

INTERVIEWS

Craft a Chinese Federation: An Option for the Times

Mab Huang; Tiancheng Wang

Whether or not China should adopt some form of federalism in the future to deal with relations among the major ethnic groups within its borders, as well as between the mainland and Taiwan, has been a matter of concern and discussion among some mainland intellectuals for quite some time. However, mainland scholars and activists know very little about what views and thoughts Taiwan's academic and political circles have in this regard. Recently, Dr. Huang, a professor at the Department of Political Science of Soochow University in Taiwan and the founding editor-in-chief of the Taiwan Journal of Human Rights, published an article in which he once again put forward the idea of constructing a "Chinese federation". Why did he put forward this idea? What is the nature of his "Chinese Federation"? How is it different from the federal or confederate system of the United States? Under what circumstances and how should such a structure be constructed? How does Prof. Huang evaluate the views of some mainland scholars on related issues? Tiancheng Wang, editor-in-chief of China Journal of Democracy, conducted this interview with Prof. Huang on these issues.

From Imperial Legacy to DNA Politics: The Deeper Logic of Chinese Nationalism and Minority Policies

Magnus Fiskesjö; Haofeng Yu

The Chinese government's policy of repression and assimilation of ethnic mi-

norities, particularly the genocide in Xinjiang, has attracted intense international attention. By reinforcing the narrative of a “unified Chinese nation”, Beijing seeks to erase the separate identities of ethnic minorities, with DNA research as one of the means of legitimization. China’s nationalism and historical narratives are having a profound impact on domestic and foreign policy. How, then, does China’s ethnic policy affect its international image? How should the international community respond in this context? Haofeng Yu, associate editor of *China Journal of Democracy*, conducted an in-depth interview with Dr. Magnus Fiskesjö, Associate Professor in the Department of Anthropology at Cornell University, to explore these key questions.

The Truth about Xinjiang: From Xinjiang Police Files to an In-depth Analysis of the Human Rights Crisis

Adrian Zenz; Paul Gosselin

Human rights issues in Xinjiang have long sparked international concern, especially after mass detentions of Uyghurs and other minorities came to light in 2017. In recent years, the human rights situation in Xinjiang has deteriorated dramatically with the implementation of measures such as re-education camps, forced labor, and high-tech surveillance. In response, the international community has launched legal actions at various levels, including genocide rulings and economic sanctions. However, Beijing has turned a deaf ear to the criticism and portrayed it as a necessary tool for counterterrorism and de-radicalization. Commissioned by *China Journal of Democracy*, Paul Gosselin, a doctoral candidate in history, had an in-depth discussion with Dr. Adrian Zenz, Senior Fellow at the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation, on the root causes of the Xinjiang issue, the evolution of its policies, and the international community’s response. Dr. Zenz’s in-depth investigative report, *Xinjiang Police Files*, exposes the Chinese government’s mass surveillance and detention of Uyghurs and other ethnic minorities, and provides key evidence for the world’s understanding of the human rights crisis in the region.

Ethnic Issue and China's Democratic Transition: How to Keep Unity or Implement Separation?

Tsultrim Gyatso; Ilshat H. Kokbore; Kevin Carrico; Ping Hu; Baogang He; Weifeng Zhong; Lun Zhang; Ming Xia

When the future democratic transition in China occurs, the ethnic issue could become one of the most explosive and challenging problems. For quite a long time, there has been significant division among Chinese intellectuals and activists on the issue of unity and separation. While many Han scholars and activists advocate for maintaining the unity of the state and introducing a federal system to accommodate ethnic diversity, some believe that the “great unity” must be dismantled, dividing China into several or even many small countries. Dalai Lama and the Tibetan government-in-exile currently advocate for the “Middle Way”, seeking high autonomy rather than independence for Tibet, but some Tibetans, particularly younger exiles, do not agree with this stance. Exiled Uyghur activists generally seem to advocate for future independence, aiming to restore the “East Turkestan Republic” once created during the Republican era. Some Southern Mongolian activists also advocate for independence.

This divergence is rooted in deep historical, religious, cultural, linguistic, and contemporary realities’ factors. Those who advocate for maintaining unity and those who demand or support separation seem unable to persuade each other.

Under the current extreme and brutal control of the Communist regime, introducing a federal system to ensure genuine autonomy or allowing any region to become independent is clearly impossible. However, when the future democratic transition occurs and political control loosens, the forces of unity and separation, if not handled properly, could collide violently. This could provide an opportunity

for hardliners, potentially leading to tragic bloodshed and complicating or even derailing the transition. How should we assess and manage this risk? Should establishing a successful democratic government and framework be prioritized first, and then address the issues of unity and separation democratically?

Whether it is to maintain unification or to pursue independence, it is necessary to go through a political process and follow certain procedures. If national unity is to be maintained, how will this be done politically, in particular, what process and institutional arrangements will be used to obtain the approval of the predominantly non-Han ethnic groups and to base unity on the consent of the different ethnic groups? If independence is to be pursued, how will the necessary authorities be elected and what procedures will be followed to obtain secession? Is it possible for the unificationists and the secessionists to reach a consensus on some basic procedures that would contribute to the success of the democratic transition, the peacefulness of the unification or secession process, and the avoidance of a tragic conflict?

POLITICS AND SOCIETY

Market Order and Social Justice: A Rebuttal to Hayek's Theory (Part 2)

Po Chung Chow

Following the previous article, Hayek champions minimal government intervention and a robust market, staunchly opposing wealth redistribution under the guise of social justice. Yet, he perceives no substantial difference between his views and John Rawls's theory of justice because he fully endorses Rawls's idea of "pure procedural justice". This paper argues that Hayek fundamentally misinterprets Rawls, since "pure procedural justice" requires that basic social institutions fully embody Rawls's principles of justice, including the "principle of fair equality of opportunity" and the "difference principle". These principles necessitate specific constraints and regulations on market operations. To counter Rawls, Hayek might argue that the market order

inherently promotes fairness and freedom. However, this paper contends that such arguments fail because market systems neither ensure fair equal opportunity for all participants nor guarantee equal freedoms under private property for the wealthy and the poor alike. The author concludes that once we accept that social justice takes precedence over market order, Hayek's defense of capitalism becomes untenable.

The Origin of Human Beings, Racial Arrogance, and the Theory of Chinese Exceptionalism

Yinghong Cheng

The discussion of Chinese nationalism has gradually become a hot topic in contemporary Chinese politics, society and culture since the 1990s. Judging from the world's modern history, nationalism based on racial superiority has always been a powerful ideological tool used by great powers - especially the rising powers - to mobilize their populations. In this sense, nationalism and racism are logically and closely related. Radical and extreme nationalism, on the one hand, self-defines itself as a unique and superior race, and on the other hand, claims that as a superior race it is discriminated against, envied and suppressed by other powerful races, and is not only victimized in the history of world rivalry, but is even bullied by the weaker and inferior races. Nationalism (or patriotism) in contemporary China is no exception in this sense. In recent years, it can be said that all kinds of Chinese national superiority theories have become commonplace in official propaganda and folk psychology, but what is being promoted is racism. This article reveals a specific case in point.

The Mongering and Reproduction of Fear: The Social Psychology of Ethnic Exodus

Ke Wang

Through interviews with Uyghur exiles in various overseas countries, this article

not only confirms the cruelty of the repression, including treating even the rights in the National Autonomy Law as crimes, arbitrary arrests, heavy penalties and sentences, brutal torture, family guilt-by-association, and the use of high-tech to closely monitor the situation, but also discovers the fact that the repression is characterized by opacity, unpredictability, and arbitrariness on the part of those in power, which allows all Uyghurs to live in fear at all times. A large number of Uyghur elites have been forced to go into exile, but the physical distance from their homeland and the developed technology of information transmission provides precisely the necessary conditions for the reproduction of fear. The psychological trauma brought to the Uyghur nation by the politics of terror is difficult to appease. To maintain their rule, totalitarian governments are committed to creating fear. The genocidal repression of the Uyghurs has taken this tactic to the extreme.

TODAY'S DEMOCRACY

The Third Wave of Democratic Backsliding: the US Elections and the Democratic Crisis

Zhidong Hao

The world is currently experiencing a resurgence of the third wave of authoritarianism, with both China and the United States deeply involved. This article details the many problems facing the United States in its electoral system and governance norms, erosion of legal norms, issues faced by civil society including the media, political culture especially the emphasis on positions rather than right or wrong, incitement of hatred and violence, and the impact of authoritarianism in the United States on its foreign relations and the global landscape. These changes mainly occurred during the nearly ten years from Trump's campaign for the US presidency in 2015, his assumption of office, denial of the 2020 election results, and now attempting to run for office again. The development of authoritarianism in the United States shows that the construction of a democratic system is not a

one-time effort, but requires continuous modification, improvement, maintenance, and consolidation. By comparing the political development of the United States and China, we can see some common characteristics of authoritarianism. How to deal with this challenge is a difficult issue facing the people of China, the United States, and other countries in the world.

INSTITUTIONAL DESIGN

Federalism and Democracy: Beyond the U.S. Model

Alfred Stepan; Xingjian Xu (trans.)

Should a multi-ethnic, multilingual nation adopt some form of federalism, and what form of federalism can it adopt to establish democracy and keep the nation together? In this classic essay, Dr. Alfred Stepan divides federalism into three types: “coming-together”, “holding-together”, and “putting-together”. He argues that the prestigious United States federalism is a “coming together” model, which is not suitable for countries that need to move from unitary to federalism in order to “stay together”. The article was first published in 1999 in the *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 10, No. 4, 1999, pp. 19-34: <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/16996>.

CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

The Challenges Facing China’s Liberal Intellectuals

Ziqi Ai

In March 2024, Meiji University (Japan) hosted an international symposium on “The Challenge of Chinese Liberal Intellectuals and Japan’s Role,” in which participants analyzed the resilience of China’s authoritarian regime, the responsi-

bilities of intellectuals, the ideological divide between the left and right, and the relationship between Japan and China's modernization. The following summary was based on the outline and audio recordings of the participants' speeches.

BOOK REVIEW

***The Sentinel State* by Minxin Pei**

Yongyi Song

As long as one dares to sail on the ocean and study all the relevant information on contemporary China and all the documents, both public and private, with the effort of penetrating water through stone, it is still possible to uncover the secrets of the history of Chinese Communist Party surveillance, which is stored in a black box.

NOTES

Global Democracy and Human Rights Events

Eleanor Zhang

APPENDIX

In Memory of Dr. Alvin Y.H. Cheung, a Defender of Hongkong's Freedom

Haofeng Yu