe conflict of this intensity did occur between 1976-1981, when four leaders, among whom Mao's spouse Jiang Qing, who had risen to prominence under the Cultural Revolution, were arrested and purged through a palace coup immediately after Mao's death. At a 1981 show trial reminiscent of the Moscow Trials of 1936-1938, they were indicted for having formed a "Gang of Four" and betrayed the party and the country and ultimately found guilty. Thanks to the liquidation of the so-called "Gang of Four," the wing of the party led by Deng Xiaoping consolidated its power and began, in December 1978, a process that was ultimately going to culminate in the restoration of capitalism.

On the eve of the 18th Congress, we have witnessed the outbreak of the most severe conflict of the last three decades within the CCP bureaucracy. This conflict came out into the open in March this year with the purge of Bo Xilai, party secretary for Chongqing, and certainly goes beyond turf wars of the ordinary kind. It reflects, on the one hand, the deep fault lines within the Chinese bureaucracy and, on the other, the severe discontent in the ranks of the proletariat and the peasantry (progressively proletarianized itself) face to the

restoration of capitalism. To grasp the roots of this conflict and to be able to decipher the secrets of the congress, we have to briefly draw up a balance sheet of the economic and political developments of the last three decades.

Capitalist Restoration, Class Struggle and the CCP (1978-2012)

The performance of the Chinese economy over the last three decades, with growth rates almost consistently reaching double-digit figures, has been historically exceptional. Despite this tremendous economic success, the dissatisfaction of the proletarian and peasant masses with the regime has not diminished, but on the contrary grown. There are several reasons for this. First, the development of capitalist relations of production has increased inequality between the classes. The contradiction between rich and poor, inexistent under Mao, has increasingly sharpened. Secondly, job security has been totally destroyed as a result of the reorganization of state enterprises according to principles of capitalist management, the privatization of some and the revision of labour legislation. It is true that rapid economic growth has (so far) prevented the emergence of unemployment as an explosive problem, but capitalist exploitation has been stepped up thanks to the threat of layoffs, with mass unemployment at times of crisis becoming a Damocles' sword hanging over the working-class as in the rest of the capitalist world. Add to these economic factors the nature of the single-party regime restricting the democratic expression of all discontent and we arrive at the roots of the discontent of the masses.

The discontent first erupted during the gigantic outburst of worker and student protests on Tienanmen Square in Beijing in 1989 that lasted for weeks on end. These were brutally quashed in blood by the army. In the immediate aftermath of the Tienanmen events, Jiang Zemin was appointed secretary general of the CCP with the approval of Deng Xiaoping. Under Jiang, who served as party secretary general between 1989 and 2002 and as head of state between 1993 and 2003, capitalist restoration was consummated and China became a fully capitalist country. A great majority of the so-called "Township and Village Enterprises," that is the industrial establishments of the countryside, were either shut down or privatized. A part of the large state enterprises in urban areas were privatized in the late 1990s, with approximately 50 million workers losing their jobs in the process. State support extended to agriculture and to the rural areas, home to the great majority of the people, was decimated. Social services in rural areas, such as education and health care, which had flourished under Mao, came close to bankruptcy in the 1990s.

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All this created mass discontent in the countryside. The repression that descended on the Tienanmen protests pushed back urban protest for a while, but the same did not occur in the countryside. On the contrary, protest actions grew by leaps and bounds, both in sheer number and with respect to the level of participation. By the end of the decade of the 1990s, even the party and state bureaucracy admitted a simmering rural crisis that limited the capacity of the government to rule, a crisis that was the subject matter of intense debate within the public at large. (Since then this matter has been debated in China under the rubric of the "three rural questions," these being the agricultural question, the peasant question and the question of the countryside.) In 2001, China's accession to the World Trade Organization was completed. The 16th Congress of 2002 adopted the "Theory of Three

Representations” developed by Jiang, which allowed for the admission of capitalists as members into the CCP. The CCP bureaucracy had itself long been transformed into a bourgeoisie. This decision was in fact an overture toward the capitalists outside the party and aimed at coopting them into the party.

Such was the situation in 2002, when the duo Hu Jintao-Wen Jiabao took over the party leadership from Jiang. The most urgent problem confronting the duo was the rural question. A new policy dubbed the “New Socialist Countryside” was adopted. This policy involved the abolition of the agricultural tax, a certain increase in subsidies extended to agriculture, mandatory education of seven years in the countryside, the provision of textbooks, educational materials etc. to students by government, a system of monthly cash payments to peasants over the age of 60. It aims at placating social discontent through a certain amount of concessions to the masses, without putting a brake on capital accumulation. It is a kind of social policy that does not go beyond the kind of poverty assistance implemented by the Lula administration in Brazil or the Erdogan government in Turkey.

The second fundamental characteristic of the Hu-Wen period that sets it apart from the Jiang incumbency was the absence of a comprehensive privatization drive. The overwhelming majority of Chinese companies that appear on the list of top global companies published by Forbes magazine are still under state property. Notwithstanding this, because new public investment is limited and because private investment has grown by leaps and bounds, the trend of decline in the weight of the public sector within the economy has continued unabated under the Hu-Wen administration.

To sum up, there was no serious change of course over the last decade apart from an increase in welfare assistance to the peasantry. The most significant consequence of increasing inequality at the beginning of the new century has been the rise in the struggles waged by the subordinate classes. The workers’ movement, which markedly retreated in the aftermath of the Tienanmen incident, has come back with a vengeance. Militant mass strikes and struggles are being waged across all regions and industries. In the countryside, the adoption of welfare programs has reduced to a certain extent the number of actions that derive from absolute poverty. However, the incessant drive of real estate interests to grab village land at very cheap prices has led to the continuation of struggle over land. Apart from strikes and struggle over land, other types of protests are also abundant. Protest against bad treatment meted out to hawkers by security guards and police, against factories that pollute the environment or against the injustices and corruption of local officials, sometimes joined by crowds of tens of thousands have become quotidian affairs.

Mike Constable union-art.com Finally, the ire created by the total repudiation for the last six decades of the right of self-determination for non-Han nations, a right that had been a promise of the CCP before its rise to power, has recently been rekindled.

All in all, the number of so-called “mass incidents,” a blanket category for all kinds of action including strikes, rallies, protests, conflicts etc. rose from 8700 in 1993 to 90,000 in 2006 and 180,000 in 2010. Ironically, then, precisely in the same period when China attained double-digit growth, social unrest also grew exponentially. The prospect of social unrest sharpening as the world economic crisis takes its further toll on the Chinese economy (and all indicators show that things are moving in that direction) is a nightmare for the capitalists and bureaucrats of China. This, in brief, is the overall economic and political situation in China on the eve of the 18th Congress of the CCP.

Opposition Movements in China

The opposition in China today can be classified under three different categories: the right-wing opposition, the left-wing opposition, and national movements. Because the Han ethnic group forms ninety per cent of the population and because the policy of the Chinese government of transferring Han populations to Tibetan and Uighur territories has advanced quite far, the impact of national movements on the overall political climate is quite restricted. The real struggle is today between the CCP leadership and those who oppose it from the right or the left.

The right-wing opposition has no qualms about the capitalist policies of the CCP. On the contrary, it demands further privatization leading to even more marked retrenchment of the economic weight of government. It is rather in the political sphere that the right-wing opposition clashes with the CCP. This opposition demands the abolition of the monopoly of power the CCP enjoys and the establishment of a multi-party system. It is impossible to know to what extent the idea of a multi-party bourgeois democracy enjoys support in the population at large, but it is clear that there is a considerable number of partisans of this idea within the ranks of those elements of the bourgeoisie that do not owe their wealth to the CCP, as well as among white collar employees, intellectuals and students.

Falun Gong is the most vociferous group within the right-wing opposition. It pretends to be a movement for spiritual renewal making use of a series of exercise and meditation techniques that derive from a peculiar synthesis of Buddhism and Taoism. It first came out into the open as a result of some public sermons given by its leader, Li Hongzhi in 1992. The Tiananmen movement had been crushed in blood only three years before and there was immense repression of political movements. The Chinese state at first tolerated the existence of Falun Gong, which claimed to be an apolitical spiritual movement and eschewed the transmission of any political messages. However, the Chinese, totally alienated as they were from the CCP as a result of the Tiananmen massacre, were ready to fill the ranks of any organization that remained outside of the CCP, so long as its existence was legally tolerated. It was this that led to the situation in which Falun Gong turned, within a couple of years, into a movement that was supported by millions. In many cities of China, thousands of people joined the activities of Falun Gong, ranging from exercises to meditation and sermons.

In the end, Falun Gong was banned in 1999, the group being hunted down by the police and declared a “diabolic” and “heretic” organization. Falun Gong responded in kind, starting a large international campaign demanding an end to one-party rule by the CCP. At present, Falun Gong has many partisans in a series of countries. The leaders of the organization reside in the United States and Canada and enjoy good relations with the governments of those countries. The group is known to possess a widespread illegal network within China itself. Falun Gong continues to be the best organized, strongest and the most disciplined group within the right-wing opposition to the CCP.

As for the left-wing opposition, this consists of groups that come up partially or entirely against the capitalist policies of the CCP. The overwhelming majority of the left-wing opposition is made up of social democracy and the different variants of Maoism. Classical social democracy garners support from among intellectuals.

The greatest force on the Chinese left is Maoism. The Maoist groups defend the policies of

the pre-1978 period and perceive the process of capitalist restoration set in motion by Deng Xiaoping in 1978 as a counterrevolution. These groups embrace Chinese nationalism, just as Mao did in his day. They are against the recognition of the right to self-determination for the Tibetans and the Uighurs and totally back the chauvinistic line of the CCP on the national question. They defend even more hawkish policies regarding the disputes China has in the Pacific region with countries such as Japan, Taiwan, Vietnam or the Philippines. They are certainly not against one-party rule. Nevertheless, there are undeniable differences between Maoists of different orientation regarding the attitude to be adopted toward the CCP. A rather small minority characterizes today's CCP as a hopelessly bourgeoisified force that cannot be redeemed. Hence, they aim for a new Maoist party in order to make revolution. From time to time, the Chinese government unleashes the police to repress these groups.

Both wings of Maoism initially addressed former party members and academics. Their impact was very restricted among young workers and intellectuals. However, the situation started to change gradually from the late 1990s on. There was a perceptible increase in the display of Mao posters and in references to Mao in the slogans chanted. Parallel to the growth in Internet use, the number of Maoist Internet sites has also increased. These have started to create an alternative perception of Mao, different from the official assessment of the historic leader. In the context of the world economic crisis that started in 2008, many young people started to read the Maoist literature. Although the partisans of bourgeois democracy have not lost any of their clout, the Maoist opposition has recently succeeded to make itself heard more. To sum up, a left-wing movement, a cross-breed between social democracy and Maoism, is on the rise in China.

The Earthquake Within the Party

We can now examine the conflicts and purges inside the CCP before its 18th congress by putting them into the economic and political context explained above. The purge of Bo Xilai, the party secretary of Chongqing municipality, lies at the core of the conflicts within the party. Bo Xilai is the son of Bo Yibo, one of the most important leaders of the CCP who was purged and jailed by Mao during the Cultural Revolution and rehabilitated after Mao's death. In China, the second and third generation male members of the families of old leaders like Bo Yibo are known as "princelings." Princelings hold important top positions within the party-state hierarchy. For example, Xi Jinping, who is expected to be elected as secretary general in this congress and become the president of the PRC soon after, is a well-known princeling.

In order to understand Bo Xilai's importance within the Chinese bureaucracy, we should briefly glance at China's administrative system and the specific features of Chongqing municipality. It is impossible to govern a huge country like China (with a population of 1.3 billion living in provinces whose population is larger than many large individual countries) with a strictly central administration. For this reason, China's administrative system has strong elements of decentralism. As we will see below, decentralism allows the implementation of different policy models in different regions of China. Four important metropolises of China are governed by municipalities under the direct authority of the central government in Beijing rather than being administered by provincial governments. Chongqing is one of these metropolises (the other three are Beijing, Shanghai, and Tianjin). More than 28 million people live within the borders of Chongqing municipality, which makes it one of the largest metropolitan areas of the world. China's administrative system gives the party secretaries of a municipality greater power than its mayor. In other words, the party secretary is the highest authority in the municipality. Working as the party secretary

of a huge metropolis like Chongqing certainly indicates a high position within the Chinese party-state bureaucracy. Moreover, Bo Xilai was elected to the CCP's 25-member Politburo in the 17th congress in 2007 and was expected to be elected to the 9-member Politburo Standing Committee in the upcoming 18th congress.

After his appointment to the job of party secretary of Chongqing in 2007, Bo implemented a set of policies that distinguished Chongqing from the rest of China. These policies then came to be labeled the "Chongqing model." It is necessary to take a brief look at this model that lies at the core of the recent battles inside the party which led to the purge of Bo Xilai.

First of all, it is necessary to underline the fact that the "Chongqing model" was not an anti-capitalist or socialist model. Similar to the rest of China, capitalist relations of production have remained as dominant production relations in Chongqing. During Bo's rule between 2007 and 2012, no steps were taken against the capitalist system or bourgeois power. Furthermore, giant capitalist corporations (including the U.S. information technology giant, Hewlett Packard; Foxconn, a Taiwanese company that is the world's largest supplier of electronic components; BASF, a German company which is the world's largest chemical products manufacturer; and Chang'an Automobile Group, Ford's partner in China) transferred a significant portion of their production and management to Chongqing during Bo administration. It is an obvious fact that giant corporations will not make significant investments to a region where an anti-capitalist model is under experimentation. In fact, in its July 2011 edition, Fortune magazine included Chongqing as one of the top 15 new cities for business. Moreover, according to a detailed investigation report published by Bloomberg news on 23 April 2012, the Bo family owns a wealth of at least \$136-million (U.S.), which is composed of shares in different companies and real estate investments. In short, Bo himself is a bureaucrat-bourgeois similar to the other members of the CCP bureaucracy. The comments made by various Chinese and foreign leftists regarding the "socialism" of Bo and the Chongqing model do not reflect anything but their ideological and political poverty.

After pointing out the capitalist character of the Chongqing model, we can now take a look at its specific features. In the economic sphere, the most important difference of Bo's Chongqing from the rest of China was the dominance of the government in the real estate sector. It is a well-known fact that ongoing urban expansion and gentrification projects in the middle and lower income countries allow real estate capital to accumulate significant amounts of capital. Similar to other parts of the world, industrialization and urbanization in China increasingly lead to the conversion of rural land to urban land. In China, this conversion requires first the transfer of the rural land ownership from the village collectives to the local governments (although collective production in rural areas was abolished during the nationwide decollectivization campaign between 1978 and 1982, government at the village-level is still called the "village collective" in contemporary China). Local government takes over the rural land by paying relatively low compensation, improves the infrastructure in the area, and finally declares it as urban land. The local government's declaration of a piece of land as urban land means that the land is now open to construction. Hence the value of the land starts to climb astronomically. The monopolistic position of the local government in this process (of transformation of rural land to urban land) enables it to take over village land by paying low compensations and then sell it to real estate (or industrial) capital at significantly higher prices. Today these sorts of land deals constitute the largest share of local government revenue in China (Villagers' resistance against land expropriations by demanding higher compensation and the increasing wealth of the local officials through kickbacks from real estate tycoons or directly getting involved in real estate

business forms the reverse of the medallion). As real estate capital construction takes off and the region develops further, the value of land increases much higher than the first stage (of conversion of rural land to urban land). While the profits of the real estate companies increase dramatically, local government gets almost nothing since they have already transferred the land to the real estate sector. Another effect of the increasing dominance of the private sector in real estate business is increasing house prices and rents, which lead to the deterioration of living conditions for urban workers.

While this remained to be the general situation in China, Bo Xilai implemented a different model in Chongqing after 2007. Instead of transferring large tracts of recently-developed urban land to the real estate companies, Chongqing municipal government started to use these lands through government-owned companies and investment funds. Thanks to this new policy, the lion's share of the real estate profits started to accumulate not in the hands of the private sector but in the coffers of the local government. During this process, local government obtained huge bank loans by using these lands as collateral. Chongqing government then used these recently-created funds to establish several big companies working in various industries. As a result, the state sector in Chongqing became significantly larger than the rest of China.

Another consequence of this change had been the allocation of about one third of the recently-constructed houses to urban workers under cheap housing programs (the remaining part of the housing projects were allocated to the construction of luxury residents for the big bourgeoisie and medium level housing for the middle classes, as in the rest of China). Government spending in social services also increased thanks to the new revenue sources of the local government. This allowed the registration of a large number of migrant workers (of rural origin) as urban residents in a relatively smoother manner than the rest of the country, where the rural-urban divide is a big problem because rural residents do not have access to many of the social services that are provided to urban residents (The only significant social right of the rural residents in China is guaranteed access to a piece of farmland provided by the village collective, which is part of the economic legacy of the pre-reform era. However, access to a small piece of farmland is often not enough for the rural resident to receive education, healthcare, and other social services that an average urban resident has access to). In brief, a portion of the real estate profits were re-distributed to the proletariat.

Another practice of Bo Xilai was to attack organized crime through large-scale police operations. The biggest such operation took place on 20 June 2009. 2915 people were arrested and a significant amount of funds controlled by the mafia was seized by the local government. That operation went beyond the low-level, insignificant members of the mafia organizations as some capitalists and bureaucrats were arrested and sentenced to severe penalties. After that event, the popularity of Bo Xilai and his Chongqing model increased all over China.

The third main component of the Chongqing model was the local campaigns which involve positive references to the themes and motifs of the Mao era. The distance between Mao's theory and practice and the new theories and practices accepted during the reform era has increasingly widened in the last three decades. The pressure exerted on the party by the Maoist opposition made the adaptation of "Mao Zedong Thought" into CCP's official theory and discourse increasingly difficult in recent years. In this particular historical context, Bo Xilai started a cultural and political campaign in Chongqing with a lot of positive references to Mao and the achievements of the pre-reform era. In this campaign, many choirs singing

the revolutionary songs of the Mao era were established and the local population was constantly encouraged to gather in squares and sing these songs. Local government started sending the lyrics of these songs as well as various quotes from Mao to every cell phone subscriber in Chongqing. The local television of the Chongqing municipal government started broadcasting programs praising various features of the Mao era. The most radical step taken within this campaign was to stop the broadcasting of commercials altogether on Chongqing television from 1 March 2011 on. The symbolic significance of this move can be understood better if we recall the fact that all television channels in China (including the China Central Television owned by the central government in Beijing) broadcast commercials. Mass mobilization methods inspired by Mao era practices were also used to a limited extent as exemplified by the high number of written petitions against specific members of mafia organizations openly signed by the people of Chongqing, who were encouraged to participate in the “Strike the Black” campaign.

By combining the Chongqing model with his personal charisma, Bo Xilai managed to establish a strong base of political power in Chongqing supported by the local population. Bo’s political platform cannot be understood outside the context of the recent rise of a reformist version of Maoism in China. The great majority of the leftist opposition in China has supported Bo Xilai by hoping to transform the CCP from inside. Bo aimed to use public discontent and the rise of the left to get him elected to the Politburo Standing Committee in the 18th congress. While the date of the congress was approaching, the political debate in China was heated up with frequent comparisons between the Chongqing model, which is characterized by a strong state sector, and the more liberal “Guangdong model” (implemented in Guangdong province, the most important powerhouse of China’s export economy), which is characterized by the dominance of the private sector in the economy. The question of which of these models will determine China’s future has often been asked in these debates. Bo’s election to the Politburo Standing Committee in the upcoming congress would certainly increase the possibility of the implementation of policies inspired from the Chongqing model in the rest of China. In this context, Bo’s opponents inside and outside the party started to raise their concerns about his Chongqing model. Many articles were published in newspapers criticizing Bo’s Mao-inspired campaigns and his harsh methods during the anti-mafia operations in Chongqing by arguing that China is currently facing a threat of returning to the days of the Cultural Revolution.

The chain of events leading to the decline of Bo Xilai took place in this political context. Wang Lijun, the police chief of Chongqing and one of the closest allies of Bo, entered the U.S. consulate in Chengdu on February 6, 2012. He stayed in the consulate for about 24 hours. The details of Wang’s negotiations with American diplomats are still not known. What is known is that Wang told them that Bo Xilai and his wife GuKailai are behind the death of Neil Heywood, a British businessman who was found dead in a hotel in Chongqing on 14 November 2011. According to Wang, Heywood was the key assistant of the Bo family in their money laundering activities. Heywood was helping the family to transfer their money (the bribes received by Bo and other types of corruption in which he was involved form the main source of this money) abroad and therefore knew the dirty secrets of the family. When his relationships with the Bo family deteriorated, he threatened them with revealing their secrets, which led to his death by poison, orchestrated by GuKailai. Bo was deposed from his office in March and expelled from the Politburo in April. In August, GuKailai was tried and given a suspended death sentence. On 28 September, Xinhua, the PRC’s official news agency, reported that Bo was expelled from the party and handed over to the authorities for trial (his current whereabouts remain unknown).

There are many unknowns and suspicions surrounding the Bo Xilai incident. For instance, a well-known Chinese forensic specialist wrote in her internet blog that there is no convincing evidence that can prove that the cause of the death of Heywood is poisoning (the blog entry was deleted by the internet censors of the PRC). The only thing that is clearly known is Bloomberg's detailed report showing that Bo family had a wealth of at least \$136-million (U.S.). Given the fact that the monthly salary of Bo was only \$1,585, it is clear that the source of the Bo family's wealth was bribery and other types of corruption. However, this is obviously not the main cause of Bo's expulsion from the party. Corruption is the rule rather than the exception for China's party-state bureaucracy. It is a well-known fact that the sons of Hu Jintao, Wen Jiabao, and Wu Bangguo (number two of the Politburo Standing Committee) are all capitalists that control significant amount of shares in various national and foreign companies that do business with China's state-owned enterprises. On June 29, Bloomberg published a detailed report revealing that the future general secretary/president Xi Jinping's sister and her husband control at least \$376-million of wealth. On September 25, The New York Times published a similar report showing that the current premier, Wen Jiabao's family has a wealth equal to at least \$2.7-billion (Access to these two news reports were immediately blocked by the PRC's internet censors).

Everybody, people who feel happy or upset about Bo's downfall alike, is aware of the fact that Bo's expulsion from the party is a political decision, not an issue of party discipline. The cause of his expulsion is the political battle over the Chongqing model taking place both inside and outside the party. Recent statements and actual events have confirmed this conviction. Guangming Daily, a newspaper controlled by the Central Committee, not only attacked Bo Xilai for his alleged sins but also attacked the entire Chongqing model as a "stale political model that brought China unparalleled disaster." Similarly, premier Wen Jiabao argued that the Bo incident showed that return to the days of Cultural Revolution is an actual threat for China. Re-starting of commercial broadcasting in Chongqing local television is probably the best evidence of the political character of Bo's purge from the party.

While the CCP leadership (as well as the right-wing opposition to the CCP) attack Bo Xilai, the majority of China's left, a reformist blend of social democracy and Maoism, has mobilized to defend Bo. Red China, a prominent Maoist web site which is currently blocked in China, recently published a petition signed by more than 1600 people including two retired central government bureaucrats demanding the impeachment of Wen Jiabao for his plans about large-scale privatization of state-owned enterprises and his "grave mistakes and crimes." The great majority of the signatories consist not of members of the diaspora but of people actually living in China. Demanding the impeachment of a prime minister implies a great risk of punishment in a one-party dictatorship like the PRC. This phenomenon itself demonstrates the high level of current political tensions in the country before the 18th Congress of the CCP. The battles and disagreements regarding the case of Bo Xilai caused one-month delay of the announcement of the actual date of the congress. Also, the actual reason of Xi Jinping's disappearance from the public in September for almost two weeks remains to be a mystery.

The Coming Storm in China and Socialist Politics

Capitalist restoration, a process set off in December 1978 with the Chinese Communist Party's embrace of the policy of "reform and opening up," has fundamentally changed the economic and social structure of China. On the eve of the 21st century, China was transformed into a capitalist country. The opening up of the doors of the CCP to business

people in 2002 was only the formalization of an ongoing process. Today the presence of the bourgeoisie inside the CCP is not restricted to the people that are legally categorized as business people. As we have already explained, top party-state bureaucrats who are not officially recognized as capitalists have already accumulated significant capital through their business links due to their control over the state-owned enterprises. In short, bureaucrat-capitalist cadres govern the CCP today.

Striking Chinese workers block the entrance gate of a factory in Shanghai.

The bourgeois regime ruled by the CCP has recently come under significant stress. In the foreign policy realm, the PRC has serious tensions with U.S. imperialism and other states from Japan to India. The regime is grappling with more severe problems inside the country. Rising class inequality between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat has increased class struggle to its highest level since the Tiananmen protests in 1989. The workers' movement, which started to rise in the mid-2000s, has become increasingly militant under the impact of the global economic crisis that started in November 2008. Migrant workers, whose numbers now approaching a quarter billion, engage in new strikes and struggles every day. The peasant struggles that started in the 1990s still continue unabated.

While the class struggle between the bourgeoisie, on the one hand, and the proletariat and the poor peasantry, on the other, intensifies, the Chinese bourgeoisie is also undergoing internal frictions. One fraction of the Chinese bourgeoisie advocates state-owned enterprises to play a significant role in the economy and a policy to appease the proletariat and the poor peasantry by increasing government spending for social services. The other fraction of the bourgeoisie advocates further privatization and opposes high increases in government spending for social services. The left-wing of the CCP led by Bo Xilai represented the former group while the latter group had a broader representation and power within the party. The Chongqing model became the biggest symbol and mass appeal of the left-wing of the CCP. The great majority of the Chinese left that embraces a reformist version of Maoism has made the Chongqing model its political platform and supported the bourgeois fraction represented by Bo Xilai.

Bo's possible election to the Politburo Standing Committee in the 18th Congress might have been a great step for this group. By destroying the political career of Bo Xilai, the CCP's centrist and right-wing sections, which are closer to neoliberalism than Bo faction, have prevented this outcome and advanced their position in the ongoing struggle. However, the Chinese left's unwavering support for Bo Xilai and severe criticism of the current party leadership demonstrates the fact that current political divisions within the CCP cannot be easily overcome. For this reason, it is necessary to follow the CCP's 18th Congress and subsequent developments in China very closely.

No matter how and toward which direction the power struggles within the CCP unfold, it is certainly clear that stability is not on the horizon and political struggles of great significance are approaching. The Chinese proletariat is entering this new era without a revolutionary political leadership. The contemporary Chinese left, embracing a reformist blend of Maoism, defending Chinese nationalism passionately, and supporting the bourgeois faction represented by Bo Xilai, does not have any capacity to develop a political platform independent from the bourgeoisie and provide revolutionary leadership to the proletariat. Of course, Chinese revolutionaries can cooperate with other leftist groups to oppose a possible new wave of privatization and organize strikes and demonstrations. However, placing unrealistic hopes upon the current Chinese left or supporting its reformist program means nothing less than betrayal to the Chinese working-class. The Chinese working-class needs a

revolutionary and internationalist political leadership as opposed to the current reformist and nationalist line of the great majority of the Chinese left. Establishing a Leninist party in China as part of an internationalist movement is an urgent task not only for Chinese revolutionaries but also for all the socialists of the world. •

Ahmet Devrim is a graduate student based in Istanbul, Turkey.

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