

# **Great transformation**

- the path, impacts and contesting future of  
Chinese society

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# Unwinding of socialism: a China style

- Ownership:
  - from “the public” to the private (though collective ownership of the lands is not totally privatized);
- Resource distribution:
  - from equality to polarization;
- Social protection:
  - from the life-time institutionalized protection to the “contingenized” of everything;
- Social discourse:
  - from glorious to the working people to glorious to the new rich;
- Political power:
  - concentrated as usual.

## **Social impacts of “Satan 's Mill”**

- Wildness of the Chinese emerging free market
  - A market of “un-embedded” from social restriction and effective government regulation
  - Strong drive for growth and money making;
  - Predominance of social Darwinism;
  - Minimum social protections for working people and “underdogs”;
  - Land deprivations of peasants;
  - Damaging to the environment;

# **Social impacts of “Satan 's Mill”**

- “Made in China” phenomena
  - 60 million laid-off workers;
  - 200 million migrant workers (peasants);
  - Low wages, long hours, factory regime of despotism, high profit rate;
  - Developmental and pro-capital local despotism:
    - Minimum supply of public service,
    - Maximum pressure to maintain social stability

## **Social impacts of “Satan 's Mill”**

- Crippling the trade union and workers' representative system;
- Monopolizing of social organizations;
- Fragmenting and atomizing society;
- Polarization of wealth distribution;
- Randomizing and radicalizing of social conflicts;
- High anxiety and high uncertainty in social psychology.

# Remedies since 2003

- New orientation for a more balanced development: “view of scientific development”
- Macro policy adjustment
  - Tax abolishment and agricultural subsidies for peasants;
  - Development of the west and the center of China, for a better regional balance;
  - Subsidies of vocational training for young people;
  - New rural medical cooperation system;
  - A system of labor legislations;
  - Union organizational drive and institutionalization of wage negotiation
  - Social insurance law in action in 2012
  - Public housing projects
  - Reform of medical service system

# Good news for labor: Guangdong Model

- Wild cat strikes and “ex-post” bargaining are tolerated, with new efforts to institutionalize it;
- Institutionalized annual wage negotiation are pushed by the trade union;
- Local industrial-wise wage negotiations are trying out;
- Wage has been increased in double digit for 3-4 years;
- Democratization of grass-root level trade union are in process;
- Labor market has finally turned into workers’ favorites: there has been a continuous shortage of labor across China;
- The age of cheap labor is coming to an end!
- Spontaneously awakening of class consciousness is in rising.

# Future?

- **There is no pre-determined future;**
- **Future is what we are trying to make;**
- **A bottom-line socialism: the minimum social blue-print for working people**
  - **Avoid the trap of marginalization**
    - **Labor movement in the former socialist country;**
    - **Labor movement in the new democratic regimes;**
    - **No more excuses**
  - **What do working people want?**
    - **Job security**
    - **Decent incomes**
    - **Equal job and equal pay**
    - **Decent working hours**
    - **Participation in decision making**
    - **Autonomous of social space**
    - **Social insurance**
    - **Right to organize, to strike and to bargaining**
    - **No more sacrificing for whatever excuses;**
    - **Any concession will be accompanied by a late-compensation contract**
    - **Inter-generation justice critical**
    - **...**