

pletely to one side” and followed the Soviet pattern of economic development. In the first decade, we did have some achievements. In the second decade, Sino-Soviet relations deteriorated; the Soviet Union tore up treaties, withdrew its experts, and suspended all kinds of assistance and cooperation projects. It was a time when we could have turned a misfortune into a blessing. For if we had turned back as soon as possible and opened wide our door to take in scientific and technical achievements and equipment from the advanced Western countries, instead of continuing to follow the Soviet pattern, the situation today would not be like this. . . . It is always more difficult to rebuild after destruction than to build up from nothing. The situation in Taiwan is just the opposite. While we were rapidly regressing, they suddenly forged ahead like a miracle. With one working in high gear and the other moving backward, the gap between us has become wider and wider. When our ostrich policy no longer worked, we had to admit that we have lost in this peaceful economic competition in which there was not even a whiff of gunpowder. One does not lose “face” in conceding defeat. Failure is the mother of success. There is no reason why we cannot win back the lost time if we would learn from past experiences.

[From *Xuexi zhiliao*, September 4, 1979; trans. adapted from *Issues and Studies* 16, no. 5 (January 1980): 88–90]

“UPHOLD THE FOUR BASIC PRINCIPLES,” SPEECH BY DENG XIAOPING,  
MARCH 30, 1979

Although the Deng regime put an end to the Maoist emphasis on political campaigns and class conflict, from early on it tried to set parameters on speech and actions. Despite these strictures, the eighties, as we shall see below, saw greater freedom for intellectuals than any period since the founding of the People’s Republic in 1949.

The [Party] Center believes that in realizing the four modernizations in China we must uphold the four basic principles in thought and politics. They are the fundamental premise for realizing the four modernizations. They are [as follows]:

1. We must uphold the socialist road.
2. We must uphold the dictatorship of the proletariat.
3. We must uphold the leadership of the Communist Party.
4. We must uphold Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought.

The Center believes that we must reemphasize upholding the four basic principles today because some people (albeit an extreme minority) have attempted to shake those basic principles. . . . Recently, a tendency has developed for some people to create trouble in some parts of the country. . . . Some others

also deliberately exaggerate and create a sensation by raising such slogans as "Oppose starvation" and "Demand human rights." Under these slogans, they incite some people to demonstrate and scheme to get foreigners to propagandize their words and actions to the outside world. The so-called China Human Rights Organization has even tacked up big character posters requesting the American president "to show solicitude" toward human rights in China. Can we permit these kinds of public demands for foreigners to interfere in China's domestic affairs? A so-called Thaw Society issued a proclamation openly opposing the dictatorship of the proletariat, saying that it divided people. Can we permit this kind of "freedom of speech," which openly opposes constitutional principles?

[Trans. from *Deng Xiaoping wenxuan* 2:158–184 — RL]

"BUILDING SOCIALIST SPIRITUAL CIVILIZATION," LETTER FROM LI CHANG,  
VICE PRESIDENT OF THE CHINESE ACADEMY OF SCIENCES, TO A MEMBER  
OF THE PARTY CENTRAL COMMITTEE, DECEMBER 1980

Like the Qing dynasty in the nineteenth century, the new regime hoped to open the country to the outside world without modifying its legitimating ideology. New technology or scientific advances were welcomed while Western cultural or political notions were considered threatening and undesirable. The regime therefore developed this concept of a socialist spiritual civilization in the hope of combating the inroads of what it called Western bourgeois material civilization.

Since the Fifth Plenary Session of the Eleventh Party Central Committee, inspired by the idea of "improving and strengthening the Party leadership," I have felt all along that, after the ten disastrous years of the "cultural revolution," there still exists within the Party the pernicious influence of the ultra-left line of the Gang of Four, remnants of the factional ideology of feudalism, selfish individualism of the bourgeoisie, anarchism of the petty bourgeoisie, and colonial ideas that worship things foreign. Under these influences, ideological demands inside and outside the Party have grown somewhat slack. . . . I feel that, along with the general goal of realizing the Four Modernizations, we should also consider putting forward a goal of "building socialist spiritual civilization." The phrase itself first appeared in Vice Chairman Ye's 1979 speech at the meeting in celebration of the thirtieth anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China.

I consider that the socialist spiritual civilization includes a concrete aspect (such as well-developed education and thriving science, literature, and art) as well as an ideological aspect (such as social ethics, traditions, and customs). For example, by ideals we mean dedication to the people's cause and building