



History

Paper 2: Authoritarian States China 1911–1976

SL & HL



CONTENTS

List of Features	vi
How To Use This Guide	vii
Paper 2 Exam Information	viii
Essay-writing Advice.....	ix
Chronology of Key Events in China: 1839–1976	x
Who's Who in China	xiii
A Note on Spelling	xvii
1. The Emergence of the Authoritarian State in China	1
1.1 Long-term Conditions That Gave Rise to the Authoritarian State in China	2
1.1.1 China Is Forced to Open Up to the West	3
1.1.2 The Qing's Inability to Promote Effective Control over the Provinces	4
1.1.3 The Failure to Address Widespread Peasant Poverty	4
1.1.4 The Hundred Days (1898): A Brief Flowering of Reform under the Qing	4
1.1.5 Sun Yat-sen and the Emergence of Revolutionary Nationalism	5
1.1.6 Reform by the Imperial Government from 1905 Onwards: Too Little, Too Late	5
1.1.7 The Revolution of the Double Tenth or Xinhai Revolution (1911)	5
1.1.8 Yuan Shi-kai's Presidency (1912–16): The False Dawn of Parliamentary Government	6
1.1.9 The Warlord Era (1916–27)	6
1.1.10 The May Fourth Movement (1919)	7
1.1.11 The First United Front (1923–7)	7
1.1.12 The Northern Expedition (1926–7) and the White Terror (1927)	8
1.2 Medium-term Conditions That Gave Rise to the Authoritarian State in China	9
1.3 Long-term Methods Used to Establish the Authoritarian State in China	12
1.4 Short-term Conditions That Gave Rise to the Authoritarian State in China	16
1.4.1 The Main Events of the Civil War (1946–9)	16
1.5 Short-term Methods Used to Establish the Authoritarian State in China	20
2. Consolidation and Maintenance of Power by Mao	21
2.1 A Note on Mao's Influence Within the CCP (1949–76)	22
2.2 Maoist Ideology	23
2.2.1 Key Components of Mao Zedong Thought.....	23

2.3 Mao's Consolidation of Power	26
2.3.1 Consolidation and Recovery (1949–52)	26
2.3.2 National Capitalism (1949–52)	28
2.4 CCP Maintenance of Power under Mao	29
2.4.1 The Creation of a Highly Centralised System of Party Control	29
2.4.2 Use of Force	30
2.4.3 Thought Control	31
2.4.4 Mass Movements	31
2.4.5 Mass Movements 1: The Three and Five Antis Campaigns (1951–2)	32
2.4.6 Mass Movements 2: The Hundred Flowers Campaign and Anti-Rightist Campaign (1957)	32
2.4.7 The Socialist Education Movement of 1962–3	33
2.4.8 Mass Movements 3: The Cultural Revolution (1966–76).....	34
2.4.9 Mao Plays 'Divide and Rule'	38
2.4.10 Foreign Policy	39
3. Aims and Results of CCP Social Policies under Mao	45
3.1 The War on Crime	46
3.2 Education	46
3.3 Women	47
3.4 Land Reform	48
3.5 The Destruction of the Old Class System and Creation of New Power Relationships	49
3.6 Culture and the Arts.....	49
3.7 Religion	52
3.8 Minorities	52
3.8.1 Tibet	53
4. Aims and Results of CCP Economic Policies under Mao	55
4.1 The First Five-Year Plan (1953–7)	56
4.2 The Socialisation of Agriculture	57
4.3 The Great Leap Forward (1958).....	58
4.3.1 Launch	59
4.3.2 Results	59
4.3.3 Termination (1961).....	62
4.3.4 Liu and Deng's Changes to Economic Policy (1961–5)	62
4.4 Mao Retires to the Second Front	63
4.5 The Impact of the Cultural Revolution on China's Economy	63
4.6 China's Economic Growth under Mao Zedong	64

5. Aims and Results of CCP Economic Policies under Deng Xiaoping	67
5.1 Deng Xiaoping's Economic Policies	68
5.1.1 Agriculture	68
5.1.2 Industry	70
5.1.3 The Special Economic Zones (SEZ): China Looks to Foreign Investment	70
5.1.4 The Growth of China's Foreign Trade	70
Revision and Essay-writing Activities: The Emergence and Rule of the Authoritarian State in China under Mao	72
Glossary.....	79
Bibliography	82

LIST OF FEATURES

Key Issues

What long-term conditions gave rise to the authoritarian state in China?	3
What were the causes of the Revolution of 1911?	5
What led to the founding of the CCP in 1921?	7
What successes did the GMD have during the Nanjing Decade?	9
What weaknesses did the GMD exhibit during the Nanjing Decade?	10
How were GMD weaknesses worsened by the war with Japan from 1937 to 1945?	11
What strengths did the CCP display prior to the Long March of 1934–5?	12
What strengths did the CCP display during the Yanan Era (1935–46)?	13
Three decisive battles in 1948–9	17
What GMD weaknesses led to their defeat in the Civil War?	19
What strengths led the CCP to win the Civil War?	20
Why did Mao launch the Socialist Education Movement (1962–3)?	33
How did Mao develop his own power base in order to launch the Cultural Revolution?	34
How did the Cultural Revolution begin?	35
How did the Cultural Revolution develop?	35
Why did Mao decide to end the Cultural Revolution?	36
What were the results of the Cultural Revolution?	37
What were the results of the Korean War for the PRC?	42
What were the results of the Land Reform?	49
What were the results of the First Five-Year Plan?	56
Why did Mao abandon Soviet-style economic planning and adopt the Great Leap Forward?	58
Why did the Great Leap Forward fail so disastrously?	61
What were the Four Modernisations of 1977?	65
How did the 'household responsibility system' work?	69
Why did China establish SEZs?	70
What reforms occurred in the industrial sector?	71
In what ways did economic modernisation destabilise China?	71

Key Historical Perspectives

The Hundred Flowers	33
Why Mao launched the Cultural Revolution	34
Collectivisation	57

Timelines

Chronology of Key Events in China: 1839–1976	x
Key Events: 1839–1927	8
Key Events: 1928–46	15
Key Events: The Chinese Civil War (1945–49)	18
Key Events: 1949–76	25

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This guide contains detailed notes on the emergence and rule of Mao's authoritarian state in China, but it also provides an overview of Deng Xiaoping's economic reforms, which took China in a fundamentally different direction from the path steered by Mao Zedong.

The guide starts with a section of advice on how to approach essay questions. In addition, practice essay questions are included at the end of the book, which are partially completed with space for you to finish off with additional points.

What parts of the IB History syllabus is this guide useful for?

Primarily, this guide is intended to help SL and HL candidates who are studying Mao's China as a case study for World History Topic 10: Authoritarian States for Paper 2.

It will also be of help to HL candidates who are studying Section 12: China and Korea (1910–50) and Section 14: The People's Republic of China (1949–2005) from the syllabus, as part of HL Option 3: History of Asia and Oceania.

Feature Boxes

This guide includes a range of feature boxes that highlight essential information and help you navigate through the book. You will find the following types of colour-coded box in the main text and in the margins:



CROSS-REFERENCE

Where else to look in the guide for more information on a topic.



KEY INFORMATION

Key facts, issues, viewpoints, and terminology. Key terms appear in bold when they are first mentioned in the main text and a definition is provided at the bottom of the page. All key term definitions are collated in the glossary at the end of the book.



TIMELINE

Helps you to visualise and contextualise important events.



KEY PERSPECTIVES

An overview of the differing historical perspectives on important events in twentieth century Chinese history.

PAPER 2 EXAM INFORMATION

What do you need to know about Paper 2?

- The examination lasts *one and a half hours*.
- It is divided into 12 sections, each on a different world history topic.
- Authoritarian States (20th Century) is Topic 10.
- Two essay questions will be set on each topic, so there are 24 questions in total.
- Candidates have to answer two questions each chosen from *different* topics.
- The maximum mark for each question is 15.
- For HL candidates, Paper 2 is worth 25% of the total assessment.
- For SL candidates, Paper 2 is worth 45% of the assessment.
- The questions will be open (you can use your own examples); they will *not* refer to either named states or leaders.
- The IB syllabus specifies that the following aspects of authoritarian states should be studied:
 - The emergence of authoritarian states
 - Consolidation and maintenance of power
 - Aims and results of policies.
- Some questions will demand discussion of states from more than one region (there are four world regions as defined in the IBO handbook), and the IBO recommend that students study a minimum of three authoritarian states.

ESSAY-WRITING ADVICE

- You must spend a few minutes carefully looking at the paper and weighing up the choice of questions before you make up your mind on which two questions to answer.
- Look very closely at the wording of the questions, making sure that you understand their implications and what you need to address in your answer.
- Pay particular attention to command words such as 'to what extent', 'examine', and 'compare and contrast'. In the case of 'to what extent was any one authoritarian state you have studied a totalitarian state?' you must weigh up the ways in which the communist state was and was not totalitarian, reaching a conclusion about whether it was totally, largely, partly, or not at all, totalitarian. 'Compare and contrast the methods by which two leaders of authoritarian states came to power' would require you to examine the similarities and the differences between their methods. 'Examine' means identify and scrutinise, so 'examine the conditions which gave rise to an authoritarian state' would require you to identify the circumstances which made possible the success of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), explaining which conditions (social, political, economic, military) benefited the CCP and evaluating which were most important.
- Always plan your answer, spending at least two or three minutes doing this for each essay, if not longer (but no more than five to six).
- Give equal time to each essay you write. Do not be tempted to spend much longer on one at the expense of the other.
- Answer the question. Keep your approach analytical. Do not drift into a description of events. Focus tightly on the question; do not deviate.
- Perhaps the best way of ensuring that each paragraph is linked to the title is to check that your first sentence (the *key sentence*) is making a statement that directly answers the question.
- For each point that you make, provide an explanation of what light that point sheds on the question and why it is significant, and also present evidence or a precise example to support it. So, the drill should be: *Statement, Explanation, Example*.
- Always write in complete sentences and be as clear as you can in your use of English. The clearer your English, the more effectively you will communicate your points to the examiner.
- Always write a proper introduction. This must identify the key issues raised by the question. You should also outline your thesis, the line of argument that your answer will take.
- Make sure that you leave time for a proper conclusion. The main purpose of this is to restate your key arguments.
- Do not feel that you have to pack your answer with references to differing schools of historical interpretation and named historians. You will get credit for such historiographical references, where used appropriately, but do not insert them just for the sake of displaying your knowledge if they do not contribute to answering the question.
- Whatever information you insert in to your answer, whether in the form of a fact, a statistic or a quotation, do make sure that you explain its significance and how it answers the question. If you do that, your essay should remain focused.

CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS IN CHINA: 1839–1976

1839–42	The First Opium War with Britain
1894–5	China is defeated by Japan in a war over Korea
1898–1901	The Boxer Rebellion
1911	The Double Tenth Revolution against the Qing Dynasty
1912	Emperor Pu Yi abdicates; Yuan Shikai becomes president of the Chinese Republic
1916	Yuan Shikai dies; the Warlord Era begins
1919	The May Fourth Movement Mass demonstrations take place against the Versailles Treaty
1921	The CCP is created
1923	The First United Front between the GMD and CCP
1925	Sun Yat-sen dies and is succeeded as GMD leader by Chiang Kai-shek
1926	Northern Expedition
1927	White Terror in Shanghai The GMD government is established at Nanjing Mao Zedong sets up the Jiangxi Soviet
1931	Japanese forces invade Manchuria
1934	The beginning of the Long March
1935	Mao is chosen as Chairman of CCP at Zunyi Conference The Long March ends; the CCP set up base at Yanan
1936	Xian Incident (Chiang Kai-shek is kidnapped)
1937	The Second United Front between GMD and CCP The Marco Polo Bridge Incident; the beginning of the Sino-Japanese War
1938	GMD government moves to Chongqing
1940	Mao publishes <i>On New Democracy</i>
1942	Mao's First Rectification Campaign at Yanan

1945	World War Two ends with Japanese surrender
1946	US Marshall Mission fails to prevent the renewal of civil war
1948	The PLA win the Battle for Manchuria and the Battle of Huai-Hai
1949	Chiang flees to Taiwan The People's Republic of China is established by the CCP
1950	The PLA invade Tibet Mao visits Moscow; the Sino-Soviet Friendship Treaty is signed Land Reform: about 2 million landlords are killed The outbreak of the Korean War: China intervenes on North Korea's side Campaign against Counter-Revolutionaries
1951	Three Antis campaign, aimed at corrupt officials
1952	Five Antis campaign, aimed at corrupt businessmen
1953	The beginning of the First Five-Year Plan The end of the Korean War
1954	The New Constitution is introduced; China officially becomes a one-party state
1957	The Hundred Flowers campaign, followed by the Anti-Rightist campaign
1958	The beginning of the Great Leap Forward CCP shells Jinmen (Quemoy) and Matsu, GMD-held islands
1959	The beginning of a severe famine which lasts into 1961 Marshal Peng Dehuai is sacked after criticising Mao at the Lushan Conference Mao steps down as Head of State (Chairman)
1960	Soviet experts withdraw from China
1961	The Great Leap is abandoned; Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping are entrusted with economic recovery
1962	Border clashes take place between China and India The Socialist Education Movement is announced by Mao
1964	<i>Quotations from Chairman Mao Zedong</i> is published China explode their first atom bomb
1966	The Cultural Revolution starts
1968	The PLA clamp down on the Red Guards

1971	Lin Biao dies Henry Kissinger secretly visits China The People's Republic is admitted to the United Nations (UN)
1972	President Nixon visits Beijing
1973	Deng Xiaoping is rehabilitated
1976	Zhou Enlai dies Mao Zedong dies Hua Guofeng orders the arrest of the Gang of Four

WHO'S WHO IN CHINA

- MIKHAIL BORODIN**
(1884–1951) The leading Comintern agent in China in the period 1923–7, Borodin advised the GMD and CCP in setting up the First United Front.
- CHIANG KAI-SHEK**
(OR, JIANG JIESHI)
(1887–1975) Chiang trained as an army officer before the 1911 Revolution, took part in the 1911 Revolution, and joined the GMD. Commandant of the Whampoa Military academy from 1924, he succeeded Sun Yat-sen as leader of the GMD in 1925. He was the head of state in Nationalist China between 1928 and 1949. He fled to Taiwan in 1949 at the end of the civil war with the CCP, where he ruled until his death in 1975.
- EMPRESS DOWAGER CIXI**
(1835–1908) Cixi was concubine to Emperor Xianfeng who died in 1861. She effectively ruled China from 1861 until her death in 1908.
- DEAN ACHESON**
(1893–1971) US Secretary of State (1949–53) under President Truman (of the Democratic Party). Acheson tried unsuccessfully to persuade Truman to recognize the PRC.
- DENG XIAOPING**
(1904–97) Deng studied in France and the USSR between 1920 and 1926. On returning to China, he supported Mao's view that the peasantry would be the primary revolutionary force in China. He was a political commissar attached to the People's Liberation Army during the Civil War of 1945–9. He was promoted to the position of CCP secretary general in 1954. During the mid-1950s, Deng became a close political ally of Liu Shaoqi and took a more pragmatic approach to economic planning than Mao. After the failure of the Great Leap Forward (1958–61), Deng and Liu were entrusted by the party with leading economic policy. They subsequently reversed key elements of Mao's economic policies. However, Deng was removed from his leadership position during the Cultural Revolution and, in 1969, was sent into internal exile. Deng was restored to the CCP's Central Committee in 1973 but was demoted again in April 1976 after being accused of organising a counter-revolutionary movement. After Mao's death in September 1976, Hua Guofeng briefly led the party but, by the end of 1978, it was clear that Deng was the most influential figure within the CCP's leadership. Deng instigated radical reform of the Chinese economy, introducing free market measures.
- HUA GUOFENG**
(1921–2008) Hua became an important figure within the CCP during the Cultural Revolution (1966–76) and was promoted to the Politburo in 1973. In 1975 he was appointed premier and, following Mao's death in September 1976, succeeded him as chairman of the CCP. Within days of Mao's death, Hua arrested the radical communist politicians known as the 'Gang of Four'. By 1978 Hua was pushed aside by Deng Xiaoping who led the CCP until 1997. Hua remained a member of the CCP's Central Committee until 2002.

JIANG QING
(1914–91)

A former Shanghai actress, Jiang became Mao's third wife in 1939. Many of Mao's colleagues in the CCP were hostile towards Jiang and insisted that she stay out of politics. She had little political influence until the 1960s when she forged links with a number of radical communists in Shanghai, who dominated the Cultural Revolution Group set up in 1966. During the Cultural Revolution, Jiang was prominent in addressing mass demonstrations and effectively was given control over the arts, promoting new revolutionary operas and plays. After Mao's death in 1976, she was arrested along with three other radical communist politicians of the Gang of Four. She was convicted in 1981 of 'counter-revolutionary crimes'. She died in jail in 1991 after her original death sentence was commuted to life imprisonment.

KANG SHENG
(1898–1975)

Kang joined the CCP in 1925 and was appointed to the CCP's Politburo in 1934. He was in charge of the CCP's internal security organisation from 1937 onwards. His influence peaked during the Cultural Revolution (1966–76), when he allied himself with the more radical communist figures such as Jiang Qing. He is regarded as responsible for promoting much of the violence of the Cultural Revolution, helping identify targets for the Red Guards to purge.

LIN BIAO
(1907–71)

Lin joined the Whampoa Military Academy and became a member of the CCP in 1925. He helped build up the Red Army at Jiangxi between 1928 and 1934. He played a prominent role during the Communists' Long March (1934–5). Lin led the People's Liberation Army brilliantly in Manchuria during the Civil War (1945–9). He was appointed defence minister in 1959 and was responsible for publishing *Quotations from Chairman Mao*, which became known as the 'Little Red Book'. Lin promoted a cult of Mao within the army and became a key player in the Cultural Revolution (1966–76). In 1969 Lin was designated as Mao's successor but became estranged from him in 1970–1. Mystery still surrounds his death in 1971 when, allegedly, according to official CCP sources, he died in a plane crash after trying to assassinate Mao.

LI LISAN
(1899–1967)

Li was a CCP leader who opposed Mao and who supported the idea of an urban revolution instead of a peasant revolution. He led a CCP rising in Changsha in 1930 which failed, and he then spent the next 16 years in the USSR. From 1949–66 he served as the labour minister for the People's Republic of China (PRC). He was denounced during the Cultural Revolution and allegedly committed suicide in 1967.

LIU SHAOQI
(1898–1969)

Liu joined the CCP in 1920 and was elected to the CCP's Central Committee in 1927 and then the Politburo in 1934. He emerged as one of the leading theoreticians in the CCP in the Yanan period (1935–47). In 1959 Liu was appointed as chairman of the PRC and was widely seen as Mao's most likely successor. However, the relationship between Mao

and Liu became strained during the Great Leap Forward, which Mao launched in 1958. The CCP turned to Liu and Deng Xiaoping to lead China's economy back to recovery. Liu and Deng abandoned some of Mao's more radical economic measures and were known as the 'Pragmatists'. Liu and Deng dominated economic policy until 1966 when they were attacked by Mao at the start of the Cultural Revolution. Liu was accused of taking China down 'the capitalist road' and was purged from the CCP in 1968. He died in prison in 1969.

MAO ZEDONG
(1893–1976)

Mao was one of the founding members of the CCP in 1921. From 1927 he advocated a peasant revolution. He was elected chairman of the CCP in 1935 during the Long March. In 1942–3, the CCP officially adopted Mao Zedong Thought as the party's ideology. Mao was chairman of the PRC from 1949–59 and remained chairman of the CCP until his death in 1976 and, apart from a brief period of somewhat reduced influence (1961–5), was the paramount figure in the party. He launched the Cultural Revolution in 1966, which promoted the cult of Mao's personality.

PENG DEHUI
(1898–1974)

Peng joined the CCP in 1928 and was a senior military commander during the Long March (1934–5). Peng was the second most senior military commander in the Red Army during the Japanese War (1937–45). He supported Mao's decision in 1950 to enter the Korean War on North Korea's side and commanded China's troops in the war until 1952. Peng was defence minister from 1954 to 1959. During the Great Leap Forward, Peng criticised Mao's economic policies at the Lushan party meeting in 1959, which led to him being sacked as defence minister. He was arrested in 1967 during the Cultural Revolution and died in disgrace in 1974.

PU YI
(1906–67)

Pu Yi was the Last Chinese Emperor, who ruled 1908–12, succeeding his uncle, the Guanxu Emperor, in 1908. He abdicated in 1912 when China became a republic. He was installed by the Japanese as puppet ruler of Manchukuo in 1932.

SONG JIAOREN
(1882–1913)

Song was leader of the GMD delegation in Parliament in 1912–13 and was assassinated in 1913.

SUN YAT-SEN
(1866–1925)

Sun was a revolutionary nationalist leader, founder of the Revolutionary Alliance (1905), briefly president of China (1911), and leader of the Guomindang until his death in 1925.

TROFIM LYSENKO
(1898–1976)

Director of the Institute of Genetics in the USSR from 1940 to 1965, Lysenko challenged orthodox thinking on genetics and agronomy and promoted controversial reforms with regards to crop planting. These techniques were discredited in the USSR in 1965 and Lysenko was removed from his post.

WANG JINGWEI
(1883–1944)

A GMD politician, who lost out to Chiang Kai-shek in the struggle to succeed Sun Yat-sen as GMD leader, Wang had favoured better relations with the CCP. From 1932–7, Wang worked with Chiang Kai-shek but fell out with Chiang once the Japanese invasion of China began. Between 1940–4, he headed a collaborationist Chinese regime that worked with the Japanese during the Japanese occupation of China.

WANG MING
(1900–74)

A CCP leader who opposed Mao and who supported the idea of urban revolution, Wang had close links with Comintern and spent 1925–30 in the USSR. On his return to China in 1930, he challenged Mao's control over the Jiangxi Soviet. Wang returned to the USSR in 1932 and remained there until 1937. In 1938 he was demoted within the CCP and thereafter never seriously challenged Mao.

YUAN SHIKAI
(1859–1916)

Yuan was a leading general in the Imperial Army, who played a key role in the 1911 Revolution. He was president of China from 1912–16.

ZHANG XUELIANG
(1901–2001)

Zhang was known as the 'Young Marshal' because he succeeded his father (the 'Old Marshal') as warlord in charge of Manchuria in 1928. Zhang was a key figure in the kidnapping of Chiang Kai-shek at Xian in 1936. Zhang was angry with Chiang for his failure to stand up to Japanese encroachments on Chinese territory.

ZHOU ENLAI
(1898–1976)

Zhou was sent by Comintern to France in 1920, where he organised Marxist study groups amongst Chinese students and workers. Zhou was appointed to the Politburo of the CCP in 1927. In 1931 he moved from Shanghai to join Mao in the Jiangxi Soviet, initially working with other CCP leaders to undermine Mao. During the Long March (1934–5), Zhou decided to support Mao's appointment as CCP Chairman and thereafter worked closely with Mao. From 1949 until his death in 1976, Zhou served as China's premier and also took charge of China's foreign policy, travelling the world extensively. Zhou is regarded as the key figure in negotiating President Nixon's visit to China in February 1972 and the resulting improvement in Sino-US relations. In domestic politics, Zhou was seen as a moderate Mao supporter who worked to counter the more radical CCP politicians. He is credited with persuading Mao to bring the extreme violence of the Cultural Revolution to an end in 1969. Zhou was extremely hostile to the radical Gang of Four who had risen to prominence during the Cultural Revolution and was instrumental in bringing Deng Xiaoping back into the party leadership in 1973.

ZHU DE
(1886–1976)

Zhu was co-founder with Mao of the CCP's Red Army in 1928. Zhu was commander-in-chief of the Red Army during the Japanese War (1937–45) and the Civil War (1945–9). He retained command of the People's Liberation Army until 1954.

A NOTE ON SPELLING

There are two systems of transliterating Chinese characters into English. This guide and most textbooks now use the more modern Pinyin version but some still use the older Wade-Giles system. For example, the older version of Mao's name is Mao Tse-tung whilst the newer version is Mao Zedong; the older version of the nationalist leader's name is Chiang Kai-shek whilst the newer version is Jiang Jieshi. Chiang Kai-shek is used in this guide. Don't worry because it does not matter which version you use, provided you are consistent in which version you use in your essay.

Question 1

During the 1950s, the Chinese government implemented a series of policies aimed at transforming the country into a socialist state. These policies included the collectivization of agriculture, the nationalization of industry, and the implementation of the Great Leap Forward. Discuss the impact of these policies on the Chinese economy and society.



1. THE EMERGENCE OF THE AUTHORITARIAN STATE IN CHINA

TOPICS

Conditions that gave rise to authoritarianism
Methods used to establish the authoritarian state
The collapse of the Qing Dynasty (1911)
Failure of parliamentary governance and the Warlord Era (1916–26)
The First United Front (1923–7)
The Civil War of 1927–37
Chiang Kai-shek's rule during the Nanjing Decade
The Second United Front and the Japanese War (1937–45)
The Civil War of 1946–9

Overview

This chapter examines the factors that led to the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949.

It provides an analysis of the conditions that the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) was able to exploit and the methods employed by the CCP.

The key condition was the long-term inability of China's government, throughout the nineteenth century and first half of the twentieth century, to deal with massive population growth, increasing peasant unrest, and foreign encroachment. In the shorter term, the impact of the Sino-Japanese War (1937–45) and the Civil War (1945–49) is also considered.

The ways in which the CCP appeared to an increasing number of Chinese, particularly the peasantry, to offer solutions to the problems facing China is analysed.

The role of leadership, particularly, that of Mao Zedong, is evaluated, as is the significance of the CCP's ideology as Mao adapted Marxism to China's circumstances.

In October 1949 Mao Zedong proclaimed the establishment of the People's Republic of China (PRC), and, although initially several other political parties were tolerated, 1949 effectively marked the beginning of single-party rule by the **Chinese Communist Party (CCP)**. In order to explain the CCP's rise, it is necessary to examine the failure of both the Qing (or Manchu) dynasty which ruled China from 1644 to 1911 and the **Guomindang (GMD)** government of Chiang Kai-Shek (1927–49) to establish stable government. In addition, the CCP's strengths must be analysed, to determine how they successfully exploited conditions, enabling them to seize power in 1949 and achieve control over almost the whole of the former Chinese Empire.

Figure 1.1: Map of the Chinese Empire under the Qing in 1820

Source: Pryaltonian (Own work) [CC BY-SA 3.0], via Wikimedia Commons



1.1 Long-term Conditions That Gave Rise to the Authoritarian State in China

For about 3,000 years, China was ruled by a series of imperial dynasties. From the mid-seventeenth century, the Qing dynasty, originally from Manchuria—hence they are often referred to as the Manchu—held power in China. The nineteenth century saw the Qing dynasty in decline, struggling to cope with foreign aggression and internal rebellions. In 1911 the **Revolution of the Double Tenth** (10 October), also known as the 'Xinhai Revolution', destroyed Qing power and China officially became a republic in 1912, following the abdication of Pu Yi, the last emperor.

KEY TERMS

Chinese Communist Party (CCP): Revolutionary party that broadly followed the ideas of Karl Marx and came to power in China in 1949 under Mao Zedong's leadership.

Guomindang (GMD): Chinese nationalist party founded by Sun Yat-sen after the 1911 Revolution that saw the overthrow of China's last imperial dynasty. The GMD came to power in 1927.

Revolution of the Double Tenth: The revolution that overthrew the Qing dynasty is often referred to as the Revolution of the Double Tenth because it started on the tenth day of the tenth month. It is also known as the 'Xinhai Revolution' because of the Chinese calendar year in which it occurred.



Figure 1.2: An illustration from a French magazine, *Le Petit Journal*, from 1898, showing China as a cake being carved up by Britain, Germany, Russia, France and Japan.

Source: Henri Meyer, 'En Chine - Le Gâteau des Rois... et des Empereurs' ('China - the Cake of Kings... and of Emperors'), in *Le Petit Journal*, 16 January 1898, Cornell University—PJ Mode Collection of Persuasive Cartography.



KEY ISSUES

What long-term conditions gave rise to the authoritarian state in China?

- A failure to prevent increasing encroachment by foreign powers
- A failure to address widespread **peasant** poverty
- An inability to promote effective control by central government over the provinces.

1.1.1 China Is Forced to Open Up to the West

Before the mid-nineteenth century, Chinese emperors showed little interest in contact and trade with the West. Their isolationism was fuelled by a belief that the Chinese Empire was the only civilised country in the world. However, starting with the **First Opium War (1839–42)** in which the British defeated Chinese forces, the Chinese government was compelled to open up to the West. The Qing were forced by militarily and industrially advanced powers, notably Britain, France, Germany, Russia, and Japan to grant commercial bases and rights and to allow Christian missionaries to operate in China. Force was applied either directly, such as Britain going to war with China in 1839, or by the threat of force.

KEY TERMS



Peasant: A person who earns their income from agriculture but either only owns or rents enough land to grow sufficient food to feed his own family or works as a labourer for a landowner.

First Opium War (1839–42): War in which British naval forces attacked China after the Chinese authorities tried to stop British merchants from importing opium into China.

As a result of a whole series of what are usually referred to as **unequal treaties**, foreign merchants gained control of China's import and export trade. Major ports, for example, Shanghai, had large foreign-controlled districts. Foreign powers completely took over peripheral areas of the empire, for example, Russia claimed Manchuria in 1900, France seized Indo-China in the 1880s and 1890s, and Japan took Taiwan in 1895.

1.1.2 The Qing's Inability to Promote Effective Control over the Provinces

The nineteenth century was marked by a series of large-scale rebellions as the imperial government in Beijing found it increasingly difficult to exercise effective control over the whole of China, partly because of foreign intervention but also because the Qing armies deteriorated in quality during the nineteenth century, and the Qing court increasingly allowed regional armies to develop which were outside its direct control.

The most serious rebellions were the **Taiping Rebellion (1850–64)** and the Boxer Rebellion (1898–1900). During the latter, the Boxers, who resented foreign exploitation of China, murdered missionaries and Christian converts in northern China and besieged the area of Beijing where foreign residents lived. The foreign powers eventually crushed the Boxers in 1900 and imposed the Boxer Protocol (1901) on the imperial government, which included a fine of \$330 million for the Qing's failure to prevent the death of foreign residents and damage to foreign-owned property; this further undermined support for the Qing dynasty among their subjects.

1.1.3 The Failure to Address Widespread Peasant Poverty

One cause of the growing unrest in China was the poverty of its peasant masses. Arable land constituted only 10% of China and much of it periodically suffered from natural disasters, such as flooding. High population growth in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries made for increasing land shortages, worsened by the Chinese custom of dividing land among all the sons of a family, rather than the eldest son inheriting it all. Devastating local famines became increasingly frequent.

By 1900 landlords and prosperous peasants, who made up 10% of the rural population, owned 70% of the land, most of which they rented out. Many peasants were constantly in debt and they gave landlords 50–80% of their crop as rent. The urban population was small and there were few modern industrial centres, except on the eastern seaboard and most of these were foreign-owned.

1.1.4 The Hundred Days (1898): A Brief Flowering of Reform under the Qing

Many Chinese were angered by China's inability to stand up to foreign encroachment and believed that the solution lay in reform and modernisation by the imperial government. In 1898 Kang Youwei, a high-ranking imperial official, in a period known as the 'Hundred Days of Reform', persuaded the Emperor Guang Xu (1871–1908) to introduce reforms in order to modernise the bureaucracy, the armed forces, and the transport system and to develop industry. However, this reforming phase was brought to an



KEY FACT

Population growth:

Between 1712 and 1900, China's population rose from an estimated 120 million to 440 million.



KEY TERMS

Unequal treaties: Term given to the treaties that China was obliged to sign by the use or threat of force by several Western powers and Japan in which China agreed, under pressure, to concede territory or trading privileges to other countries.

Taiping Rebellion (1850–64): A rebellion in southern and central China that was largely made up of peasants, led by Hong Xiuquan who sought to overthrow the Qing dynasty and establish the Heavenly Kingdom of Great Harmony. It took the Qing 14 years to suppress the rebellion in the course of which possibly 20 million people died.

abrupt halt by the powerful **Empress Dowager Cixi** who hated reform and western ideas. Her conservatism was a powerful barrier to reform from 1861 until her death in 1908.

1.1.5 Sun Yat-sen and the Emergence of Revolutionary Nationalism

Many **Chinese nationalists** believed that only the overthrow of the Qing and the establishment of a republic could save China. The most prominent republican leader was Sun Yat-sen whose political outlook was influenced by Western ideas, but who was also impressed by the modernisation of Japan since 1868. In his writings, Sun outlined the Three People's Principles: the People's Nationalism, the People's Democracy and the People's Livelihood. Sun sought to end foreign domination of China and to create a strong, unified Chinese republic. His idea of the People's Livelihood fell far short of full-blown **socialism** but did represent a desire to see greater social justice and a fairer distribution of wealth.

CROSS-REFERENCE

For further coverage on Empress Dowager Cixi see the 'Who's Who in China' section.

CROSS-REFERENCE

For further coverage on Sun Yat-sen see the 'Who's Who in China' section.

1.1.6 Reform by the Imperial Government from 1905 Onwards: Too Little, Too Late

Nationalist resentment at foreign aggression against China, and at the Chinese government's inability to stand up to it, reached new heights after 1894–5 when China and Japan went to war, and, as a result, China lost Formosa (Taiwan) and its control over Korea. This encouraged other foreign powers to make further demands on China. Japan inflicted a humiliating defeat on Russia in 1905, leading to increased Japanese influence in Manchuria, and, in 1910, Japan officially annexed Korea.

The rise of Japan as a major Asian power impressed many educated Chinese who saw Japan as a model that China should copy. Since 1868, Japan had modernised its armed forces and system of government and had embarked on a programme of industrialisation. The imperial government in China belatedly came to realise the need to follow suit and introduced a series of reforms, including abolishing the ancient examination system, by which Chinese gained appointments in the imperial bureaucracy, and the modernisation of parts of the army. Elected provincial assemblies were set up in 1909 and a national consultative assembly was called in 1910, but these new bodies wielded little power.

1.1.7 The Revolution of the Double Tenth or Xinhai Revolution (1911)



KEY ISSUES

What were the causes of the Revolution of 1911?

- **Nationalist resentment.** This was directed at the continuing feebleness of the imperial government.
- **The government's reform programme.** Many educated Chinese were disappointed that the reform programme had not gone far enough.
- **Nationalisation of railways.** There was anger at the government's nationalisation of several privately-owned railway networks and the poor financial compensation

KEY TERMS

Chinese nationalists: In the context of China, nationalists wanted to revive China's power and independence, bringing to an end foreign exploitation of their country.

Socialism: Political movement or ideology committed to reducing social inequality by redistributing wealth, for example, by taking businesses and industries into state ownership.

**KEY ISSUES (continued)**

offered. This was compounded by the fact that the government turned to foreign banks for a loan to finance its railway programme.

- **Severe flooding and harvest failure in the south of China.**
- **Revolutionary conspiracy.** New army units stationed in Wuhan were planning an uprising.

Sun Yat-sen was abroad at the time of the Double Tenth, but he returned to China in December and was proclaimed president of the new Chinese Republic by the Revolutionary Alliance in Nanjing. However, the Revolutionary Alliance was too weak on its own to topple the imperial government; what sealed the fate of the Qing dynasty was the decision by the most powerful of the imperial generals, Yuan Shi-kai, to broker a deal with the rebels. Yuan promised to support the revolution on the condition that he, rather than Sun, took over as president. Lacking large military forces, Sun agreed, and, the Chinese Republic was formally established in February 1912, following the abdication of Emperor Pu Yi.

1.1.8 Yuan Shi-kai's Presidency (1912–16): The False Dawn of Parliamentary Government

Yuan Shi-kai allowed parliamentary elections to be held in 1913. The Revolutionary Alliance, which had reconstituted itself as the National People's Party (GMD) in 1912, won the elections. However, Yuan had no intention of sharing power and, in 1913, having had Song Jiaoren, leader of the GMD deputies in parliament, assassinated, he banned the GMD. The following year he closed down parliament and proceeded to rule China very much as if he were an emperor (which he clearly aimed to make himself).

Yuan proved no more able to stand up to foreign aggression than the Qing. In 1915 he tamely submitted to most of the **Twenty-One Demands** that Japan made; these included the transfer of German privileges in Shandong to Japan and the granting of rights to exploit the mineral resources of southern Manchuria.

1.1.9 The Warlord Era (1916–27)

Yuan died of natural causes in 1916 and, thereafter, there was no effective central government in China until 1927. There was a government in Beijing, which foreign powers recognised, but its authority did not extend over much of China. Instead, a series of powerful regional generals or warlords held sway. Conditions were often terrible for ordinary Chinese as warlord armies frequently attacked each other, pillaged and looted the civilian population, and extracted heavy taxes from the peasants. The integrity of the former Chinese Empire was further undermined, as control over Tibet, Xinjiang, and Outer Mongolia was lost.

During this period, Sun Yat-sen tried to set up a GMD government at Guangzhou in southern China, planning to mount a northern military expedition with the aim of

**KEY TERMS**

The Twenty-One Demands: A series of demands made by Japan for China to concede territory, notably Shandong, to Japan and allow Japan to exert influence over China's

government. The weak Chinese government gave in to most of these demands.

reunifying China. However, the GMD's position remained precarious and Sun was dependent on support from local warlords. In 1922 Sun was forced to flee to Shanghai.

1.1.10 The May Fourth Movement (1919)

This proved to be a highly significant development in the history of modern China. Massive student demonstrations, joined by workers in the major cities, were organised in protest at the western powers' decision at the Versailles Peace Conference to award Germany's former concessions in Shandong to Japan. The May Fourth demonstrators were protesting at yet another example of foreign powers carving up China in their own interests, and also at the revelation that the Chinese government had earlier secretly agreed to this concession to Japan. The May Fourth Movement did much to revive the fortunes of the GMD as it provided a powerful stimulus to nationalist feeling.



KEY ISSUES

What led to the founding of the CCP in 1921?

- **The May Fourth Movement.** This was a key factor in the emergence of the CCP, as many of its founding members had been involved in the May Fourth demonstrations, particularly at the Beijing National University.
- **Marxism.** The first Chinese translation of Karl Marx's *Communist Manifesto* was published.
- **Lenin's Bolsheviks.** Their success in seizing power in Russia in 1917 encouraged Chinese interest in Marxism.
- **Foreign intervention.** Comintern agents sent by the USSR arrived in China in 1920.

Li Dazhao and Chen Duxiu, both professors, were the leading members of the fledgling CCP. Mao Zedong, a university librarian of peasant background, was also one of the CCP's founding members but his influence was limited at this stage. The CCP was tiny at first, numbering only 432 members even by 1923.

1.1.11 The First United Front (1923–7)

Neither the GMD nor the CCP were strong enough to achieve power in China in the early to mid-1920s but, in 1923, Comintern helped to broker an alliance between the two Chinese parties, known as the 'First United Front', which would facilitate the establishment of a GMD government in 1927. CCP members were allowed to join the GMD as individual members but there was no merger of the two parties.

The USSR had tried unsuccessfully to establish diplomatic relations with the Beijing government, so decided to work instead with the GMD and CCP. The Soviet Union's government aimed to increase its own influence in China, largely because of the desirability of having a friendly state on its southern border, by the overthrow of the pro-western government in Beijing. Comintern provided the GMD and CCP with political

KEY TERMS



Marxism: The ideas put forward by Karl Marx, a German revolutionary, who published the *Communist Manifesto* in 1848. Marx predicted all societies would go through a series of revolutions which would eventually lead to the creation of perfect societies in which there was no poverty and all property and assets would be communally owned.

Bolsheviks: The faction within the Russian Marxist movement that was led by Lenin. 'Bolshevik' means 'majority' in Russian.

Comintern: The Russian Communist Party's agency for spreading worldwide revolution.

and military advisers and some financial backing. Acting on Comintern advice, the GMD and CCP set up a military training academy at Whampoa.

In 1925 Sun Yat-sen died, just as he was planning the Northern Expedition to take on the warlords. Eventually, Chiang Kai-shek, the commandant of the Whampoa Academy, emerged as the new GMD leader. This proved highly significant as Chiang was politically more conservative than Sun Yat-sen and was deeply suspicious of the CCP. Chiang's main rival for the GMD leadership, Wang Jingwei, was much more interested in social reform and therefore may, if he had succeeded Sun Yat-sen, have acted to preserve the United Front.

1.1.12 The Northern Expedition (1926–7) and the White Terror (1927)

In 1926–7 Chiang Kai-shek successfully led joint GMD–CCP forces in the Northern Expedition; the aim was to defeat the various warlords and create an effective national government whose authority extended over all of China. However, it must be emphasised that Chiang did not defeat all of the warlords but instead brokered deals with several of them, whereby they agreed to join forces with him. The CCP only provided a limited number of troops for the Northern Expedition but they made a major contribution in terms of organising peasant uprisings and urban strikes, distributing propaganda among peasants and factory workers.

Chiang Kai-shek became increasingly concerned about the growth and influence of the CCP; there were 50,000 CCP members by 1927. Chiang feared that the CCP's encouragement of strikes would frighten off the GMD's middle-class backers. So, at Shanghai in April 1927, just after the capture of the city from the local warlord, Chiang Kai-shek, without any warning, ended the United Front by ordering the killing of thousands of CCP members and trade unionists. This White Terror, as the arrests and executions carried out against the Communists was known, was extended to other cities during the rest of the year.

The killings in Shanghai led to a split within the GMD because Wang Jingwei and the left of the party, based at Guangzhou, condemned Chiang's actions. However, Chiang proceeded to establish a GMD government at Nanjing, which became the new capital of China. Chiang had several key assets, including the support of the main GMD military forces, substantial financial backing from Shanghai businessmen and bankers, and the support of several powerful warlords, particularly Feng Yuxiang. Foreign governments duly recognised the new GMD government as the official government of China.

TIMELINE	
Key Events: 1839–1927	
1839–42	First Opium War with Britain
1894–5	China is defeated by Japan in a war over Korea
1898–1901	The Boxer Rebellion
1911	The Double Tenth Revolution against the Qing Dynasty
1912	Emperor Pu Yi abdicates; Yuan Shikai becomes president of the Chinese Republic
1916	Yuan Shikai dies; the Warlord Era begins

However, even before the Japanese invasion of 1937 the GMD's shortcomings were very evident.



KEY ISSUES

What weaknesses did the GMD exhibit during the Nanjing Decade?

- **Once in power, the GMD lost its revolutionary outlook.** It became a self-interested bureaucracy, and corruption became a growing problem. Many career bureaucrats who had worked for the warlord and imperial governments joined the GMD after 1927.
- **The GMD lacked popular support.** In 1927 the GMD purged those of its members who were interested in social or political reform. The GMD turned its back on mass organisations of peasants, workers, and young people which it had used to mobilise support for the Northern Expedition (1926–7).
- **The GMD became increasingly dependent on army support.** In the cities, the GMD suppressed the trade unions. Nationally, the GMD had an organised party branch in less than 20% of China. In rural areas, the GMD relied on former warlords and officials to keep order and collect taxes, and showed little interest in the condition of the peasantry. The historian Chan Han-seng, researching Guangdong province, concluded that peasant poverty worsened in the early 1930s because of increased landlord exploitation.
- **The GMD failed to introduce parliamentary government.** Sun Yat-sen, in his *Three Principles of the People*, had written about the need for a temporary dictatorship until the country was ready for democracy. In 1931 a provisional constitution was issued, establishing a system of government with five branches (executive, legislative, judicial, examination, and control bureau); however, the GMD showed no sign of being genuinely prepared to abandon their single party monopoly of power. The GMD relied on a large secret police, the Special Services, comprising 1,700 agents by 1935, and led by Tai Li to spy on opponents and break up dissident groups. The press was heavily censored.

The GMD was composed of many different elements. It was, therefore, unable to function as an effective party dictatorship; instead, it soon became a Chiang Kai-shek dictatorship. Chiang set up the Blue Shirts, an authoritarian organisation of several thousand army officers. The Blue Shirts did much to promote the New Life Movement (1934), which was intended to encourage civic virtue and drew heavily on **Confucianism**. However, this began to run out of steam after a promising start, and it seems to have had little effect in terms of improving the conduct of officials.

- **Most of the industrial expansion in the 1930s took place in foreign-owned factories.** The GMD did not encourage the business classes. Businessmen were subjected to high taxes, and, in Shanghai, they were intimidated—often by use of the Green Gang criminal organisation—into giving the GMD large sums of money.
- **80% of government spending went on the 5 million strong GMD army.** This imposed a huge strain on state finances.
- **There was little in the way of social reform.** Education was expanded in the cities but this was from a very low base, and rural illiteracy was not tackled.
- **The GMD failed to unite China and extend GMD control to China's 400 million people.** At best, they only controlled areas containing two-thirds of China's



KEY TERMS

Confucianism: A way of life taught by Confucius in China in the 6th–5th century BCE. It is primarily concerned

with ethical principles.



TIMELINE (continued)

Key Events: 1839–1927

1919	The May Fourth Movement Mass demonstrations take place against the Versailles Treaty
1921	The CCP is created
1923	The First United Front between the GMD and CCP
1925	Sun Yat-sen dies and is succeeded as GMD leader by Chiang Kai-shek
1926–7	The Northern Expedition The White Terror in Shanghai The GMD government is established at Nanjing Mao Zedong sets up the Jiangxi Soviet

1.2 Medium-term Conditions That Gave Rise to the Authoritarian State in China

Given the eventual collapse of GMD rule and the seizure of power by the CCP in 1949, it is all too easy to present the GMD government as doomed from the start. However, this would be misleading as the GMD government did make some progress during the **Nanjing Decade (1927–37)** before the Japanese invasion of 1937 and the ensuing Sino-Japanese War (1937–45), which certainly undermined GMD rule, perhaps fatally.



KEY ISSUES

What successes did the GMD have during the Nanjing Decade?

- **The warlord era was ended.** Chiang Kai-shek brought the chaos of this era to an end.
- **Industrial output grew.** It increased at an average of 6% a year.
- **The railway network expanded.** 8,000 miles of track increased to 13,000 miles, and, by 1936, the network extended all the way from Beijing to Hong Kong. The amount of road increased from 18,000 miles to 69,000 miles.
- **China's financial institutions were reformed.** This was achieved, chiefly, by Chiang's brother-in-law, Song Ziwen, who rescheduled China's foreign debts, abolished the *lijin* and the tax on internal trade, and established a central bank. He also took back from foreign powers the right to set customs tariffs.
- **Educational provision in the towns expanded.** Between 1931 and 1937, the number of children attending primaries increased by 86% from 10.3 million and the number of university students rose by 94%.
- **A national research institute, Academia Sinica, was set up.** Founded in 1928, this promoted and co-ordinated academic research in China, particularly in the sciences.

KEY TERMS



Nanjing Decade (1927–37): The period of GMD rule when the government was based in Nanjing; in 1937 they were driven out

of Nanjing by the Japanese.



KEY ISSUES (continued)

population; this fell drastically following the Japanese invasion of Manchuria in 1931 and the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War in 1937.

- **Even before the Japanese invasion of 1937, only limited progress was made in ending foreign domination.** Chiang was unable to retrieve Outer Mongolia or Tibet and foreign powers retained their trading privileges in many of China's ports and territorial concessions such as Hong Kong.
- **Chiang lost support by failing to provide vigorous defence against the Japanese.** He firstly lost support when they took over Manchuria (1931–2) and then also when Jehol was attacked in 1933. Chiang preferred to concentrate on destroying the CCP. Chiang famously declared that the Japanese were merely 'a disease of the skin', whereas the Communists were 'a disease of the heart'. The Xian (Sian) Incident occurred in December 1936, when Chiang was kidnapped by some of his own supporters. The generals demanded that Chiang cease fighting the Communists and instead resist Japanese incursions into Chinese territory.
- **The GMD had not defeated the phenomenon of warlordism but instead came to terms with it.** Therefore, GMD control of China was superficial; again, the part played by the former warlord of Manchuria, Zhang Xueliang, during the Xian Incident in 1936 reflects that.
- **Chiang failed to destroy the CCP.** Although, as a result of the White Terror of 1927, CCP membership dropped by perhaps 80%, the bulk of the survivors, led by Mao Zedong, set up the Jiangxi Soviet, which was the name the CCP gave to their organisation in Jiangxi, borrowed from the Russian term for an elected council. Chiang launched four unsuccessful extermination campaigns (1930–4) against the CCP in Jiangxi, until capturing the CCP base area in a fifth campaign in 1934.

However, a remnant of the CCP escaped, embarking on the Long March, eventually relocating to Yanan in the far north of China, which they chose as it was in a very remote, sparsely populated area, outside of GMD control.

The GMD were to emerge from the Sino-Japanese War of 1937–45 divided, demoralised and discredited, their best troops destroyed and the economy in crisis. Many historians see this as the key to explaining the GMD's defeat in the Civil War of 1946–9.



KEY ISSUES

How were GMD weaknesses worsened by the war with Japan from 1937 to 1945?

- After the fall of the eastern coastal region, including Beijing, Shanghai and Nanjing, to the Japanese in 1937, **the GMD were forced to relocate their government to Chongqing in the south-west.** This area was poor and the GMD were now cut off from their traditional power base in the Lower Yangzi area.
- Although the GMD offered determined resistance to the Japanese in 1937, for the rest of the Sino-Japanese War, **the GMD forces were far less active in fighting the Japanese than the Communists were.** This lost the GMD support. Chiang preferred to conserve his forces and weapons for a final showdown with the Communists. The US general who acted, for most of the war, as army liaison officer with the GMD, Joseph Stilwell, was very critical of GMD inaction.
- **The GMD totally mismanaged the economy.** They fuelled hyper-inflation by printing vast quantities of paper currency; by 1945, prices had increased to more than 6,000 times their 1937 level.
- **The GMD lost many of their best troops during the Japanese War.** This was particularly as a result of the major Japanese offensive, Operation Ichigo, launched



**KEY ISSUES** *(continued)*

in April 1944, in south-central China, aimed at destroying US bomber bases. In the process they inflicted huge losses on the Nationalists, who suffered 500,000 casualties.

- **The peasantry became increasingly disaffected towards the GMD.** This was because of the latter imposing high levels of conscription and their requisitioning of horses and equipment.
- **GMD corruption grew worse.** A lot of the supplies sent by the US were sold by GMD officials on the black market.
- **GMD relations with intellectuals and students worsened.** The GMD were hostile to liberal elements at the National South West Associated University in Kunming; the GMD used the Three People's Principles Youth Corps, its main youth organisation, to spy on the staff and students.

1.3 Long-term Methods Used to Establish the Authoritarian State in China

As we have already noted, initially the CCP was a very small movement, founded in 1921, and composed largely of intellectuals. The CCP decided, on the advice of Comintern, to join the First United Front with the GMD in 1923. However, the CCP soon began to develop popular support as it seemed to offer to many ordinary Chinese the best chance of tackling peasant and working class poverty and ending foreign domination of China.

**KEY ISSUES**

What strengths did the CCP display prior to the Long March of 1934–5?

- **The CCP won extensive lower-class support.** By 1927 there were 58,000 CCP members, many of them recruited from the factory workers of China's eastern cities, like Shanghai. Mao was in charge of the Peasant Institute in Guangdong; by 1927, 2 million peasants had joined the Peasant Associations set up by the CCP in Guangdong and Hunan. The White Terror of 1927 was a huge blow to the CCP, but the survivors established the Jiangxi Soviet and built peasant support through land reform. Until 1931 land reform was moderate, with only the richest or most exploitative landlords having their land confiscated. However, from 1931 a more extreme policy meant that even richer peasants had land confiscated.
- **The CCP leadership showed great resilience in surviving the White Terror, the five GMD extermination campaigns against the Jiangxi Soviet and the Long March (1934–5).** The Long March, an epic journey of nearly 7,000 miles, provided the CCP with an inspiring legend to draw on, particularly the crossing of the Luding Bridge, and use for propaganda purposes. After 1927 and, again, after 1935, the CCP had to rebuild its membership.
- **By 1935, the CCP had begun to acquire strong leadership in the person of Mao Zedong.** He was elected as chairman of the CCP in January of that year. However, his control over the party was far from complete at this stage.

Prior to 1935, there had been bitter divisions over strategy and personal rivalries.

- Mao had favoured more moderate land reform, in which landlords were permitted to retain some land, an emphasis on building peasant support and a more defensive response to GMD attacks on the Jiangxi Soviet.
- Other CCP leaders, notably the '28 Bolsheviks', so-called because they had returned to China from training in the USSR by the Russian Communist Party, advocated more extreme land reform, an emphasis on winning urban working class support, and a more aggressive strategy to deal with GMD attacks on the Jiangxi Soviet.

Wang Ming and Li Lisan were two of Mao's main rivals for the leadership. Mao was ruthless in dealing with rivals, as he demonstrated in the Futian Incident (December 1930–January 1931), when thousands of CCP members were tortured or executed, allegedly because they were GMD agents but probably, in fact, because they supported Mao's rivals. Mao was eventually chosen as chairman of the CCP in January 1935 at the Zunyi Conference in north-central Guizhou province during the Long March. The conference of CCP leaders was held following disastrous losses by the party during the first two months of the Long March. The leadership of the Long March, previously entrusted to Qin Bangxian and Otto Braun (a German military advisor), was now placed in Mao's hands.

The factors outlined below laid the foundations for CCP success in the Civil War of 1946–9; the CCP were to emerge from the Sino-Japanese War more united, with an enlarged army, wider support and control over a much greater area than previously.



KEY ISSUES

What strengths did the CCP display during the Yanan Era (1935–46)?

- **The CCP became more united under Mao's leadership.** It was at Yanan that Mao asserted his dominance over the CCP, by a combination of intellectual brilliance and ruthlessness. The **Rectification of Conduct Campaign** of 1942 established Mao's ideas as official CCP ideology. 'Rectification' became a regular feature of the CCP; party members had to scrutinise their behaviour and engage in self-criticism and criticism of each other, in order to ensure they remained faithful to the ideals of the party. Mao also used rectification to maintain his own ascendancy over the party. A leadership cult began to develop from 1943; CCP ideology was now referred to as 'Mao Zedong Thought'; which was Mao's adaptation of Marxist ideas to Chinese circumstances, for example, replacing Marx's dismissive view of the peasantry's revolutionary potential with the premise that, in China, they would be the main revolutionary force.
- **Under Mao, the CCP showed an ability to adapt Marxism to Chinese conditions.** For example, they departed from orthodox Marxism in that the CCP came to see the peasantry as the main revolutionary class. This view had been developed by Mao from the late 1920s and had been opposed by many of the CCP's leaders, particularly the so-called '28 Bolsheviks', during the period prior to its relocation to Yanan.
- **The CCP broadened its support base by appealing beyond the peasantry to other classes.** At the Wayaobu Conference in December 1935, the Party approved Mao's policy of allowing members of the bourgeoisie and landowning class into the CCP.

In January 1940 Mao published a lengthy essay entitled *On New Democracy*, in which he appealed for an alliance of four revolutionary classes—**national bourgeoisie, petite bourgeoisie**, peasants, and industrial workers—to defeat the Japanese and landlordism.



KEY TERMS



Rectification of Conduct Campaign: Rectification means to put something right. Mao used periodic rectification campaigns before and after he came to power in order to try to keep the CCP disciplined and loyal to Mao Zedong Thought.

National bourgeoisie: Members of the middle classes who were prepared to work with the CCP against the Japanese occupying forces.

Petite bourgeoisie: 'Small' members of the middle classes, that is, shopkeepers, teachers and others who were above the working classes but not rich enough to be classed as part of the business classes or landed elites.



KEY ISSUES (continued)

During this period the CCP pursued a moderate land policy, insisting on rent reductions but only confiscating the property of those landlords who had collaborated with the Japanese. Mao intended through this publication to broaden the CCP's support base beyond that of the peasantry, by appealing to the patriotism of China's educated classes.

YEAR	CCP MEMBERSHIP
1937	40,000
1945	1.2 million

- **The CCP won peasant support, through land and educational reforms.** Also, the CCP helped the peasants organise their own associations. Mao advocated the Mass Line: CCP officials were to live among the peasants and learn from them. From 1940 the CCP followed the 'three-thirds policy', which meant CCP members only occupied a maximum of one third of local posts, with the remaining two-thirds taken by members of other parties or by local people; in 1941, only 25% of government officials in the Yanan area were CCP members.
- **The CCP took the opportunity to expand massively the area under its control because a power vacuum developed in rural northern China.** The Japanese drove the GMD southwards but were too thinly spread out to prevent the CCP controlling much of the countryside in northern China. By the end of the Sino-Japanese War, the CCP controlled an area occupied by about 90 million Chinese.
- **The CCP's military organisation, the Red Army, originally founded by Mao and Zhu De during the Ziangxi Soviet, and led in the Yanan period by Zhu De and Peng Dehuai, was much better disciplined than the GMD forces.** Mao drew up instructions for the Red Army, known as the 'Eight Rules of Conduct', which laid the basis for good relations with the peasants. Mao insisted that the Red Army respect the peasants and treat them well. As well as combating the Japanese, the Red Army had important non-fighting roles in distributing propaganda and helping to organise peasant associations.

YEAR	RED ARMY MEMBERSHIP
1936	22,000
1945	880,000

The CCP established stronger patriotic credentials than the GMD, for example, by their decision, in December 1936, to negotiate an end to Chiang's kidnapping by two of his generals, Zhang Xueliang and Yang Hucheng, during the Xian Incident in exchange for his agreeing to the Second United Front against the Japanese (although this was not formally signed until August 1937). At this stage, Mao believed that, given the threat from the Japanese, the Chinese people still needed Chiang as their leader. The CCP also benefitted from negotiating this agreement with Chiang's generals because part of the deal was that Chiang agreed to stop attacking the CCP.



CROSS-REFERENCE

For further coverage on the Mass Line see section 2.2.1.

The CCP were more active in resisting the Japanese after 1937 than the GMD. Mao favoured using the Communist Eighth Route Army to fight a guerrilla war, aided by peasants, behind enemy lines. The only time the Communists mounted a conventional attack against the Japanese was the Hundred Regiments Offensive (1940). On this occasion, Communist forces inflicted heavy casualties on the Japanese but their own losses were high and the Japanese conducted terrible reprisals on civilians.



Figure 1.3: Mao Zedong and his wife, Jiang Qing, in 1946

Source: unknown photographer, via Wikimedia Commons (file uploaded by user: Charvex)



TIMELINE

Key Events: 1928–46

1928	Mao Zedong establishes a communist base area in Jiangxi
1931	Japanese forces take control of Manchuria in September
1934	The CCP begin the Long March in October
1935	Mao is chosen as CCP chairman at the Zunyi Conference in January The Long March ends in October The CCP set up a new base at Yanan in Shaanxi province
1936	The Xian (Sian) Incident (December): Chiang is kidnapped by his own generals
1937	The Marco Polo Bridge Incident in July marks the start of the Sino-Japanese War The Second United Front is signed in August by the GMD and the CCP
1938	The GMD government relocates to Chongqing and remains there for the rest of the war
1940	Mao publishes <i>On New Democracy</i> in January
1942	Mao's first Rectification Campaign
1944	Operation Ichigo (major Japanese offensive against the GMD)
1945	World War Two ends in August with Japan's surrender
1945–6	US Marshall Mission fails to prevent the renewal of the Chinese Civil War

1.4 Short-term Conditions That Gave Rise to the Authoritarian State in China

The short-term conditions that gave rise to the establishment of the PRC are constituted by the military, economic, and political contexts of the Civil War that broke out between the GMD and CCP. These contexts initially broke out in 1945, and, after a series of short-lived truces, continued uninterruptedly from 1946 to 1949.

1.4.1 The Main Events of the Civil War (1946–9)

The Battle for Manchuria Part 1: The People's Liberation Army (PLA) Retreat (1946–7)

In March 1946 the truce brokered by the US envoy, General George Marshall, broke down and there was a renewal of fighting in Manchuria between GMD and CCP forces. President Truman sent Marshall to China because he was anxious to prevent the outbreak of a full-scale civil war which might drag the US into the conflict at a time that Truman was focused on the apparent threat of Soviet expansionism in Europe.

By June there was full-scale GMD–CCP warfare in much of northern and central China. In the first year of the civil war, Mao employed the same strategy as he had used against the GMD in Jiangxi and the Japanese in 1937–45: giving up territory and encouraging the enemy to become overextended, both in Manchuria and elsewhere in northern China. This involved temporarily withdrawing from Yanan itself and allowing the GMD to capture it in March 1947.

However, the Civil War of 1946–9 was fundamentally different from the fighting experienced by the Communists in the past. Prior to 1946 the Red Army had been engaged in battles to secure the countryside; now the PLA was aiming to win control of China's major cities. Mao ordered his commanders to avoid battle unless they were certain of victory against smaller GMD detachments.

Chiang Kai-shek made the fatal error of concentrating too many of his troops in the battle for Manchuria, without first gaining control of the areas of northern and central China which lay between GMD-held southern China and Manchuria in the north-east. In Manchuria the GMD forces held the cities but were thinly spread out, with the PLA controlling the countryside in between the major towns. This allowed the PLA to cut communications between the different GMD garrisons and then attack and capture them one by one.

The Battle for Manchuria Part 2: The PLA Counter-attack (1947–8)

The summer of 1947 saw the PLA's best commander, Lin Biao, launch a three-pronged offensive in Manchuria, which, over the next six months, resulted in the Communists securing control of the main north–south railway line and inflicting 640,000 casualties on the GMD. In addition, about 1 million GMD soldiers surrendered, many of them being absorbed into the PLA. By April 1948 the PLA had captured all except three major towns in Manchuria.

To the south of Manchuria, other PLA forces captured much of northern China between Beijing and the Yangzi River. By the time that the GMD lost control of Manchuria, at the end of 1948, the best of their forces had been destroyed.



KEY TERMS

The People's Liberation Army (PLA): The Communists' Red Army was renamed the People's Liberation Army at the start of

the Chinese Civil War.



KEY ISSUES

Three decisive battles in 1948–9

1. **The climax of the Manchurian campaign.** In October–November 1948, Lin Biao successfully attacked the last three Manchurian cities of Jinzhou, Shenyang, and Changchun that were under GMD control. Mao was astonished by the speed and completeness of the PLA's triumph in Manchuria. Chiang Kai-shek lost 500,000 of his best soldiers in the process.
2. **The battle for Tianjin and Beijing.** Lin Biao took his forces 600 miles south, to link up with the Communist North Eastern Army. Their objective was to capture the key cities of Tianjin and Beijing. Mao ordered Lin Biao to encircle the two cities and, then, in January 1949, the PLA stormed Tianjin, leading to the surrender of Beijing a week later.
3. **The Huai-Hai campaign.** This was conducted across the four northern provinces of Anhui, Henan, Jiangsu, and Shandong and lasted from December 1948 to January 1949. The PLA and GMD each had about half a million troops engaged in this campaign, but the PLA had significant additional help provided by peasant militias. As in the battle for Manchuria, the PLA remained true to Mao's principle that the Communists should start by concentrating superior forces against weaker GMD units. By mid-January, almost the entire 500,000 GMD army had been killed or captured.

In the four months from October 1948 to January 1949, the GMD lost 1.5 million troops. Chiang Kai-shek temporarily stepped down as president in January, with Li Zongren taking over.

The Conquest of the South (1949)

Mao certainly had not envisaged such a rapid collapse by the GMD. It was at this point that Stalin urged Mao not to cross the Yangzi River but instead be content with control of just northern China. Stalin was concerned lest a PLA offensive into southern China trigger intervention by the US and was probably also anxious about the prospect of a potentially powerful, reunited China on the USSR's southern border. Mao ignored Stalin's advice, and, in April 1949, the PLA crossed the Yangzi River.

Nanjing fell to the Communists in April; Shanghai fell in May. Chiang Kai-shek resumed the presidency at this point, and, in December 1949, as the GMD's position on the mainland was no longer tenable, he crossed over to the island of Taiwan with many of his remaining GMD forces and \$300 million in gold and foreign currencies.

On 1 October 1949, in Beijing, Mao proclaimed the PRC.



TIMELINE

Key Events: The Chinese Civil War (1945–49)

AUG–OCT 1945	GMD-CCP peace talks at Chongqing; Mao meets Chiang Kai-shek for the first time in 19 years
OCT 1945	US Air Force and US Navy move GMD troops into northern China
NOV 1945	Civil War breaks out following the GMD troops' entry into Manchuria; Stalin orders the CCP to evacuate their troops and officials from the cities and towns of Manchuria
DEC 1945	George Marshall arrives in China to try to mediate between the GMD and CCP
JAN 1946	Marshall arranges a truce between the GMD and CCP The Political Consultative Conference between the GMD and the CCP is held but no agreement is reached
JUL 1946– JUN 1947	GMD offensives in Manchuria and northern China
MAR 1947	The GMD capture Yanan
JUN 1947– APR 1948	The PLA switch from a strategy of planned withdrawals and ambushing GMD troops to mobile warfare, going on the counter-attack in massed formations in the open, overrunning much of Manchuria
AUG 1948	GMD commit atrocities in Shanghai against suspected communist supporters
NOV 1948– JAN 1949	Lin Biao launches an offensive to take Beijing and Tianjin, which proves successful by January 1949 The Huai-Hai campaign—including the Battle of Xuzhou—is fought across four provinces in North Eastern China. Liu Bochong and Chen Yi defeat the GMD forces; there are 500,000 GMD casualties/prisoners.
JAN 1949	Chiang Kai-shek resigns temporarily as president; he is replaced by Li Zongren
APR 1949	The PLA cross the Yangzi River The PLA take Nanjing
MAY 1949	The PLA take Shanghai
OCT 1949	The PLA take Guangzhou Mao Zedong proclaims the PRC
DEC 1949	Chiang Kai-shek crosses with the remainder of the GMD army to Taiwan



KEY ISSUES

What GMD weaknesses led to their defeat in the Civil War?

- **Many Chinese blamed the GMD for the resumption of the civil war in 1946.** Chiang Kai-shek refused to accept the suggestion of a coalition government, including the CCP, which the US urged Chiang to agree to. In December 1946 there were widespread student demonstrations in Beijing and Shanghai against the GMD government.
- **The way in which the GMD behaved in reoccupying areas formerly held by the Japanese lost them support.**
 - The GMD failed to punish those Chinese who had collaborated with the Japanese.
 - Many of the GMD officials and officers who took control of Taiwan in 1945 were corrupt, provoking a rebellion in 1947.
 - The GMD appointed officials and commanders to run Manchuria who were drawn from outside the region.

The GMD became increasingly repressive. This led to a number of groups within the GMD breaking off and going into opposition, for example, the Revolutionary Alliance. The most famous victim of political assassination by the GMD was the popular poet Wen Yiduo, who was a professor at South West Associated University at Kunming. In 1948 the GMD secret police killed many of the GMD's opponents in cold blood on the streets of Shanghai.

- **The government's attempts to control inflation failed disastrously.** In August 1948 the gold yuan note was introduced to replace the national currency. People were encouraged to convert their gold and foreign currency into gold yuan. However, in November, the gold yuan collapsed and, with it, many people lost their savings.
- **Chiang Kai-shek had miscalculated about how the war in Asia would end.** Chiang had assumed there would be large-scale US intervention in China to drive out the Japanese; he had hoped to persuade the US, once the Japanese had been defeated, to use its troops against the CCP. Instead, the war ended abruptly following the dropping of the atom bomb on Nagasaki in August 1945.
- **The US only provided limited support to the GMD.** The US government had hoped to arrange a peace between the GMD and CCP and sent General George Marshall to China for that purpose in 1945–6. The Truman administration was disappointed by the failure of the Marshall Mission. Following the renewal of civil war, the US government severely restricted aid to Chiang as it was concerned by reports of the corruption of his regime. By 1948, when the US government realised that Chiang was in serious danger of losing the civil war, it proved too late for increased US aid (\$463 million) to have a significant impact.
- **Chiang's key military mistake was to commit most of his troops to the occupation and retention of Manchuria.** The GMD forces were over-extended and therefore proved vulnerable to counter-offensives by the PLA. Chiang interfered disastrously in military decision-making.
- **GMD army morale was low.** Although the GMD army was much bigger than the PLA at the start of the Civil War, the morale of many GMD soldiers was low and discipline was brutal. Many GMD soldiers were conscripts and were often roped together to try to stop them deserting. Desertion rates in GMD units regularly ran at 70% a year.

1.5 Short-term Methods Used to Establish the Authoritarian State in China



KEY ISSUES

What strengths led the CCP to win the Civil War?

- **At the end of the Japanese War, the PLA were in a better position to take the surrender of Japanese weapons in Manchuria.** Soviet troops, taking the Japanese surrender, handed over captured weapons to the PLA; otherwise, the USSR provided no help to the CCP during the Civil War. In fact, Stalin tried to dissuade Mao from crossing the Yangzi into southern China in 1949, urging him to be content with CCP control of just the north of China.
- **The PLA did not, at first, try to contest GMD control of Manchuria's towns.** The PLA retreated, encouraging the GMD to overextend themselves. However, in June 1947, the PLA went onto the offensive and cut off many of the GMD garrisons; by the end of November 1948, the PLA had captured the whole of Manchuria.
- **The PLA had able generals, with Lin Biao being their best.** Mao did not interfere with military decision-making.
- **The CCP had strong peasant support in Manchuria.** This was won by the CCP's record against the Japanese and by the CCP's land reforms post-1945.
- **Mao was flexible in terms of land reform.** In 1946–7 the CCP pursued a radical land policy in northern China involving the total expropriation of landlords and even some rich peasants; Mao moderated this from 1948 when it became clear that many middle peasants were being alienated.
- **The GMD's numerical advantage in troops was rapidly eroded.** Although the GMD army was much bigger than the PLA in 1946, the PLA was assisted by peasant militias, numbering 2 million, and, during the Civil War, many GMD soldiers deserted to the PLA or changed sides when captured. The CCP encouraged this by promising generous treatment of soldiers who defected to them.

YEAR	GMD	PLA
1946	4.8 million	1.2 million
1949	1.5 million	4 million

Table 1.1: Size of GMD and Communist Armies (1946–9)

- The CCP's growing support is reflected by its party membership figures:
 - 1.2 million in 1945
 - 3 million by September 1948.
- The CCP managed to infiltrate the GMD. They knew in advance of most of the GMD's moves. Chiang Kai-shek's assistant chief of staff, General Liu Fei, was a Communist agent, as was Guo Rugui, head of the GMD's War Planning Board.
- By the end of 1948, Mao had managed to secure an agreement with moderate anti-GMD political parties to set up a National Political Consultative Conference. This was established in September 1949 and was in theory a coalition government. However, in practice, the CCP dominated it.



2. CONSOLIDATION AND MAINTENANCE OF POWER BY MAO

TOPICS

Mao's influence within the CCP

Mao's ideology

Mao's consolidation of power

The CCP's maintenance of power

Overview

This chapter examines the consolidation and maintenance of power by the CCP up to 1976.

It considers the methods used by Mao and the CCP, in the period 1949-52, to extend their control over the whole of China and to create a party apparatus and bureaucracy with which they could both stay in power and implement a radical socialist reconstruction of China.

Initially, the CCP was prepared to work with non-CCP elements in repairing the economy. By 1952, CCP control of the country was secure, so this chapter then looks at the role of the party apparatus, force, thought control, mass movements, and foreign policy in helping maintain that control.

It also explores the methods used by Mao to maintain his personal ascendancy over the CCP and the varied success he enjoyed in the period 1949-76.

2.1 A Note on Mao's Influence Within the CCP (1949–76)

Throughout 1949 to 1976, Mao retained the position of chairman of the CCP. In addition, Mao was chairman of the PRC from 1949 to 1959. From 1949 through to his death in 1976, Mao was the dominant political figure in the CCP, although during the years 1961–6, Mao's influence over economic policy was substantially reduced. Broadly speaking, one can discern three periods when Mao had differing levels of influence within the CCP: 1949–60, when he dominated the party; 1961–5, when he was still a powerful figure but had to give way to Liu Xiaqi and Deng Xiaoping on economic policy; and, finally, 1966–76, when he reasserted his authority over the party, dominating it until his death in 1976.

- 1949–60** In the early years of the PRC, Mao seems to have worked collaboratively with other leading CCP politicians such as Zhou Enlai, Liu Shaoqi, and Deng Xiaoping, and the leadership team appears to have been harmonious. However, from 1956 onwards a split within the leadership opened up (though this was not apparent to the Chinese public), initially over the question of the pace of socialist economic reform. Mao and his allies within the CCP favoured more rapid advances, while others such as Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping, who became known as the '**Pragmatists**', advocated a more gradual and cautious approach. Mao succeeded in getting his way in the late 1950s, launching the hugely ambitious Great Leap Forward in 1958, in which he sought dramatic increases in agricultural and industrial production.
- 1961–5** The disastrous failure of the Great Leap Forward, which resulted in a famine of gigantic proportions in 1959–61, led to Mao's influence within the party being reduced. He had, in any case, been planning to curtail his involvement in the day-to-day running of the party, and stepped down as chairman of the PRC in 1959. However, the failure of the Great Leap Forward resulted in a bigger reduction in Mao's influence than he had intended, and the party turned to Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping to oversee economic recovery. Mao was not sidelined in this period, but he was unable to prevent Liu and Deng adopting economic policies which he was deeply unhappy with.
- 1966–76** In 1966 Mao launched the Cultural Revolution, which allowed him to reassert his influence to where it had been before the Great Leap Forward failed. In fact, Mao's dominance of the CCP peaked during the Cultural Revolution (1966–76) as the cult of Mao's personality was strengthened considerably, and rival leaders such as Liu and Deng were removed from office. Despite the apparent triumph of Mao and his more radical allies at the start of the Cultural Revolution, the power struggle between more radical Maoists and more pragmatic CCP officials continued right through until Mao's death in 1976. Mao's personal influence within the party, reasserted in 1966, remained paramount until 1976, although his health deteriorated badly from the early 1970s onwards. Evidence of his



KEY TERMS

Pragmatists: Politicians who favoured pursuing policies that worked even if they involved a deviation from Marxist-Maoist

ideology. To be pragmatic is to be flexible and practical.

continuing grip on the overall direction of CCP policy can be seen in the 1971 purge of the defence minister, Lin Biao (probably because Mao saw him as too politically ambitious and a rival to his own influence), and the 1972 decision to open up diplomatic relations with the US, resulting in President Nixon's visit to Beijing.

2.2 Maoist Ideology

Mao's recent biographers, Jung Chang and Jon Halliday (2005) have argued that Mao was not primarily motivated by ideology but rather that the paramount consideration for Mao was securing and maintaining his own control over the Party; that a lust for power and indeed violence was what drove Mao as ruler of China. However, the vast majority of Mao's biographers, such as Philip Short (1999), whilst accepting that Mao sought to dominate the Party at all times, portray him as a politician whose aims were shaped by his Marxist ideology (though a 'sinified' version) and by China's weakness and exploitation by foreigners since the nineteenth century.

For most of the period from 1942 to 1976, the official ideology of the CCP was defined in terms of Mao Zedong Thought. Prior to 1942 there had been bitter, and sometimes violent, ideological struggles within the CCP. Mao's opponents, particularly the 28 Bolsheviks, had wanted to prepare for a revolution of the industrial proletariat, and they dominated the Party until the early 1930s. It was during the Rectification Campaign of 1942–4 at Yanan that Mao established his ideological leadership of the Party. The term 'Maoism', to describe Mao's version of Marxism, began to appear in Party publications in 1942 and was accepted by the party as official CCP ideology, and, in 1943, a second label for Mao's version of Marxism was first coined, namely Mao Zedong Thought.

In certain respects, Mao was an orthodox Marxist in that he believed, like Karl Marx, in class struggle, collective ownership of the means of production (of wealth), and the dictatorship of the proletariat (industrial working class). However, Mao was also highly influenced by Chinese history and culture and adapted Marx's ideas to Chinese conditions. Mao 'sinified' Marxism; in other words, he produced a Chinese version.

2.2.1 Key Components of Mao Zedong Thought

THE PEASANTS AS A REVOLUTIONARY CLASS

Marx had dismissed the ability of the peasants to develop a revolutionary consciousness because they were widely dispersed and often illiterate. The Russian Communist Party affirmed Marx's emphasis on the industrial proletariat as the principal revolutionary class. In the first half of the twentieth century, China had undergone only limited industrialisation; however, Mao, from the late 1920s, began to argue that the peasant masses could be used to overthrow the gentry and landlord class and then go on to create a socialist society.

BELIEF IN A TWO-STAGE REVOLUTION

In 1940 Mao published *On New Democracy* in which he argued that socialism in China would be created as the result of a two-stage revolution:

- The first revolution would be bourgeois-democratic, at which point, private property would be retained. In the first, 'New Democratic' phase, the revolution would begin to be led, not by the bourgeoisie alone (as Marx has prophesised), but by a 'joint revolutionary-democratic dictatorship' of four revolutionary classes:

the proletariat, the peasants, the ‘national’ bourgeoisie (those capitalists who had not collaborated with the Japanese, nor been too exploitative of the poor) and the petite bourgeoisie (shopkeepers, intellectuals).

- The second stage of revolution would be socialist and would see property and economic resources collectivised or nationalised. In practice, Mao began to implement this second stage during the early–mid 1950s.

THE MASS LINE

Mao developed the idea that the Party’s role, vis-à-vis the masses, was to identify what the masses’ true interests were, interpret them in the light of Marxist–Maoist principles, and then communicate them back to the masses in a way they could understand.

The idea of the Mass Line involved developing close relations between the CCP and the people. During the Yanan period (1935–46), CCP **cadres** were expected to live among the peasants so that they could learn about rural life and be in a better position to educate the peasants about Marxism.

After 1949 the Mass Line remained a central Maoist idea. This is illustrated by the regular recourse made by the CCP to mass mobilisation campaigns such as the Three and Five Antis (1951–2) which aimed to eliminate corruption among officials and the business and financial elites.

Mao sought to involve the masses in campaigns to build socialism rather than simply sending out officials to impose socialist change on the masses. The way in which to a considerable extent the communes of the Great Leap Forward developed out of initiatives by local officials and peasant experimentation in 1958 reflects Mao’s views on the interaction between the Party and the masses.

CONTINUOUS REVOLUTION AND RECTIFICATION

Mao believed that, in addition to the revolutions required to put the CCP into power and to establish a socialist economy, revolution should be a permanent or continuous feature of communist rule. Mao meant that the Party and people would need to have their outlooks and thought remoulded, corrected, and inspected regularly in order to create and maintain a selfless, socialist culture.

Mao developed the concept of ‘rectification’ whilst at Yanan; it involved CCP officials engaging in self-criticism and criticism in order to ensure that they served the people selflessly and remained true to Marxist–Maoist ideology. Mao also used his first Rectification Campaign in 1942, and later ones, in order to assert and maintain his own authority over the CCP as all **cadres** were required to study Mao’s writings. Mao, in the 1950s and 1960s, remained convinced that rectification campaigns were an essential



KEY TERMS

Cadres: Party officials or activists.

device for ensuring that the CCP, and especially its officials, remained in touch with the masses and did not develop into a self-seeking elite, as, he believed, had happened in the USSR.

Both the Socialist Education Movement (1962) in which the party removed large numbers of corrupt officials, and, the Cultural Revolution (1966) in which Mao removed party officials whom he believed were deviating from the party's socialist ideals, were forms of rectification designed to eliminate corruption and ensure that the CCP remained faithful to socialist ideals.

WORLDWIDE REVOLUTION

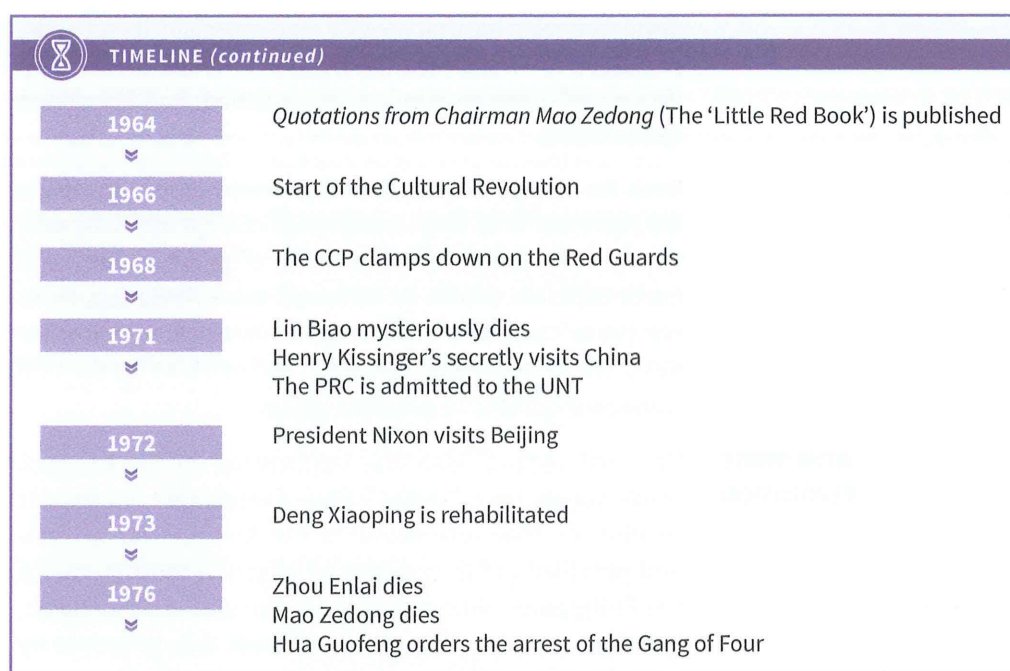
Up until 1971–2 Mao was committed to the Russian revolutionary Leon Trotsky's idea of worldwide communist revolution. Mao intervened in the Korean War in 1950 and provided aid to communist guerrilla movements in the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaya, Burma, and Indonesia. However, in 1971, Mao departed from this principle by pursuing closer diplomatic relations with the US.



TIMELINE

Key Events: 1949–76

1949	The PRC is established The National Capitalist phase of economic policy is started (ends in 1953)
1950	The PLA invades Tibet Mao visits Moscow; The Sino-Soviet Friendship Treaty is signed Radical Land Reform in southern China The outbreak of the Korean War; China intervenes on North Korea's side The campaign against Counter-Revolutionaries is launched
1951	Three Antis campaign, aimed at corrupt officials
1952	Five Antis campaign, aimed at corrupt businessmen
1953	The first Five-Year Plan starts The Korean War ends
1954	The PRC's Constitution is introduced; China officially becomes a one-party state
1957	The Hundred Flowers campaign; followed by the Anti-Rightist campaign
1958	The beginning of the Great Leap Forward CCP shells GMD-held islands of Jinmen (Quemoy) and Matsu
1959	The beginning of a severe famine which lasts into 1961; Marshal Peng Dehuai is sacked after criticising Mao at the Lushan Conference Mao steps down as head of state (chairman)
1960	Sino-Soviet split; Soviet experts withdraw from China; by the end of the year, the Great Leap is abandoned; Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping are entrusted with leading economic recovery
1962	The Socialist Education Movement is announced by Mao



2.3 Mao's Consolidation of Power

2.3.1 Consolidation and Recovery (1949–52)

Historians in general—for example, June Grasso, Jay Corrin, and Michael Kort (2009)—have viewed the CCP's achievements in this first phase of their rule as remarkable. The CCP succeeded in fulfilling the aims of the **May Fourth generation** who had dreamt of restoring China's unity and independence from foreign interference. Not only that, but the communist leadership of the PRC decided, within a year of coming to power, to take on the technological and military might of the US in the Korean War, successfully fighting the US to a standstill, and, by doing so, saved communist North Korea from collapse.

The CCP's initial success is all the more impressive given that China had suffered from nearly 40 years of war and civil war and that disorder and crime had reached epidemic proportions; perhaps 1 million bandits operated in rural areas, while drugs and prostitution blighted the cities. Furthermore, although the CCP had had extensive experience of administering rural areas during the 1930s and 1940s, they had none of running towns or an urban economy.

In order to deal with the huge challenges facing them, the CCP leadership in the early 1950s proved very pragmatic and flexible. In 1949, Mao wrote that:

Our triumph is only the first step in a long march of ten thousand li.

Li is a Chinese measurement equivalent to about 0.5 km. Cited in Grasso et al., 2009

The CCP was prepared, during this period, to tolerate other political parties (but not, of course, the GMD), and, in September 1949, a provisional national assembly for China



KEY TERMS

May Fourth generation: Those Chinese who experienced the May Fourth demonstrations of 1919 and looked forward

to a strong, united China.

was set up when the People's Consultative Conference met. The People's Consultative Conference drafted a temporary constitution known as the 'Organic Law', which permitted eight political parties to function. This was consistent with Mao's New Democratic strategy of working with other parties to create a new China.

So, initially, the new government was a coalition of different parties, but right from the start it was dominated by the CCP, which was open about the fact that it opposed western-style democracy in which people could voice criticisms of the government and seek a change of government through elections. Rather, Mao described the new system of government as a 'people's democratic dictatorship'; the 'people' consisted of the 'national' and 'petty' bourgeoisie, the peasants and the industrial proletariat (cited in Schram, 1991, p. 6). Mao also made it clear that the CCP would be severe in dealing with those classes not defined as part of the 'people'.

Mao wrote in June 1949 (*On the Dictatorship of the People's Democracy*, Chapter 41), that:

The right to vote is given only to the people and not to the reactionaries. These two aspects, namely democracy among the people and dictatorship over the reactionaries, combine to form the people's democratic dictatorship.

Mao, 1949a

To facilitate their takeover, for the first years of the PRC, the CCP divided the country into six regions, each run by a bureau in which the military had a key role. China officially became a one-party communist state in 1954 when the Common Program of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, a temporary constitution, announced in 1949, that laid down the way the PRC would be governed, was replaced by a new constitution. A 'parliament', the People's National Congress, was created but it only met for a few days each year and had no real power. As in the USSR, power was exercised by a hierarchy of CCP committees, with the Politburo at the top.

At the outset, the CCP had to draw on non-communists to help them govern China's 540 million people, because there were just 750,000 CCP cadres in 1949. So many of the 2 million officials who had served the GMD government were kept on by the CCP until it had built up the numbers and administrative competence of its own officials. By 1953 CCP membership had increased from 4 million to 6.1 million and that growth allowed the Party to dispense with many non-communist officials. Communist suspicions about the reliability of the latter were greatly heightened by the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950.

The restoration of unified control over what had been the Chinese Empire had been a major aim of the CCP leadership. This was not completed in 1949 as much of South West China was still under GMD control and the PLA's assault on Quemoy (Jinmen), an island close to Taiwan, failed. Chiang Kai-shek spent November and December in Sichuan on the mainland, before crossing to Taiwan. However, by the end of 1950, the CCP had been almost totally successful in reunifying China:

- Xinjiang was captured from the GMD in March 1950
- Hainan Island in April, and Tibet in October 1950, were brought under CCP control.

This only left Hong Kong (held by Britain), Macao (held by Portugal), Outer Mongolia (independent), Taiwan (under GMD control), and some small GMD-controlled islands outside of the PRC; Mao was furious that he was obliged to abort plans for invading Taiwan in 1950 when the Korean War broke out.

Figure 2.1: Map of the People's Republic of China

Source: Sameboat [Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons



2.3.2 National Capitalism (1949–52)

On taking power, the CCP's immediate economic goal was to achieve recovery after the damage and dislocation caused by the Sino-Japanese War and the Civil War. To that end, the CCP was keen to work with 'national capitalists', or 'national bourgeoisie', that is, those businessmen who had not had close connections with the GMD. The CCP needed their management and financial skills and experience, which Mao had acknowledged even before the CCP came to power:

We shall soon put aside some of the things we know well and be compelled to do things we don't know well... We must learn to do economic work from all who know how, no matter who they are.

Mao, 1949b

Under national capitalism, the state took over ownership of heavy industry and the banking system. This was made easier by the fact that the GMD government had exercised considerable control over industry. For example, 75% of chemical industries had been state-run under the GMD regime. Lighter industry and smaller factories were not nationalised at this stage; they remained under private ownership. However, although the national bourgeoisie could continue to make profits, they were subject to increasing state regulation in terms of wages and prices. Even when all factories and businesses were nationalised in 1955, many former owners were kept on as managers and received an annual share of the profits.

Industrial and agricultural production recovered very successfully:

- In the period 1949–52, the value of industrial output increased by two and a half times.
- By 1952 grain production was actually 10% higher than it had been in 1936.
- The Communists also tackled the hyperinflation which had totally destabilised China's economy under the GMD. A new, carefully controlled, currency, the renminbi, was introduced: the currency was exchanged at a rate of 10,000 old to 1 new. Inflation had fallen to 15% p.a. in 1951.
- The budget was balanced (government expenditure was equal to government revenue), partly as a result of the CCP being much more effective at taxing the population than the GMD had been.
- The infrastructure was repaired and communications expanded (railways increased by 33% to 24,000km by 1953).

2.4 CCP Maintenance of Power under Mao

The CCP came to power with widespread popular support in rural areas and significant support in the cities too because of the widely-held perception that they had led the resistance to the Japanese. The CCP consolidated their rural support in 1950 through a programme of land reform. The CCP, conscious that their support in the cities, though significant, had distinct limits, also established tighter control over urban society through the Three and Five Antis Campaigns (1951–2), which brought the business and financial classes much more firmly under CCP direction.

The advent of the Five-Year Plan in 1952–3, based on the model followed by Stalin in the USSR from 1928 onwards, and, benefitting from Soviet advice and loans, further strengthened the CCP's control over the industrial economy, as did the rapid collectivisation of agriculture in the mid-1950s. In order to maintain power, the CCP relied on a variety of methods, including the use of force, thought control, and mass movements. Social reform, to an extent, also generated support for the CCP. The CCP's authority was also dependent on the maintenance of a large and tightly organised party structure and a very large standing army.

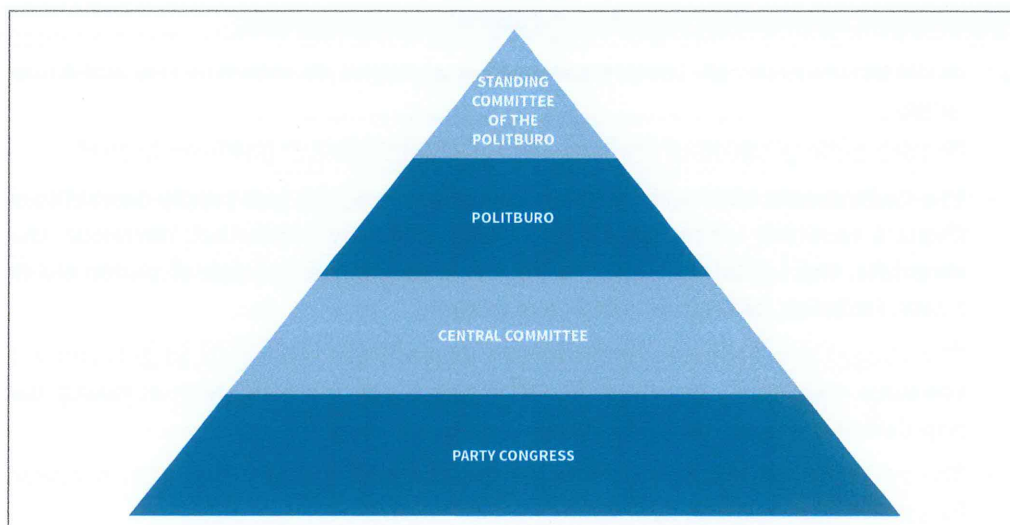
2.4.1 The Creation of a Highly Centralised System of Party Control

Although until 1954 the PRC officially allowed other parties than the CCP to operate, and a number of non-CCP politicians were members of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (a provisional national assembly), in practice, power rested with the CCP. The PRC, from the outset in 1949, had a highly centralised political system, with the CCP dominating all political and administrative institutions at every level.

CCP membership grew from 4.5 million in 1949 to 6.1 million by 1953. By the 1960s CCP membership had reached 18 million.

At the top of the CCP's hierarchical structure (see Figure 2.2 on the next page) was the Politburo and its Standing Committee of five (initially Mao, Liu Shaoqi, Chen Yun, Zhou En-lai, and Zhu De). The Politburo had ultimate power over all party, government, and military matters. Below the Politburo was the Central Committee (100–200 strong). The CCP's National Congress, a body several thousand strong, represented the grassroots of the party, but it did not meet regularly, and, when it did, only for a maximum of 15 days; it had little real power.

Figure 2.2: The CCP's hierarchical structure



The CCP used force to consolidate and maintain their power and imposed tight controls over the movement of China's citizens. All citizens over the age of 15 were required to carry a residence certificate, issued by the police, and needed permission from the communist authorities to move residence or work. Every person in China was assigned to a work or neighbourhood unit, known as the '*danwei*', which served as an instrument for keeping the population under constant surveillance.

2.4.2 Use of Force

The campaign against counter-revolutionaries (1950)

In spite of having to make use, for a time, of officials who had served under the GMD, Mao was particularly concerned to identify and eliminate anyone within the PRC who continued to support the GMD. The outbreak of the Korean War in 1950, which, by October, saw US troops perilously close to North Korea's border with Manchuria, and, which, in turn triggered China's military intervention, heightened the CCP's anxiety about potential 'enemies within' and led to a bloody Campaign against Counter-Revolutionaries:

- The Party organised mass demonstrations against the US and other foreign capitalist countries. The Chinese population was mobilised to identify spies and traitors.
- Within six months, over 700,000 people, most of them with former GMD links, were executed.
- In addition, 500,000 people were imprisoned in 'reform through labour' camps set up by the CCP. The prison camp system as a whole was called the *laogai*.

The CCP's power throughout its history has been underpinned by the maintenance of very large armed forces. In 1950 the PLA numbered 5 million. This was extremely expensive to maintain and its size was reduced to 2.5 million by 1957. The CCP introduced a system of conscription, involving three years' military service. The 1950s saw the PLA become increasingly professionalised with 14 ranks introduced in 1955 and much higher pay rates for officers, with, for example, colonels earning 30 times as much as privates in the PLA.



KEY TERMS

Laogai: Forced labour camps, collectively known as the laogai, were set up, with perhaps 1.5 million people

imprisoned in them in the 1950s.

2.4.3 Thought Control

Thought Reform Movement of September 1951

The CCP also sought to eradicate bourgeois and capitalist ideas. Mao and the CCP had developed techniques of thought control or *Zhengfeng* during the Yanan period. The American academics June Grasso, Jay Corbin, and Michael Kort explain those techniques in the following terms:

It was a three-stage process designed to break the individual's sense of self following a group assault on his personal opinions, the incessant tensions of which broke the person's inner will. The only way to resolve such powerful value-stripping was for the victim to atone for his sins by submitting totally to the will of the party.

Grasso et al., 2009, p. 135

In the autumn of 1951, 6,500 intellectuals and university professors were obliged to undertake courses in communist thought run by the Party. Art and literature had to conform to the CCP's political dictates.

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For further detail on the CCP's policy in this area, see sections 2.4.6 and 3.6.

2.4.4 Mass Movements

Closely related to the methods and psychology of *Zhengfeng*, the CCP launched a number of campaigns to reshape the attitudes and habits of the Chinese population, as part of their drive to establish political control over its citizens. The CCP were aiming not just at establishing a socialist economy but also at creating a socialist culture and mindset. To achieve this, the CCP employed the same methods that they had used before coming to power: mass movements to mobilise and galvanise the population, rectification campaigns involving criticism and self-criticism, and struggle sessions in which party officials or members of the public criticised individuals accused of corruption or disloyalty to the party. This approach essentially stemmed from Mao's concept of the Mass Line, which he had developed in the Yanan period:

We must go among the masses; arouse them to activity, concern ourselves with their...woe; and work earnestly and sincerely in their interests...If we do so the broad masses will certainly give us support and regard the revolution as their very life and their most glorious banner...The masses, millions upon millions...are a wall of bronze and iron which no force can break down.

Mao Zedong, Selected Works, vol. 4 (Beijing, 1969), p. 374

In order to establish tight control over the Chinese people, particularly in the towns where the CCP had not previously held sway, the CCP created structures, such as the Danwei, to ensure everyone was subject to surveillance.

A series of mass organisations were created, including:

- The National Women's Association
- The New Democratic Youth League (for ages 14–25)
- The Children's Pioneer Corps (for ages 9–14). Children were instructed in the Five Loves—for country, people, labour, science, and public property.

2.4.5 Mass Movements 1: The Three and Five Antis Campaigns (1951–2)

Even before the official end of the National Capitalist phase (1949–53), the CCP began to put greater pressure on former GMD officials and the bourgeoisie who had remained behind when the GMD leadership had fled to Taiwan. In 1951–2 the CCP launched two campaigns with a view to clamping down on corruption:

The Three Anti (*San Fan*) Campaign (1951). This targeted corruption, waste and elitism. It was directed against officials, both former GMD officials and members of the CCP. Officials were obliged to undergo self-criticism and criticism, both at the hands of colleagues and the public.

The Five Anti (*Wu Fan*) Campaign (1952). This targeted bribery, tax evasion, fraud, theft of government property, and of economic secrets. This was directed against the business community.

In the case of both campaigns, offenders, on the whole, were treated mildly compared to the Campaign Against Counter-revolutionaries. Fines and prison sentences or dismissal from official posts were the most common punishments. About 5–10% of officials were either censured or punished. Businessmen collectively had fines imposed on them totalling somewhere between \$1 billion and \$2 billion.

2.4.6 Mass Movements 2: The Hundred Flowers Campaign and Anti-Rightist Campaign (1957)

In 1957 the CCP briefly lifted censorship and encouraged intellectuals to voice criticism of how the CCP was working. The Hundred Flowers Campaign was very much Mao's initiative and he first tried to launch it in May 1956, when he announced:

Let a hundred flowers bloom, a hundred schools of thought contend.

Cited in Blecher, 2010, p. 44

At this stage intellectuals did not respond, not surprisingly, given the controls they had been subjected to by the Party and the treatment dissidents had received in the past. Many of them would have viewed this invitation as a trap, designed to lure them into making known their misgivings about the CCP so that they could be punished. However, Mao continued to make calls urging intellectuals to speak out, and, following the publication of a speech by Mao in the party's official newspaper, the *People's Daily*, in April 1957, the campaign finally got under way in May.

After a slow start, a torrent of criticism was unleashed in which many claimed that the CCP had become a privileged caste, alienated from the masses. The movement spread to the universities as students called for multi-party elections and a Democracy Wall was created at Beijing University where students and lecturers pinned posters. Within six weeks, the CCP leadership, alarmed at the way its authority was being undermined, decided to bring the campaign to a halt.

A purge of intellectuals and other critics then followed, known as the 'Anti-Rightist Campaign'. In this campaign, over 500,000 people were forced to undergo labour reform or were sent to the countryside to learn from the peasants. Many academics were dismissed from their university posts. Intellectuals would never trust Mao again and Mao remained suspicious of intellectuals for the rest of his life.



KEY HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

The Hundred Flowers

- According to historians, such as Paul Bailey (1988), Mao saw the Hundred Flowers as a form of rectification: opening up the CCP to criticism would keep it pure and prevent it from developing into a privileged elite. There is no doubt that Mao believed that the revolutionary disturbances in communist Poland and Hungary in 1956 were the result of criticism being stifled and grievances building up as the communist parties of Eastern Europe had grown increasingly out of touch with the people. So, on one level, it is likely that Mao saw the Hundred Flowers as a safety-valve, designed to let off steam so that grievances did not accumulate to exploding-point.
- Philip Short (1999) suggests that Mao was trying to combine a 'totalitarian system with democratic checks and balances'. Certainly, it appears that Mao was not sure what would happen when the Hundred Flowers got going but wanted to experiment. Paul Bailey takes a similar view to Short and argues that Mao was genuine about allowing a degree of criticism of the Party but that he massively misjudged the likely scale of the condemnation that would ensue and had not foreseen that there would be widespread calls for the end to the CCP's monopoly of power.
- Alternatively, as many intellectuals suspected, the Hundred Flowers can be viewed as a trap set by Mao to flush out critics. This view is put forward by, among others, Jasper Becker (1996).
- Finally, Merle Goldman (1981) suggests that Mao hoped that the Hundred Flowers would promote 'a genuine exchange of ideas and the criticism of repressive officials [that] would ultimately lead to ideological unity.'

2.4.7 The Socialist Education Movement of 1962–3

KEY ISSUES

Why did Mao launch the Socialist Education Movement (1962–3)?

- **In order to reassert his control over the Party.** Following the reduction in his influence that resulted from the catastrophic failure of his Great Leap Forward, launched in 1958, Mao turned to mass mobilisation and rectification in the shape of the Socialist Education Movement.
- **To re-educate the masses.** The Movement was an attempt to re-educate the masses politically and bring about a fundamental change in the way the Chinese masses saw the world so that they took on socialist attitudes.
- **Self-criticism and criticism.** Mao intended that CCP officials should undergo self-criticism and subject themselves to criticism by the masses.

Throughout 1962–3 the more moderate CCP leaders, Deng Xiaoping and Liu Shaoqi (the Pragmatists), obstructed Mao's attempt to mobilise the masses. They issued directions that fundamentally altered the Socialist Education Movement; rather than mass mobilisation, the CCP leadership organised work teams to go into schools and factories in order to educate the people and identify and remove corrupt local officials. It would take Mao until 1966 to get a mass campaign off the ground; this became known as the 'Cultural Revolution'.

2.4.8 Mass Movements 3: The Cultural Revolution (1966–76)



KEY ISSUES

How did Mao develop his own power base in order to launch the Cultural Revolution?

- **Cult of personality.** While Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping's supporters held the upper hand within the Party hierarchy in the early-mid 1960s, Mao was able to rely on the unswerving loyalty of Lin Biao, the defence minister from 1959, and work with him in developing an alternative power base within the PLA. Lin encouraged a cult of Mao within the PLA. In 1964 Lin published *Mao's Quotations from the Works of Chairman Mao*, which became daily study for the PLA and the population as a whole who were encouraged to read it as their 'bible'. A fictional work (presented as fact) called the *Diary of Lei Feng* about a lorry driver whose every action was inspired by Mao, was also published in 1963. Both *Quotations from the Works of Chairman Mao* (popularly known as 'The Little Red Book') and the *Diary of Lei Feng* became school set texts.
- **Rejection of western culture.** Mao's wife, Jiang Qing, and a group of Shanghai radicals in the CCP, organised a series of forums on literature and the arts, promoting the idea of a total transformation of the arts in China, so that all pre-1949 art and literature and all western culture were rejected. Mao was much more successful in building support within the CCP in Shanghai than in Beijing where Liu Shaoqi and the more moderate leaders had greater influence.
- **Shanghai Forum.** In 1965–6 the Shanghai Forum, led by Jiang Qing and Yao Wenyuan, staged a campaign against Wu Han's play *The Dismissal of Hai Rui from Office*. This was not just an argument about culture because they believed that the play was a thinly veiled attack on Mao's dismissal of Marshal Peng in 1959 after Peng had criticised the Great Leap Forward. Hai Rui had been a virtuous medieval official unfairly sacked for criticising a corrupt emperor.
- The radicals were not just trying to silence one intellectual because Wu Han was also vice mayor of Beijing and his boss and patron, Peng Zhen, Mayor of Beijing, was a close associate of Liu Shaoqi. In June 1966 the Cultural Revolution Committee, a sub-committee of the Politburo, dominated by radical Maoists, purged the so-called Group of Five, including Peng Zhen, who were moderates trying to reconcile the radicals and pragmatists (Deng and Liu's supporters).

In 1966, Mao initiated the Cultural Revolution, which caused the greatest disorder in modern Chinese history. Although Mao intended a huge upheaval, it seems clear that events got too far out of the Party's control, even for Mao's liking, and, by early 1969, the worst of the disruption was halted by action by the CCP and the PLA. However, officially the Cultural Revolution did not end until Mao's death in 1976.



KEY HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

Why Mao Launched the Cultural Revolution

- Mao sought to reassert his authority over the CCP, ending Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping's influence. According to Pierre Ryckmans, 'it was a power struggle waged... behind the smokescreen of a fictitious mass movement' (1981, p. 13).
- Mao was desperate to stop the CCP's movement towards developing an elite of officials and managers. Maurice Meisner writes, 'it was his [Mao's] last desperate attempt to revive a revolution that he believed was dying' (1999, p. 291).
- Mao wanted to change cultural values and sought to attack western and traditional Chinese values. The historians Roderick MacFarquhar and Michael Schoenhals chose as the title for their major work on the Cultural Revolution, *Mao's Last Revolution* (2006); Mao was 73 years old in 1966 and, conscious of his own mortality, sought to remould the mentality and outlook of the Chinese people.



KEY ISSUES

How did the Cultural Revolution begin?

- **Mao intended to restore the CCP's revolutionary zeal.** He was looking to provide China's young generation with a revolutionary challenge; they were China's future but they had not been through the crucible of dramatic challenges such as the Long March and the Civil War.
- **From May 1966 there was growing unrest in Beijing's universities.** This was encouraged by visiting members of the Cultural Revolution Committee. As the struggle between radical Maoists and pragmatists intensified, Liu Shaoqi sent work teams into schools and universities to try to prevent the radicals using them to cause disruption. The work teams tried to focus students' criticism on selected targets. However, this time Mao's efforts to launch a radical mass campaign were not to be thwarted. Students and high school pupils in Beijing began to organise themselves in to Red Guard units, dedicated to carrying out Mao's will.
- **In July 1966 Mao staged his 'Great Swim' in the Yangzi River.** This was in order to demonstrate his virility and that he was 'back' in public life. He completed 10 miles taking part in the Wuhan annual cross-Yangzi River swim.
- **In August 1966 Mao publicly expressed his support for the Red Guard movement in Beijing.** This led to Red Guard units being set up all over China. Also, in August, Mao, in a wall-poster, called on students to 'bombard the [CCP] headquarters'—to seek out and destroy all those who were taking the 'capitalist road' within the CCP (Tsou, 1986, p. 83). The resulting wave of revolutionary enthusiasm was supposedly spontaneous, but it was actually orchestrated to a considerable degree from above.
- **In August 1966 the first huge Maoist rally of over 1 million Red Guards took place in Tiananmen Square in Beijing.** The PLA took over the railway network on behalf of the radical Maoists and young people were given free transport to Beijing. There, they attended hysterical mass rallies before returning to their homes to seek out those in authority who were taking the capitalist road.



KEY ISSUES

How did the Cultural Revolution develop?

- **Deng Xiaoping and Liu Shaoqi were dismissed in October 1966.** Liu died in prison in 1969. Large-scale purges of the CCP and of university lecturers and school teachers were carried out by the Red Guards.
- **Mao proclaimed 'it is right to rebel' and urged the Red Guards to attack 'the Four Olds'.** The Red Guards launched violent attacks on 'bad elements'—many CCP officials, teachers, intellectuals, and former bourgeoisie were subjected to terrifying psychological, and physical assaults. The security minister, Xie Fuzhi, instructed the police not to intervene to prevent Red Guard violence and Kang Sheng, the head of the secret police, helped Red Guards to identify targets within the Party.
- **Although the Cultural Revolution originated with activism organised from above, once started, it proved very difficult to control.** Normal educational activities in schools and universities stopped.



KEY TERMS



The Four Olds: These were what Mao directed the Red Guards against, namely: old thought, old culture, old

practices, and old customs.



KEY ISSUES (continued)

- **Once the Cultural Revolution started, Mao withdrew to a large degree to central China, leaving Lin Biao and Jiang Qing to direct affairs.** This to some extent reflected Mao's view that the people should be mobilised into revolutionary action, rather than led from above by the CCP leadership, and Mao had similarly initiated movements in the past (such as the Hundred Flowers Campaign) and then left them to develop independently. However, Mao went much further during this period by physically distancing himself from events in the major cities such as Beijing and Shanghai, and this added to the growing sense of chaos.
- **Violent clashes** soon developed between rival Red Guard factions and between workers and students.
- **In February 1967 a democratic workers' movement emerged in Shanghai, which set up the People's Commune, taking away control of the city from the existing Communist authorities.** This development had been encouraged by two of the Cultural Revolution Committee, Zhang Chunqiao and Yao Wenyuan (who later became part of the Gang of Four during the struggle for power within the CCP in the early-mid 1970s, leading up to Mao's death in 1976). Mao and Lin Biao were both alarmed by these events in Shanghai and within just a few weeks Mao had replaced the Shanghai People's Commune with a new city government drawn from members of the CCP and PLA.
- **Mao and other party leaders became worried that China was on the verge of civil war.** Thousands were killed at Wuzhou in southern China in clashes between rival Red Guard units in April 1968. In Guangxi province, ceremonial cannibalism of 'Rightists' by Red Guards appears to have occurred.
- **In Beijing, the CCP's top leadership divided into three factions.**
 1. The members of the Cultural Revolution Committee, including Jiang Qing.
 2. The military leadership led by Lin Biao.
 3. More moderate members of the CCP, with Zhou Enlai particularly prominent.

Zhou Enlai, and other moderate Maoist leaders within the CCP, insisted on the restoration of order. In March 1967 the PLA was given the key role in new revolutionary committees, which were set up in each province. These 'three-in-one' committees were composed of radical leaders of the masses, party officials and members of the PLA. In September 1967 Zhou called on the Red Guards to stop their violence and return home. When Red Guard violence did not stop, the PLA was sent into restore order. It took a long time to turn off the revolutionary violence, but, by late 1968, the revolutionary committees had restored order in most places. In December 1968 Mao called on the Red Guards to leave the cities and go into the countryside. 12 million did so over the next four years.



KEY ISSUES

Why did Mao decide to end the Cultural Revolution?

- **Purges and violence.** These went much further than Mao had probably intended.
- **The emergence of the Shanghai People's Commune.** This appeared to threaten the CCP's monopoly of power in China. Tang Tsou (1986) has convincingly argued that the Cultural Revolution was a functional expression of 'people power' that limited the power of the government and paved the way for reforms after the death of Mao.
- **It was causing chaos.** It also coincided with when the CCP leadership was increasingly worried by the prospect of war with the USSR.
- **Military commanders.** A number of military commanders, but not Lin Biao, became worried that the purges of the Cultural Revolution might be extended to the PLA.



KEY ISSUES

What were the results of the Cultural Revolution?

1. **Liu Shaoqi, Deng Xiaoping, and their pragmatist followers were defeated.** However, Deng would be rehabilitated in 1973 and helped shape China's economic policies from then on (with the exception of 1976 when he was temporarily disgraced).
2. **The cult of Mao reached new heights.** In 1969 a new constitution defined 'Marxism-Leninism-Mao-Zedong Thought' as the guiding line of the CCP.
3. **Approximately 500,000 people died.** Some estimates suggest a much higher figure. The main victims were intellectuals and officials, not peasants as in the Great Leap Forward. The prison camp system, the *laogai*, was expanded.
4. **The period 1968–70 saw the massive transfer of 20 to 30 million urban inhabitants to the countryside.**
5. **'May 7th Schools' were set up to re-educate Party officials each year in Maoist thought.** This involved them studying Mao's writings and working in the fields in order to learn from the peasants the virtues of manual labour.
6. **Education, particularly higher education, was disastrously disrupted.** During the Cultural Revolution, admission to university was based on 'political consciousness' rather than academic qualifications.
7. **Chinese art and literature became very sterile. Jiang Qing imposed strict controls on what could be displayed, performed and published.** The Red Guards destroyed a lot of ancient Chinese art, including Buddhist temples.
8. **The PRC became increasingly isolated internationally.** Westerners were attacked in China, and, in August 1967, the British embassy in Beijing was sacked by a mob.

Assessing the Cultural Revolution

Mao saw the Cultural Revolution as over by 1970, having defeated his revisionist opponents. However, the period of Maoist indoctrination and domination, which the Cultural Revolution represents, did not end until Mao's death in 1976.

The Cultural Revolution can be viewed as the escalation of certain features present in the PRC since 1949: public denunciation, struggle sessions, and mass mobilisation. It had essentially been an urban phenomenon and the countryside had suffered much less disruption than the towns.

Roderick MacFarquhar and Michael Schoenhals argue that, without the Cultural Revolution, there would not have been the huge economic changes under Deng Xiaoping from the late 1970s onwards. They suggest that, without the widespread revulsion within the CCP against the Cultural Revolution, Deng could not have brought about the economic revolution that transformed China into the economic power it is today:

The Cultural Revolution was so great a disaster that it provoked an even more profound cultural revolution, precisely the one that Mao intended to forestall.

MacFarquhar and Schoenhals, 2006, p. 3

The official CCP verdict on Mao's legacy in general, and the Cultural Revolution in particular, was delivered in June 1981 at the Sixth Plenary Session of the Central Committee, entitled 'The Resolution on Certain Questions in the History of Our Party since the Founding of the People's Republic of China'.

The resolution concluded that:

Comrade Mao Zedong was a great Marxist and a great proletarian revolutionary, strategist and theorist. It is true that he made gross mistakes during the 'Cultural Revolution,' but if we judge his activities as a whole, his contributions to the Chinese revolution far outweigh his mistakes. His merits are primary and his errors secondary.

Eleventh Central Committee of the CCP (1981)

2.4.9 Mao Plays 'Divide and Rule'

Continuing faction-struggle (1971–6)

In the five years leading up to his death in 1976, Mao sought to maintain his own authority over the CCP by playing the game of 'divide and rule'; that is, he played off the different factions within the party against each other in order to enhance his own control as the ultimate arbiter of power and decision-making. Although Lin Biao seemed to have emerged from the Cultural Revolution in a very strong position, being confirmed officially as Mao's successor in 1969, his ascendancy proved very short-lived and, following Lin's death in 1971, Mao pursued a policy of balancing the more radical faction within the CCP against the more pragmatic faction. In January 1976, following Zhou Enlai's death, Mao promoted Hua Guofeng as a CCP leader who belonged to neither of the main factions. After Mao's death in September 1976, Hua Guofeng moved quickly to arrest the leaders of the radical faction, the so-called Gang of Four. However, within a year, Hua Guofeng found himself moved aside as Deng Xiaoping and other pragmatists gained control over the party and maintained it for the next two decades until Deng's death in 1997.

The rise and fall of Lin Biao

In 1969, Lin Biao, the defence minister, was officially confirmed as Mao's successor, and, in the same year, 10 of the 16 Politburo members were members of the armed forces. However, only 3 of these were supporters of Lin, and, with hindsight, it appears that Mao was already having doubts about Lin. In September 1971 Lin mysteriously disappeared; the CCP claimed that he had been planning a coup and an assassination attempt on Mao, and he had fled by plane to Russia but died in a crash over Mongolia.

It is still not clear what happened to Lin Biao and whether Lin had been planning to assassinate Mao, although many historians, such as Richard Curt Kraus (2011), argue that Lin had been organising a coup. What is clear is that Lin seems to have been purged because Mao believed that he was becoming too ambitious. At a CCP conference in Lushan in August 1970, Lin and his supporters unsuccessfully proposed the restoration of the post of chairman of state (or president), which had been abolished when its last holder, Liu Shaoqi, had been disgraced. Mao appears to have opposed Lin's proposal as he suspected that Lin wanted to become the new chairman of state as a way of further promoting his own power. A further reason why Lin and Mao seem to have fallen out is that Lin was opposed to closer links with the US at a time when Zhou En-lai was pushing for western investment to boost the economy and the reopening of relations with the US because of the very strained relations between China and the USSR—in 1969 there had been military clashes along the Sino-Soviet border and the CCP leadership had been alarmed at the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968.

In 1971 Henry Kissinger, the US secretary of state, secretly visited China, and in 1972 the world was stunned by President Nixon's official visit. The US withdrew its opposition to China entering the UN. The PRC took Nationalist China's place on the UN Security Council. However, full US-Chinese diplomatic relations were not officially restored until 1979.

The radicals and pragmatists battle for control of the Party

From 1971 Zhou Enlai and Mao were effectively running the Party, but both were ageing rapidly, and in 1972 Zhou was diagnosed with cancer.

Deng Xiaoping was allowed back to Beijing in 1973 and was appointed as vice premier. Deng had previously been confined to internal exile as a result of him being disgraced during the Cultural Revolution. At this point, it was not clear whether the radicals or pragmatists would secure control of the Party on Mao's death.

The ongoing debate in the 1970s about the direction of economic policy

- The radicals, led by Jiang Qing, Zhang Chunqiao, Yao Wenyuan, and Wang Hongwen (the Gang of Four), argued for maintaining centralised controls and emphasised the importance of mass mobilisation and production focused on quantity and speed.
- The modernisers, led by Deng and, up to 1976, Zhou Enlai, stressed gradualism, quality production, and the expansion of incentives and wage differentials. In 1975–6 the debate centred around Deng and Zhou's proposed **Four Modernisations**.

In 1973 the radicals were very much still a force in the Party, particularly Jiang Qing, Zhang Chunqiao, Yao Wenyuan, and Wang Hongwen. In 1973 Wang Hongwen, a radical Shanghai trade union leader, was presented as Mao's successor.

In order to balance the radicals, Mao decided that Deng Xiaoping should be rehabilitated and restored to the Central Committee in 1973.

In 1973 the radicals launched a propaganda attack on Zhou and his revisionist policies in the so-called 'Criticise Confucius and Lin Biao' campaign.

In January 1976 Zhou Enlai died and Mao backed the relatively obscure Hua Guofeng as the new premier. He was essentially a compromise candidate, a moderate Maoist.

In April 1976 Deng was sacked as vice premier, following demonstrations in Tiananmen Square in Zhou Enlai's memory; Deng was accused of encouraging the disturbances. At this point, Hua Guofeng sided with the radicals against Deng.

In September 1976 Mao died and, within weeks, Hua Guofeng ordered the arrest of the radicals (the Gang of Four). They were accused of planning a coup and were eventually put on trial in 1980. Jiang was sentenced to death, but this was commuted to life imprisonment; she died in 1991.

In 1977 Deng was appointed as number three in the Party hierarchy as CCP secretary and he increasingly shaped China's economic policies. From the late 1970s, through to his death in 1997, Deng was the dominant figure in the CCP. He was a moderniser, seeking greater trade with the US and Japan and introducing reforms such as increased incentives and decentralisation.

2.4.10 Foreign Policy

The PRC was founded just as the Cold War rivalry between the USSR and the US and their allies was developing; this inevitably had profound consequences for the PRC's international relations. For much of the period 1949–76, Mao looked to formulate foreign policy in line with Marxist-Leninist ideas about worldwide revolution—for example, the PRC provided aid to the Huk guerrillas who unsuccessfully tried to establish



communist rule in Malaya. However, the desire to export revolution abroad was balanced by considerations of national security. This explains, in part, Mao's decision to sign the Sino-Soviet Friendship Treaty with the USSR in 1950 as, at a time when the Cold War was intensifying and the US was hostile towards the PRC, Mao sought to secure his regime by aligning China with one of the world's two superpowers. This led to an uneasy 10-year period in which, in Mao's words, China 'leaned to one side' and relied on Soviet economic aid, simultaneously seeking Soviet help in developing an atomic bomb.

Similarly, Mao decided on intervention in the Korean War in 1950 because he believed that he could not allow communist North Korea to collapse and a hostile, capitalist, united Korea to emerge on China's border. The Sino-Soviet split, which became public in 1960, put Mao's China into a perilous position, with both the US and the USSR hostile to his regime. The further deterioration of Sino-Soviet relations in the late 1960s led Mao to perform a major u-turn and re-establish diplomatic relations with the US in the early 1970s. Mao saw this improvement in Sino-American relations as essential to China's security.

A further motive driving Mao's foreign policy was nationalism as Mao, Zhou Enlai, and other CCP leaders were part of the May Fourth generation, and, consequently, they sought to restore Chinese sovereignty and make China into a great power, as it had been in imperial times before the decline of the Qing dynasty.

The establishment of the PRC (1949)

When, in 1945, civil war in China between the CCP and the GMD broke out again, President Truman of the US sent General George Marshall to China to try, unsuccessfully, to broker a peace. In 1945 the US had helped the GMD by carrying out a massive airlift of GMD troops to Manchuria and in 1948 Congress passed the China Aid Act, but this support was limited as the US realised how corrupt the GMD government was.

Diplomatic relations broken off by the US

Mao's victory over Chiang Kai-shek in October 1949 came as a shock to the US public. At first it seemed as if the US might recognise the PRC but there was a huge outcry in the US against **Dean Acheson**, the US secretary of state, at his statement in August 1950 that China could not have been saved by US intervention. The Republicans accused the Democratic administration of doing too little, too late. Many in the US feared the spread of communism all over South East Asia, especially after the USSR signed a Friendship Treaty with China in February 1950. This coincided with the beginning in America of the McCarthy Era when Senator Joseph McCarthy orchestrated a 'witch hunt' of alleged communists working in the State Department, intelligence services, armed forces and the world of entertainment, which led to many people being falsely convicted of spying or other treasonable activities. The US refused to recognise the PRC until 1979, though it allowed its admission to the UN in 1971.

The Sino-Soviet Treaty of 1950

Mao's relations with Stalin had never been close. Mao had opposed the pro-Soviet CCP leaders prior to the Chinese Civil War and, during the Civil War, Mao received no direct aid from the USSR, except that the Russians handed over captured Japanese weapons in Manchuria to the PLA. As late as spring 1949, Stalin had urged Mao to be content with control of just northern China. Mao was also keen that the Russians withdraw their troops from Lushun (Port Arthur). However, once it became clear that the US was likely to be hostile to the PRC and, given the PRC's need for economic aid, Mao decided to 'lean to one side' in the developing Cold War and to do so in the direction of the USSR.

Mao visited Moscow and signed a friendship treaty with the USSR. Stalin agreed to withdraw from Lushun by 1952, but Mao was shocked by the hard bargain that Stalin



CROSS-REFERENCE

For further coverage on Dean Acheson see the 'Who's Who in China' section.

struck. The treaty provided China with \$300 million in loans but in return the USSR was given economic concessions in Xinjiang and Manchuria. This part of the treaty remained secret as Mao was embarrassed that the PRC was making such concessions, a situation reminiscent of the foreign exploitation that prevailed before the Civil War.

The Korean War (1950–3)

Background

Between 1910 and 1945, Japan had ruled Korea. At the Cairo Conference in 1943, the USSR, the US, and Great Britain agreed that Korea should gain its independence after Japan was defeated. The USSR only joined the war against Japan in August 1945, but it did send its forces into Korea (above the 38th parallel) and Manchuria to take the surrender of Japanese troops there. The US gained Soviet agreement that they would occupy Korea south of the 38th parallel—a line fixed on in order to make easier the shipping back to Japan of Japanese soldiers by putting the ports of Pusan and Inchon under US control (Moran, 2001, p. 59). US forces entered the Korean peninsula on 8 September 1945.

In September 1945 the Korean People's Republic was set up by a coalition of nationalists and communists who supported land reform and claimed to rule the whole of Korea. In the same month a right-wing group called the Korean Democratic Party was founded. In fact, a huge array of political groupings emerged in Korea and, in the end, it was the influence of the Russians and Americans that proved decisive in determining the fate of the Korean peninsula.

During 1946 the US and USSR helped set up rival governments: Syngman Rhee led the Republic of Korea in the South while Kim Il-Sung led the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in the North. In 1949 Soviet troops left the North, confident that the South would collapse of its own accord. Later that same year, US troops withdrew from South Korea.

The North invades the South (June 1950)

In January 1950 Dean Acheson delivered his so-called 'perimeter speech' in which he outlined which areas of Asia that the US was committed to defending; in it, he did not refer to Korea or Taiwan. Acheson was probably anxious to restrain Rhee from attacking the North. However, it seems to have encouraged Kim Il-Sung to believe that the US would not intervene if North Korea invaded South Korea.

Kim visited Moscow in 1949 and was refused permission to invade South Korea; however, on a second visit in 1950, Stalin agreed but he told Kim to consult Mao before going ahead. There is no evidence that Mao was keen on the scheme, but he was grateful to the Korean Communists who had provided the CCP with 100,000 troops during the battle for Manchuria in 1946–7.

In June 1950 North Korea invaded the South. The US got the UN, in the absence of the USSR, to agree to send troops to Korea. The USSR was temporarily boycotting the UN in protest at the PRC's exclusion from the UN.

Initially the North Koreans swept easily through the South and, by September 1950, South Korean and UN forces were confined to the 'Pusan Pocket' at the southern tip of the Korean peninsula. However, in September 1950, General MacArthur, the UN's American commander-in-chief, audaciously turned the tide of the war by launching an amphibious landing at Inchon, deep inside North Korean held territory. Soon the North Koreans were fleeing back over the 38th Parallel and US policy changed from simply driving the North Koreans out of the South to liberating the whole of Korea from communism. The UN advance towards the China's border led to the intervention of 200,000 Chinese troops.

Many of the Chinese Politburo, including Lin Biao, had argued against intervening in the Korean War, particularly as Stalin would not commit himself to providing Soviet support. However, Mao, backed by Peng Dehuai, managed to persuade the Politburo to send in Chinese troops in late October 1950. This proved brilliantly successful and the Chinese 'People's Volunteers', as they were called, in order to avoid China being officially at war, forced the UN forces back over the 38th Parallel and captured Seoul, the South's capital. Mao then got over ambitious and sought to unify Korea under communist rule; Chinese troops suffered huge losses and the UN recaptured Seoul. Mao consequently supported ceasefire negotiations which began in July 1951. However, it took until July 1953 for an armistice to be arranged, which left Korea divided at the 38th Parallel.



KEY ISSUES

What were the results of the Korean War for the PRC?

- **In many ways, the Korean War was a triumph for Mao.** The PRC had saved North Korea and stood up to the world's greatest military power.
- **However, this was earned at a great cost.** The Chinese suffered between 400,000 and 800,000 casualties.
- **Furthermore, the Korean War led the US to commit itself to the defence of countries from communism.** They were committed to defending Taiwan and to supporting the French in their struggle against the communist Vietminh in Vietnam.
- **The US also sought to contain communism in South East Asia.** They created the South East Asian Treaty Organisation (SEATO) in 1954, which was an alliance of South East Asian states; its members were the US, GB, France, Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Pakistan, and Thailand.

Taiwan

In 1949 Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist government had withdrawn to the island of Taiwan. The US continued to recognise it as the rightful government of China and blocked the PRC's admission to the UN until 1971. Chiang died in 1975, having never given up his claim that his government on Taiwan was the legitimate government of both Taiwan and mainland China. In 1954 the US signed a Defence Treaty with Taiwan when the PRC threatened the islands of Quemoy and Matsu (held by the Nationalists). In 1958 the PRC again threatened the two islands, and the US sent the 7th Fleet to patrol off Taiwan. On both occasions the PRC backed down, partly because the USSR was unwilling to support the PRC in this dispute.

The Sino-Soviet Split

As the CCP became increasingly self-confident, its leadership became less willing to accept a subordinate role in the Communist Bloc. The CCP leaders were angry that Khrushchev, Stalin's successor as Soviet leader, had not consulted them before making his 'Destalinisation' speech in 1956 in which he condemned Stalin's purges of the Soviet Communist Party because the CCP had praised Stalin in public. Mao strongly disagreed with Khrushchev's policy of peaceful co-existence with the capitalist countries. He saw conditions as very different in East Asia where violent conflict could and did work; for example, in Vietnam. Mao provided military supplies to the value of \$670 million to Communist North Vietnam in its conflict with right-wing South Vietnam in the 1960s and early 1970s (until North Vietnam brought the whole of Vietnam under its control in 1976). The US had become increasingly involved in propping up South Vietnam, which struggled to contain communist guerrilla fighters, so that between 1965 and 1973 up to half a million US combat troops were fighting in Vietnam.

The Soviet leadership saw Mao as dangerously reckless and Khrushchev soon regretted promising to help the PRC build an atom bomb. The Russians were alarmed by Mao's comments that the world could survive a nuclear war and that it would be the capitalists who would perish.

Sino-Soviet relations really deteriorated from 1958 when Mao felt that Khrushchev had not given the PRC sufficient support in the second crisis over the GMD islands of Quemoy and Matsu. 1959 saw Khrushchev renege on his promise to help develop a Chinese atom bomb and Mao was angered by Khrushchev's public criticism of the Great Leap Forward. Mao suspected that Marshall Peng Dehuai, China's defence minister, had been conspiring with Khrushchev against him when Peng had visited Moscow in March 1959. In 1960 Khrushchev abruptly withdrew all Soviet engineers and technicians from China. In 1960 the Sino-Soviet split became public when the Chinese and Russian communist parties clashed at a congress held in Bucharest.

In 1962 Khrushchev publicly criticised the PRC's behaviour in the Sino-Indian border war; this hurt the CCP leadership as it now seems clear that the Indians were the aggressors. In the same year, the CCP angered Khrushchev by their criticism of his conduct during the Cuban Missile Crisis, claiming that he had capitulated to Kennedy. The CCP denounced the **Test Ban Treaty** of 1963; they presented it as Soviet-Imperialist collaboration to deny the PRC the atom bomb. In 1963 Deng Xiaoping led a delegation to Moscow for a final attempt to heal the rift but these talks failed and this marked the end of formal diplomatic contact between the two countries for 26 years. The low-point in Sino-Soviet relations came in 1969 with military clashes along their border at Damansky Island in the Ussuri River.

Rapprochement with the US (1971–2)

In 1971–2, Mao, after years of denouncing the Russians' policy of peaceful co-existence with the West, shocked the world by resuming diplomatic relations with the US. This reflects Mao's concerns about the risks of war with the USSR. This about-turn in Mao's foreign policy did much to facilitate the general improvement in East-West relations in the early 1970s known as '*Détente*' (meaning a relaxation in tension). It also laid the foundations for the huge growth in China's foreign trade, which, along with Deng Xiaoping's reforms from the 1980s, led to China becoming a global economic force and, consequently, a global political player.

China and the developing world

China developed strong links with a number of Asian and African countries, in part, as an attempt to promote worldwide revolution but also to extend China's influence. Mao's brand of Marxism, with its emphasis on peasant revolution, had potentially greater appeal to developing countries than the Soviet version. The CCP supplied weapons to the Vietminh in their struggle with the French and later with the US; they also provided aid for communist guerrillas in Malaysia, the Philippines, and Burma, but none of these movements ultimately proved successful.

At the Bandung Conference, in Indonesia, in 1955, Zhou Enlai raised the PRC's international profile by taking a lead in creating the 'non-aligned' movement of African and Asian states, which sought to avoid domination by the more advanced western countries and being drawn into one of the two rival camps (US or Soviet) in the Cold War. The PRC provided economic aid to several African countries, for example, helping build the Tan-Zam Railway.

the Chinese government's policy of 'one country, two systems' for Hong Kong and Macao, and the 'one country, two systems' for the Hong Kong and Macao Special Administrative Regions.

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3. AIMS AND RESULTS OF CCP SOCIAL POLICIES UNDER MAO

TOPICS

War on Crime

Education

Women

Land reform

Destruction of the Old Class System

Creation of new power relationships

Culture and the arts

Religion

Minorities

Overview

This chapter examines the ambitious social policies of the CCP in the period 1949–76 and analyses the methods the CCP employed in their attempt to create a new socialist society, breaking away from the Confucian culture and former class structures of pre-1949 China.

It considers key areas of social policy: the war on crime, education, female emancipation, the destruction of the old class systems, land reform, the Arts, religion, and ethnic minorities.

The chapter also evaluates the CCP's success in these different areas of policy, noting much greater success in land reform, for example, than in transforming the cultural outlook of the Chinese people, including attitudes to women in the countryside.

3.1 The War on Crime

The CCP was keen to tackle problems of organised crime and banditry, with an estimated 1 million bandits operating in rural areas in 1949. After decades of war and civil strife, many Chinese were desperate to see a government in power take steps to restore law and order. The CCP approached these issues in a decisive but measured fashion, punishing, often executing, major criminals but treating prostitutes and drug addicts as victims and providing them with rehabilitation programmes. CCP officials raided and closed down brothels and gambling dens.

3.2 Education

On coming to power, the CCP, in keeping with their pre-1949 policies, launched a massive drive to increase literacy and expand educational provision. In 1949, only 24 million children attended primary schools and only 1.27 million were in secondary education. By 1953, 51 million children were in primary education and 3.13 million in secondary. However, even by the mid-1950s, illiteracy rates remained very high, with perhaps as much as 80% of the population unable to read and write. During the 1950s, the CCP received a lot of help from the USSR in the form of Russians teaching in Chinese schools and universities and Chinese being trained in Russian universities.

During the Great Leap Forward there was a massive expansion of primary education, with 85% of children of primary school age attending school by 1965 (up from 60% in 1952). However, the growth in secondary schooling was much slower, with only 14% of secondary school age children attending school by 1965. In the same year, a mere 1% of the university age population went to university.

In the late 1950s Mao emphasised the need for all school children to carry out manual labour and having the 'correct' political attitude became the key criterion for getting into higher education, regardless of intellectual ability. However, in the early to mid-1960s, Liu Shaoqi altered this policy and encouraged universities to admit students based on academic merit. New university regulations issued in 1961 reduced party interference in the universities.

By the mid-1960s Mao became alarmed that education, particularly at university level, was becoming increasingly elitist, with the children of party officials and intellectuals dominating admission to higher education. A system of elite primary and secondary schools had developed, increasing the trend towards the emergence of a new ruling class. This trend was challenged and reversed during the Cultural Revolution which started in 1966, as Mao reinstated and extended his educational policies of the late 1950s. China's schools and universities faced huge disruption, particularly in the radical phase of the Cultural Revolution from 1966 to 1968. High schools closed in 1966, although they reopened in 1967. During the Cultural Revolution, the humanities and classics were removed from university curricula and many university lecturers were dismissed and sent to the countryside to learn from living alongside the peasants. Admission to university was made dependent on having the 'correct' background rather than passing entrance tests, so many more students from peasant or working class backgrounds were enrolled, while many students from 'bourgeois' backgrounds were obliged to go and work in remote areas of China, engaging in hard, manual labour. In schools, at all levels, manual work was introduced alongside academic study. One positive impact of the Cultural Revolution was that there was a greater emphasis on expanding schooling in rural areas, with an additional 34 million children enrolled in rural primaries during this period.

3.3 Women

From the 1920s onwards, Mao had attacked China's traditional gender relations, writing, in 1927, that:

A man in China is usually subjected to the domination of...political authority...clan authority...and...religious authority...As for women, they are also dominated by the men. These...are the embodiment of the whole feudal-patriarchal system and ideology.

Mao, 1960, pp. 44–46

Marc Blecher characterises the position of women in pre-1949 China as follows:

Under the system of patrilocal exogamy, women married into their husbands' households, which were customarily located outside their home villages. Thus, from birth girls were regarded as a financial burden, since the resources involved in raising them would never be recouped. Emotionally, too, parents resisted getting too attached to their daughters, since after marriage they would rarely if ever see them. Boys were much preferred because they would remain in their home villages...where they could be relied on eventually to take care of their elderly parents...

Blecher, 2010, p. 119.

Prior to coming to power, the CCP had campaigned for more equal treatment of women and against practices such as **foot-binding**. However, this had not been a key focus for the CCP and gender reform was not pushed energetically by the party, probably in a large part because they did not want to alienate peasant men who generally held very traditional attitudes towards the role and status of women.

Once in power, the CCP did try to improve the position of women in society. In attempting to do so, the CCP also sought to undermine the traditional extended family model in order to acquire greater opportunities for tightening their control over the population and reorienting people's loyalties from the family to the party and state. In 1950 the Marriage Law banned arranged and child marriages and polygamy. Women were also given the right to divorce and the right to own property. This led to a huge increase in divorces, with 1.3 million divorce petitions filed in 1953. However, changing men's attitudes, particularly in rural areas, proved very difficult and women continued to be treated as inferiors by many men, receiving lower pay and continuing to marry outside their native villages, as was the custom, which meant that women moving to another village to join their husbands' families were often mistreated as they were outsiders, without any blood relatives to protect them.

One area of development that the CCP successfully promoted, and which had a profound effect on the opportunities open to women in China, was the education of girls and women in the school and university systems. Marc Blecher cites research that has shown only 38% of girls in rural areas in the period 1929–49 completed primary education; after 1959, 100% did. However, educational provision was much less equal at middle school and university level; taking the period 1959–76 as a whole, only 20% of girls

KEY TERMS



Foot-binding: Traditional practice in China whereby the feet of young girls were bound up to keep them from growing properly,

so that they had tiny feet which were regarded as attractive. Often, this led to deformed growth and chronic pain.

completed middle school whereas 54% of boys did, and by the time of Mao's death in 1976, only 24% of university students were women.

In the period of Mao's rule, women did achieve some success in terms of gaining a greater political role but such advances were limited. By the 1970s each work team in industry had a women's team head, elected by the women of the team, to represent their issues. Women also had an increasingly significant influence at the grassroots of the CCP's organisation, with the proportion of women among the CCP's cadres rising from 8–12% in the period 1958–66 to between 16% and 21% in the early 1970s. Fewer women were prominent in the higher levels of the CCP and most of them held positions directly related to women's issues, such as leadership roles in the Women's Association. There were a few exceptional cases where women who were married to leading figures in the CCP played important political roles, such as Wang Guangmei (Liu Shaoqi's wife) and Jiang Qing (Mao's wife). The limited extent of women's political voice in Mao's China can be seen in the failure of the campaign by the Women's Association in 1973 to challenge **patrilocal marriage**.

During the Great Leap Forward, the CCP encouraged more women to work outside the home in order to boost economic output. Creche facilities and canteens were provided in the communes to make this possible but in many cases women ended up with the 'double burden' of looking after the household and working in the fields or factory.

3.4 Land Reform

One of the biggest changes introduced by the CCP in the early years of its rule was land reform. In contrast to the relatively moderate land policy that Mao had followed for most of the Jiangxi and Yanan periods, the Land Reform of 1950 saw the destruction of the power and wealth of the landlord class.

In order to carry out land reform, CCP cadres were sent out to the villages but, in keeping with Mao's emphasis on the mobilisation of the masses, the peasants were encouraged to take the lead in attacking their landlords, denouncing them in organised 'Speak Bitterness' sessions. In such sessions, peasants denounced landlords for exploiting them, verbally and often physically abusing them.

- It is important to note that the land reform's impact was far more dramatic and violent in southern China than in the north because in the north there had been relatively few landlords, with just 10–15% of the land rented out, whereas in provinces like Sichuan in the south, the figure was 56%.
- Historians cite different figures for the number of landlords who were killed, often beaten to death by the peasants, but approximately 2 million landlords died.
- A much larger number of landlords survived but had a lot of their land taken away and redistributed to middle and poor peasants.
- Land reform was not complete until 1952.
- One important effect, just as the CCP intended, was to give the peasants a stake in the revolution, as they now had something to lose if the CCP were overthrown. Approximately 40% of China's arable land was redistributed to 60% of the population.

KEY FACT

Before the Land Reform, 4% of landowners had owned 40% of China's arable land.

KEY TERMS

Patrilocal marriage: Tradition in rural China where a woman leaves her village to marry a man from another village and then lives with her husband's family.

At this stage, ownership of land remained private; the CCP only moved gradually towards socialisation of agriculture from the early 1950s.

3.5 The Destruction of the Old Class System and Creation of New Power Relationships

Within three years of coming to power, the CCP had destroyed the traditional class system in China. This was primarily the result of the Land Reform (1950) referred to above and the Five-Year Plan (1953–7) explained on the next page.



KEY ISSUES

What were the results of the Land Reform?

Under the Land Reform, the old landlord class had been eliminated and there had been a massive transferral of land from landlords to peasantry. Under the Five-Year Plan, private ownership of factories and businesses gave way to state ownership, although some of the former bourgeois factory or business owners were retained as managers. The scale of these economic and social changes was vast and is illustrated by the fact that, by late 1956, privately owned farms, businesses, and factories only produced 2% of China's total economic output.

Although China's pre-1949 class structure was overturned by the CCP, class labels were assigned to everyone by the party. As Harold M. Tanner explains:

Urban and rural families had been investigated [by the CCP] and had been assigned class labels like 'landlord', 'rich peasant', 'capitalist', 'bureaucrat capitalist', 'poor peasant', 'worker', 'bad element', and so on. These labels had been the basis on which the party had carried out socioeconomic revolution, dispossessing the rich and redistributing land and other property to the poor. Now these labels would become a permanent feature of each family's and each individual's private and public life.

Tanner, 2009, p. 511

Power relationships in urban and rural society, too, had changed. The educated, landowning rural elites who had been local leaders and the interface between village China and Chinese governments for over two thousand years no longer existed: instead, villagers organised into collectives were led by local activists close to the CCP and by party members. The party-state controlled urban people through street committees in older established neighborhoods and through each individual's place of employment or 'work unit'...

The work units, neighborhood committees, and rural collectives gave the agents of the party-state the ability to infiltrate all aspects of work, social and private life in a way not achieved by any previous Chinese regime.

Tanner, 2009, p. 512

3.6 Culture and the Arts

In 1942 Mao, in his *Talks at the Yanan Forum on Literature and Art*, stated that:

There is in fact no such thing as art for art's sake, art that stands above classes, or art that is detached from or independent of politics.

According to Mao, art was required to promote class struggle and loyalty to the Party; ‘bourgeois individualism’ was condemned. We have already noted in the section on how the CCP maintained power that in 1951 the party launched a Thought Reform Movement aimed at ensuring **intellectuals** adapted their ways of thinking to be aligned with CCP ideology. The party silenced artists and writers who did not conform. A notable example of this is the treatment of the writer Hu Feng in 1955. Hu Feng complained to the CCP’s Central Committee that Chinese literature was threatened by ‘five daggers’, which were:

- The CCP’s requirement that writers had to confine their subject matter to the lives of peasants and the working class
- The CCP was dictating the themes that writers focused on
- The CCP was dictating the forms of literature that could be published
- The CCP’s insistence that writers had to conform to CCP ideology
- The Thought Reform that the CCP obliged intellectuals to undergo.

Following Hu Feng’s letter to the Central Committee, an anonymous article (actually almost certainly written by Mao) appeared in the party’s newspaper, the *People’s Daily*, condemning Hu Feng. Other writers joined in the attack on Hu Feng who was subsequently imprisoned.

In the mid-1950s China’s intellectuals received mixed messages from the CCP. While Hu Feng’s treatment would have deterred them from airing new ideas or experimenting in new art or literary forms, in June 1955 Zhou En-lai summoned China’s leading scientists to a meeting in Beijing. At the meeting Zhou En-lai stressed that the party trusted intellectuals and that the vast majority of them would from now on be regarded as part of the working class (and, therefore, seen as positively contributing to the building of a socialist society and culture). Zhou announced that the party would welcome more intellectuals joining it; this led to a 50% increase in the number of **intellectuals** in the CCP in 1956.

The CCP went further in 1956–7 in trying to encourage China’s intellectuals in the form of the Hundred Flowers Campaign, which initially Mao tried unsuccessfully to launch in May 1956, with the announcement:

Let a hundred flowers bloom, a hundred schools of thought contend.

Cited in Blecher, 2010, p.44

Initially, intellectuals were cautious about responding to Mao’s appeal for them to speak out and criticise the failings of the CCP but in June 1957 they did so, following the publication in the *People’s Daily* of a speech that Mao had made earlier in February, entitled ‘On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People.’

Following a torrent of criticism by intellectuals that seems to have gone much further than Mao had intended, Mao closed down the Hundred Flowers campaign at the end of June, condemning those who had criticised the CCP as ‘poisonous weeds.’



CROSS-REFERENCE

For further coverage of the Hundred Flowers see 2.4.6.



KEY TERMS

Bourgeois individualism: Art that explored the individual’s emotions and thoughts.

Intellectuals: The CCP defined ‘intellectuals’ as those people who had received a high school or university education or who were academics, artists, or writers.

In the immediate run up to the Cultural Revolution in 1966, the struggle for power by different factions within the CCP leadership was to a considerable extent played out in the arena of culture and literature, with the arts being used for propaganda purposes. The publication of *Quotations from the Works of Chairman Mao* in May 1964 was intended initially by Lin Biao, the defence minister, and radical ally of Mao, as an instrument for ensuring that the soldiers of the PLA followed the correct ideological line—that is, Mao’s radical commitment to ongoing revolution as opposed to the more flexible approach taken by CCP leaders like Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping. This pocketbook, which was to become known as the ‘Little Red Book’, soon became required reading in China’s schools.

The political battle between the warring factions within the CCP came to the boil in 1965 over the play *Hai Rui Dismissed from Office*, which was written by Wu Han, a leading historian and playwright, as well as vice mayor of Beijing. The play was set in the Ming dynasty era but was in fact a thinly veiled attack on Mao’s treatment of Peng Dehuai at the Lushan Conference in 1959 when Peng, the then defence minister, had openly criticised Mao’s Great Leap Forward. In November 1965 a writer and radical ally of Jiang Qing, Yao Wenyuan, published an article in Shanghai attacking Wu Han. The Politburo put Peng Zhen, mayor of Beijing, and a moderate ally of Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping, in charge of a Five-Person Group to investigate the play. Peng’s group concluded in February 1966 that Wu Han should not be punished but needed to be reasoned with. Although the Politburo approved the Five-Person Group’s February Outline Report, Mao refused to add his approval. Instead, Mao turned to Lin Biao who asked Jiang Qing to convene ‘a forum on work in literature and art for the armed forces’ (cited in Lawrance, 1998, p. 69). This forum attacked the February Outline Report and demanded a ‘Great Socialist Cultural Revolution’ and, in March 1966, the CCP leadership replaced the Five-Person Group with the Cultural Revolution Group, which was dominated by Mao’s radical allies, including Jiang Qing, Yao Wenyuan, and Chen Boda—a senior CCP member in the Chinese Academy of Sciences. Following a struggle that began in May 1966 between Mao’s supporters and those of Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping, for control of Beijing University, the Cultural Revolution Group was to be Mao’s main vehicle for launching the Red Guard movement among China’s high school and university students.

During the Cultural Revolution, there was a wholesale assault on traditional Chinese culture and western cultural influences as part of Mao’s campaign against ‘the Four Olds’. In Beijing, Red Guards searched more than 100,000 houses, confiscating and destroying ‘reactionary materials’, such as Confucian books or art inspired by traditional Chinese themes or western influences. Many intellectuals were attacked and humiliated in public by the Red Guards; the well-known novelist Lao She committed suicide after being ‘struggled with’ by Red Guards. Buddhist temples were attacked.

During the Cultural Revolution, Jiang Qing assumed a central role in promoting revolutionary art that served the people rather than catered for the tastes of intellectuals; consequently, traditional Beijing opera was no longer performed and was replaced by revolutionary opera and ballet, such as *The Red Detachment of Women* and *Raid on White Tiger Regiment*. These new works depicted peasants, workers, and soldiers as model citizens and revolutionary heroes. Some of this new revolutionary output was adapted from older works, for example, the opera *White-Haired Girl*, which was based on the story of a peasant woman who was kidnapped and raped by a landlord during the Sino-Japanese War, but survived by hiding in a cave and being fed by local peasants. Although she survives, the heroine’s hair turns white from the trauma she endures. For the new version, Jiang Qing insisted that the peasants must be portrayed in a less passive light, so the peasant heroine is not raped, because she successfully resists the landlord. Art forms of all sorts were also used to promote the cult of Mao; large scale

CROSS-REFERENCE



See 2.4.8 on the Cultural Revolution for further coverage of *Quotations from the Works of Chairman Mao*.

statues of Mao were installed in public places, and posters were used extensively to convey the message that Mao was China's 'great helmsman'. Given the CCP's tight censorship and other repressive mechanisms, it is difficult to evaluate how far Mao and his radical allies in the CCP succeeded in changing the Chinese people's cultural outlook as a result of the Cultural Revolution. The enthusiasm with which many Chinese embraced Deng Xiaoping's more free market economics from the late 1970s onwards suggests that Mao failed to inculcate socialist values into the population at large or, if he had succeeded, that this success proved temporary and did not outlive him.

3.7 Religion

The PRC's 1954 constitution incorporated the principle of religious freedom, which was extended to Buddhists, Christians, Daoists, and Muslims. In practice, however, this freedom was limited as the CCP's ideology was atheistic and the CCP were suspicious of any rival belief systems which could potentially undermine loyalty to the communist authorities. With regards to China's small Christian communities, they were granted freedom to worship provided they accepted *The Three Selves*. Foreign Christian missionaries had been obliged to leave the PRC by the end of 1950. In 1954 the CCP set up the Religious Affairs Bureau (RAB) to monitor and supervise all religious activities in China. The RAB created national associations for Buddhists, Christians, Daoists, and Muslims to control their religious practices. Temples, mosques, and churches had to be registered with the RAB in order to be allowed to hold religious services and ceremonies. The extent to which the CCP allowed religious freedom in practice (as opposed to in theory) fluctuated markedly. In the periods 1949–56 and 1960–5, religious groups were able to worship without the threat of persecution, but, in periods when radical Maoist policies predominated—the late 1950s and, even more so, during the Cultural Revolution (1966–76)—the CCP promoted attacks on all forms of organised religion, which took the form of public criticism, arrests, and the destruction of temples, mosques, and monasteries, particularly in Tibet and Xinjiang.

3.8 Minorities

When the CCP came to power in 1949, they officially recognised 56 non-Han Chinese ethnic groups living in the PRC, including the Tibetans in the west and the Turkic-speaking Muslim people of Xinjiang in the north-west. Other ethnic minorities are the Tungus of Manchuria, Mongols, and Uighurs. In total, they constituted about 8% of China's population in 1950. In drawing up the constitution for the PRC in 1954, the CCP established a **unitary** state, rather than a **federal** system. The 1954 constitution created five autonomous regions: Tibet, Xinjiang, Ningxia, Guangxi, and Inner Mongolia.

Although the CCP showed some respect for local languages and customs, they replaced the traditional local elites with CCP officials whose attempts to impose socialist values on the ethnic minorities experienced considerable resistance by the Hui in Ningxia and Qinghai in the 1950s. There was armed revolt by Muslims in Gansu and Qinghai in 1958 which the PLA put down with considerable force. The Cultural Revolution



KEY TERMS

The Three Selves: Freedom from foreign finance, freedom from foreign influence, and, in relation to Roman Catholics, freedom from control by the Vatican.

Unitary: System of rule where a single government has authority over the whole country.

Federal: System of rule where there are different tiers of government, with the national government exercising authority over the whole country for certain matters (for example, defence) and then other bodies at a regional or state level exercising authority locally over matters such as education.

saw increased persecution of ethnic minorities who resisted attempts by Red Guards to eliminate non-communist traditions, customs, and beliefs. From the late 1970s, under Deng Xiaoping, the CCP allowed ethnic minorities greater cultural autonomy and provided money to help rebuild temples, monasteries, and mosques destroyed during the Cultural Revolution.

3.8.1 Tibet

The fiercest resistance that the CCP encountered from ethnic minorities was in Tibet, despite the CCP's expectation that the Tibetans would welcome liberation from the traditional **theocracy** that prevailed there under the leadership of the **Dalai Lama**. Tibet had been part of the Chinese Empire under the Qing dynasty until 1913, when it gained independence. When the GMD came to power in 1927, they claimed control over Tibet but were unable to achieve that in practice.

When the CCP came to power in 1949, there were 3 million people living in the 460,000 square miles that comprised Tibet. Tibet was and remains strategically important to the PRC as it borders both Russia and India. In 1950 the PLA occupied Tibet and the following year saw an agreement that allowed the Tibetans a large measure of autonomy. However, there was ongoing tension between the Chinese communist authorities and the Tibetan Buddhist leadership. In 1954 the Tibetans' spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, met with Mao in Beijing to try to negotiate an agreement which would allow the Tibetans greater autonomy. However, this meeting failed to prevent increasing unrest among Tibetans, which led to large-scale rebellion in Lhasa in 1959. The unrest was suppressed by the PLA and the Dalai Lama fled from Tibet into exile. This did not end unrest in Tibet as Tibetan guerrilla fighters kept up a continuous campaign against Chinese troops and officials in Tibet. During the 1960s, US intelligence services trained Tibetan exiles in a base at Colorado. The UN has passed several resolutions—for example, in 1959, 1961, and 1965—condemning the PRC's human rights record in Tibet and its persecution of Buddhists.

From 1959 onwards, the communist government in Beijing promoted increased Chinese migration to Tibet with a view to swamping the Tibetan population with Han Chinese (by the 1990s, the Han Chinese outnumbered the Tibetans by 1 million).

The Cultural Revolution saw Red Guards destroying Buddhist temples in Tibet in their attempt to eliminate old culture and beliefs.

KEY TERMS



Theocracy: A form of government where religious leaders rule a society.

Dalai Lama: The title for the spiritual head of Tibetan Buddhism. It means 'big master' in Tibetan/Mongolian.



4. AIMS AND RESULTS OF CCP ECONOMIC POLICIES UNDER MAO

TOPICS

The First Five-Year Plan
Agriculture
The Great Leap Forward
Mao retires to the Second Front
The impact of the Cultural Revolution on the economy
Economic growth under Mao

Overview

This chapter examines the CCP's economic policies in the period 1952–76. It should be noted that economic policy in the period 1949–52, in the shape of National Capitalism, is covered in Chapter 2.

The CCP moved the agricultural economy gradually towards a socialist model in the 1950s and moved the industrial sector more abruptly on to a socialist footing with the First Five-Year Plan in 1953.

Economic policy was broadly successful up to 1958 when Mao launched the Great Leap Forward, which ended in a disastrous famine and was abandoned by the end of 1960. Mao's aims and methods and the reasons for the Great Leap Forward are considered in detail.

The chapter moves on to examine the more pragmatic economic policies introduced by Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping which brought about economic recovery in the early to mid-1960s.

The disruptive impact of Mao's Cultural Revolution on the economy is analysed and an evaluation of economic policy up to 1976 is provided.



CROSS-REFERENCE

See also 2.2.3 on national capitalism (1949–52).

4.1 The First Five-Year Plan (1953–7)

The First Five-Year Plan brought to an end the National Capitalist phase and saw, by February 1956, the nationalisation of all private industries and businesses in China.

Given the backing that the GMD had received from the US, it is not surprising that Mao decided that the PRC must 'lean to one side' in international relations and look, despite receiving very little help from Stalin in the past, to the USSR for friendship (cited in Nakajima, 1987, p. 264). Furthermore, it was natural, given their lack of experience in industrial planning, for the CCP to turn to the USSR for advice and help in building a socialist economy. In February 1950 the PRC signed the Sino-Soviet Friendship Treaty. Under its terms, the USSR provided China with \$300 million in loans, repayable at low interest, and Russian technicians and economic advisors. 11,000 Soviet experts were working in China in the 1950s and 28,000 Chinese received training in the USSR.

China's First Five-Year Plan (1953–7) followed the Soviet model: planning was highly centralised and concentrated on heavy industry. Huge new industrial centres such as the Anshan steel complex, employing 35,000 workers, were built. Factory management changed from a more team-based approach to one-man management, as in Russian industry.



KEY ISSUES

What were the results of the First Five-Year Plan?

- **It completed the process of the nationalisation of industry.** On the eve of the Five-Year Plan, 20% of heavy industry and 60% of light industry had still been under private ownership.
- **It boosted urbanisation.** China's urban population increased from 57 million (1949) to 100 million (1957).
- **There were important infrastructure improvements.** For example, the construction of the Yangzi River Rail and Road Bridge linked north and south China.
- **Heavy industrial output nearly trebled and light industrial output rose by 70%.** Overall targets were exceeded by 20%. China's overall economic growth in the early-mid 1950s, measured in terms of **Gross Domestic Product (GDP)**, averaged 8.9% a year, compared to India's figure of less than 2% a year growth in GDP.
- **The \$300 million lent by the USSR represented only 3% of total investment.** The Chinese government, therefore, had to raise the money to fund the plan from its own population. Consequently, agriculture was squeezed to pay for heavy industrial expansion; the state set the price it paid the peasants for grain low, to produce a large profit which could be invested in industry.
- **The CCP were much more successful in raising tax revenue than the GMD had been.** This is an important reason for the success of the Five-Year Plan. GMD tax revenue in the 1930s equated to only 5–7% of GDP; whereas by 1952, the PRC was raising taxation equivalent to 24% of GDP.
- **Agricultural investment was low, as 90% of state investment was in industry.** This is one reason for the relatively slow growth in agricultural output: just 3.8% on average each year.



KEY TERMS

Gross Domestic Product (GDP): The value of a country's economic output and financial services.

4.2 The Socialisation of Agriculture

Aware of the disasters that had accompanied Stalin's collectivisation of agriculture in the USSR in the 1930s, and drawing on their considerable experience of working with the peasants, the CCP adopted a gradualist approach to introducing socialism into the countryside. The CCP leadership was convinced that collectivisation was essential for increasing agricultural efficiency, as well as for fulfilling their ideological aims. However, from the early 1950s onwards, the CCP leadership quarrelled over the pace at which the PRC moved towards full collectivisation.

After the 1950 Land Reform, the CCP encouraged peasants to pool their equipment and animals at certain times of the year, whilst retaining private ownership of land and other resources. This was acceptable to the peasants and, by 1953, 40% of peasant households belonged to mutual-aid teams. Starting properly in 1954, the CCP began to organise peasants, in some areas, into Agricultural Producers' Co-operatives (APCs). In these larger units, land was pooled but private ownership was still retained and the peasants were rewarded for what they contributed to the co-operatives in terms of land, equipment and labour. Rich peasants were not allowed to join these Lower Level APCs.

Between 1953 and 1956 the CCP's policy towards co-operatives oscillated wildly; for example, in 1953 Mao condemned the speed of change (which he dubbed 'Rash Advance') but then criticised the resulting fall-off in the number of co-operatives (dubbed 'Rash Retreat').

In 1955 Liu Shaoqi advocated a slower, more cautious approach but Mao won over the party leadership to his policy of rapid collectivisation. By 1956, 80% of rural households were in co-operatives. Encouraged by this success, Mao ordered the transition to bigger, Higher Level Agricultural Producers' Co-operatives in which land was collectively owned. This was a radical step because all peasants now worked for wages, regardless of their input of land or equipment. Within a year, nearly 90% of peasants were incorporated into Higher Level APCs.

- Through collectivisation, the CCP achieved far greater control over the countryside than any previous Chinese regime.
- From 1953 the state became the sole buyer and seller of grain and peasants were obliged to sell fixed quotas of grain to the state, with the remaining grain shared out among the peasants. This removed from the peasants their ability to influence price levels, because they no longer determined how much grain they marketed.
- The gradual introduction of collectivisation in China meant that it was achieved much more peacefully than had been the case in Russia. The differences in wealth between the peasants in the early 1950s was relatively small so that most peasants did not feel they would lose out by pooling their resources.
- Collectivisation was achieved without major disruption to the rural economy and the year 1957 saw a 5% increase in agricultural output.

KEY VIEWPOINT

John King Fairbank described collectivisation as: 'a modern serfdom under party control' (2006, p. 353).



KEY HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

Collectivisation

Historians disagree about the extent of resistance to collectivisation. Marc Blecher (2010) suggests that resistance was limited to rich peasants who were unhappy about their share of the co-operatives' income, which resulted in them slaughtering their livestock. However, Philip Short (1999), argues that it was serious peasant rioting in 1954 that led Mao, in January 1955, to call a temporary halt to the process.

Table 4.1: The reform of China's agriculture in the 1950s

YEAR	AGRICULTURAL UNITS	NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS PER UNIT	ORGANISATION
1950	Mutual-Aid Teams	5–10	Equipment and animals pooled at harvest time but private ownership retained
1954	Lower Level APCs	30–50	Pooling of land but share of profits partly based on how much land/equipment contributed
1956	Higher Level APCs	200–300	Land collectively owned; small allotments permitted
1958	Communes	5,000	Land collectively owned, not even small private plots/allotments permitted

4.3 The Great Leap Forward (1958)

It is clear that Mao had growing reservations about the Soviet-style First Five-Year Plan right from its inception in 1953. As early as December 1953, the arrest of the top party leader, Gao Gang, was probably, in part, motivated by Mao's misgivings about being too closely tied to the USSR, because Gao, the CCP boss in Manchuria, was a strong advocate of Soviet-style industrialisation.

In May 1956 Mao delivered an important speech, known as *On the Ten Great Relationships*, in which he outlined a set of economic priorities which were fundamentally at odds with the Five-Year Plan and which the Great Leap Forward would be based on when it was launched in 1958. He emphasised the need to decentralise economic planning, develop labour-intensive projects, and focus on the use of moral incentives instead of material ones.

In October 1957 Mao persuaded the Central Committee to cancel a Second Five-Year Plan, due to be implemented in 1958, and, instead adopt a radical new plan with very ambitious targets, which would abandon the Soviet model. This became known as the Great Leap Forward.



KEY ISSUES

Why did Mao abandon Soviet-style economic planning and adopt the Great Leap Forward?

1. **Under the Five-Year Plan, with its emphasis on heavy industry, light industry and agriculture had been neglected.** Instead, Mao wanted China to 'walk on two legs': to simultaneously develop agriculture and industry (cited in Schram, 1987, p. 187).
2. **Since 1956 material incentives in the form of pay differentials for skilled and unskilled workers had reappeared.** This clashed with the Marxist idea of rewarding each according to his needs and worried Mao.
3. **The Five-Year Plan focused on capital-intensive projects but the PRC was short of capital to invest in industry.** In particular, agricultural productivity was rising only slowly.
4. **Mao was keen to change the nature of China's economic planning and development.** This was because the First Five-Year Plan was Russian in inspiration and direction, and Mao wanted to assert China's independence and do things his own way.
5. **By 1957 Mao was impatient to accelerate the speed of economic growth.** The rapid collectivisation of agriculture in 1956–7 encouraged Mao to believe that willpower and mobilisation of the masses could deliver huge advances in industry and agriculture. In October 1957 Mao spoke of quadrupling steel output to 20



**KEY ISSUES** *(continued)*

million tons a year, and, in November, whilst attending a Communist Conference in Moscow, he predicted that China would overtake Britain in industrial production by 1972.

6. **Mao was worried that the CCP might be losing its revolutionary spirit and that CCP and government officials were becoming a self-interested elite.** He aimed to reduce the influence of the central planning ministries in Beijing and increase the influence of provincial CCP agencies. As importantly, Mao wanted to revive the 'Yanan spirit' and mobilise both the Party and the masses to create a modern, socialist economy.

4.3.1 Launch

Mao undertook a tour of China in January–April 1958 and returned to Beijing, fired with enthusiasm for a Great Leap Forward. In particular, he had been encouraged by massive irrigation schemes, involving 100 million peasants digging dykes and channels to provide water for almost 20 million acres of farmland. This had been achieved by combining the labour of many co-operatives. Mao decided that this was the way to transform the Chinese economy, by focusing on labour-intensive projects and so, in August 1958, he called for the amalgamation of the co-operatives into much larger units: the communes. The term 'commune' was coined in memory of the revolutionary **Paris Commune** of 1871, as providing an example of popular, collective action. The first Commune had been set up in April 1958 in Henan province by radical, local cadres and Mao seized on this as the answer to his search for a way to accelerate economic and socialist progress.

4.3.2 Results**The communes**

The 26,000 communes that were set up in 1958 were gigantic units, containing an average of 5,000 households each. Mao believed that such large-scale organisation would mean a significant surplus of labour available for large projects such as land reclamation, irrigation, or industrial production. Canteens and crèches were set up in order to free up women for agricultural and industrial work. By 1959 70% of children were in nurseries.

However, the communes were not just agricultural enterprises but were also responsible for industry, education, and defence. In terms of defence, Mao planned to use the communes to set up a people's militia; he was concerned about security at this stage because of the international tension over Quemoy and Matsu, Nationalist-held islands off Taiwan, which the PRC bombarded in 1958.

The CCP leaders were aiming to develop industry in the countryside as well as in the towns. Under the 'backyard furnace' policy, the communes were instructed to set up blast furnaces in the countryside. In 1958 the government set a target for steel production to double to 10.7 million tons a year by 1959 and to rise to 60 million tons by 1960.

KEY TERMS

Paris Commune: Following France's defeat by Prussia in 1871, the workers of Paris temporarily took control of France's capital

and established a collective, workers' government.

The towns under the Great Leap Forward

There were attempts to set up communes in the towns, so that they encompassed agricultural production as well as industry. However, a lack of space and time in the case of factory workers meant that few were established. Nonetheless, industry underwent major changes as planning and management became more decentralised. Within individual factories, decision-making power was transferred from a single manager to collective management, including worker representatives.

Mao and the more radical elements of the CCP leadership saw the Great Leap not just in economic terms but also in cultural and political terms. They intended the communes to break down the distinction between peasant and worker, town and countryside and transform the outlook of the people so that they put aside narrow loyalties to their families and villages and instead thought in terms of the good of the Party and the country. The announcement below, from a CCP declaration of August 1958, makes that clear:

In the present circumstances, the establishment of people's communes with all-round management of agriculture, forestry, animal husbandry, side occupations, and fishery, where industry (the worker), agriculture (the peasant), exchange (the trader), culture and education (the student), and military affairs (the militiaman) merge into one, is the fundamental policy to guide the peasants, to accelerate socialist construction, complete the building of socialism ahead of time, and carry out the gradual transition to communism.

Industry

- Overall, China's gross domestic income increased by 8% in 1958 but fell by 30% in 1960.
- 600,000 backyard furnaces were built in 1958 and, initially, steel production more or less reached the target laid down by the government. However, the steel produced by the backyard furnaces was of such poor quality that most of it could not be used. The programme was therefore abandoned in 1959. The government had not taken into account factors such as the availability of coal, iron ore, and transport.
- In spite of the failure of the backyard furnace scheme, the Great Leap Forward marked the beginning of rural industrialisation, which became a very important feature of China's economy in the long term. The communes had considerable success in manufacturing agricultural tools, the production of chemical fertilisers and in uranium mining, which helped accelerate China's atomic programme.
- The communes also contributed to large-scale irrigation and hydroelectric projects. This model of labour-intensive development was to have considerable appeal to other developing countries.

Agriculture

The impact of the Great Leap was much more disastrous on the countryside than on industry:

- The 1958 harvest was good: 200 million tons of grain. However, the government published the inflated figure of 260 million tons and set wildly unrealistic targets for 1959.
- The 1959 and 1960 harvests were poor: only 170 million tons and 144 million tons respectively.
- China experienced a catastrophic famine: the death rate rose steeply in 1959 (from 1.08% to 1.46% of the population) and then hugely in 1960 (to 2.54% of

the population). The mortality rate remained high in 1961 (1.7%). 1959–61 are known as the ‘Three Bitter Years’, when it is possible that over 20 million people died in the famine.

YEAR	GRAIN OUTPUT (MILLION TONS)
1957	196
1958	200
1959	170
1960	144

Table 4.2: Grain production: 1957–60 (based on research by a number of western academics)

YEAR	DEATHS (MILLIONS)
1957	7
1959	9.6
1960	17
1961	11

Table 4.3: Figures for deaths in the Chinese population: 1957–61 (based on research by a number of western academics)



KEY ISSUES

Why did the Great Leap Forward fail so disastrously?

- **CCP officials were unable to deal with the huge challenges posed by the Great Leap.** In particular, local cadres were totally unprepared for managing the vast size of the communes. The Great Leap was launched in 1958 with very little prior planning.
- **Mass mobilisation.** The intensive use of labour could not, contrary to Mao’s philosophy, compensate for the lack of capital investment in technologically advanced processes such as steel production, hence the failure of the ‘backyard furnace’ programme.
- **In 1960 the Sino-Soviet split occurred.** Khrushchev, the Soviet leader, abruptly withdrew thousands of soviet advisers from China who were helping the Chinese on industrial projects. This, in part, explains the slump in industrial production in 1960–1.
- **Flawed agricultural reforms, derived from the ideas of the Russian agronomist, Trofim Lysenko, were imposed on the peasants.** These included close planting, deep ploughing, and a campaign against the ‘Four Pests’ (rats, sparrows, flies and mosquitoes). The sparrow population was all but wiped out, which allowed an explosion of caterpillars, which devastated crops.
- **Grain production fell partly because peasants were heavily involved in industrial projects and land reclamation.** After the initial enthusiasm of 1958 wore off, many became exhausted by the demands being made of them. In the autumn of 1958, about 90 million people temporarily abandoned their normal occupations to get involved in steel production.
- **The withdrawal of material incentives contributed to falling levels of agricultural and industrial output.** The peasants seem to have disliked the huge size of the communes and the regimented lifestyle and resented the loss of their private plots. In industry, the ending of higher wages for skilled workers and demands for greater output, demotivated factory workers.
- **China suffered abnormally bad weather in 1959–61, leading to severe drought in the north-east and flooding in the south.** 60% of China’s arable land was affected.
- Although the harvests were poor in 1959–60, they were not so disastrous that a famine should have ensued. Famine was more the product of **the CCP’s refusal to**

CROSS-REFERENCE



For further coverage on Trofim Lysenko see the ‘Who’s Who in China’ section.



KEY ISSUES (continued)

admit to failure. Officials at both local and national level claimed a record harvest in 1959 of supposedly 282 million tons and so the state took 28% of the peasants' grain, as opposed to just 17% in 1957.

- **Most of the blame for this failure by officials to report honestly must be laid at Mao's door.** He had, by 1958, particularly as a result of the repression carried out during the Anti-Rightist Campaign of 1957, created a climate of fear in which almost no-one, even within the circle of top CCP leaders, dared criticise his policies.
- **Early in 1959, Mao had begun to accept that there were serious problems with the Great Leap and had agreed to reduce some of its most extravagant targets, but he reacted very badly to criticism made by his old comrade, Marshal Peng Dehuai, in July 1959, at a Central Committee meeting at Lushan.** Mao even threatened to engage in civil war if the Party did not back him, so the rest of the CCP leadership closed ranks behind Mao. Peng was dismissed as defence minister. Disastrously, Mao reaffirmed his faith in the Great Leap, talking of China producing 1,000 million tons of grain and 650 million tons of steel by the end of the twentieth century. So, the Great Leap Forward was continued until late 1960 and the famine therefore intensified.

4.3.3 Termination (1961)

By the end of 1960, China was in a state of crisis, suffering its worst ever famine. In some provinces, such as Sichuan and Anhui, a quarter of the population starved to death. Armed rebellion by desperate peasants broke out in four western provinces, and in Tibet the PLA had to be deployed to restore order. In the face of this, the CCP turned to Liu Shaoqi, PRC chairman, and Deng Xiaoping, CCP general secretary, to restore the economy and grain supplies. The Great Leap was quietly abandoned under the direction of Liu and Deng.

In 1962 Liu received a report on conditions in Hunan province and commented that the disasters of the Great Leap Forward were 70% down to human error and only 30% down to natural causes (drought, famine). Liu and Deng (the Pragmatists) emphasised the need to pursue economic policies that worked, rather than placing strict adherence to communist principles above all else.

In 1962 Deng famously quoted an old Sichuanese saying:

It doesn't matter if the cat is black or white; so long as it catches the mouse, it is a good cat.

4.3.4 Liu and Deng's Changes to Economic Policy (1961–5)

- By 1962 the CCP had reverted to highly centralised economic planning, returning power to the state planning officials in the central bureaucracy.
- 25 million unemployed urban workers were forced to move back to the countryside.
- Material incentives, including wage differentials for skilled and unskilled workers, were reintroduced.
- Private plots and markets were encouraged in the countryside, although most arable land remained under the control of the communes. By late 1961, CCP cadres in some provinces were introducing 'household responsibility' schemes whereby individual families contracted to farm land on their own.

- China imported huge amounts of grain from Australia and Canada throughout the 1960s. In 1961, 6 million tons were imported.
- In 1961 the communes were subdivided, reducing them in size by as much as two-thirds. The much smaller unit, the 'production team', became the principal unit of rural organisation and comprised just one village. This marked a major retreat from the radical collectivisation of the late 1950s.

Grain output rose steadily in the mid-1960s by around 5% a year, but it took five years for agricultural production to recover fully from the damage inflicted by the Great Leap. Industrial output revived much more quickly and, aided by the discovery of huge oil and gas-fields in Daqing, it doubled between 1961 and 1965.

4.4 Mao Retires to the Second Front

It appears that, since the early 1950s, Mao had been planning to step back from the day-to-day running of the government and Party and, as he put it, retire to the 'Second Front', where he would concentrate on strategic thinking and planning, leaving younger colleagues to take over the reins. In accordance with this, Mao gave up his position as PRC chairman in 1959. This came before the CCP officially declared the Great Leap to have failed. But, because of the disasters of the GLF, Mao was forced further into the political background than he had anticipated, treated in his words as a 'dead ancestor' (respected but not consulted). However, historians disagree about the extent to which Mao's influence was limited in the early 1960s. Philip Short (1999) argues that, even in 1961–2, Liu and Deng were considerably constrained in what they did by a need to maintain Mao's approval for their policies.

The CCP leadership divides over economic policy (1962–5)

- From 1962 serious divisions emerged between radical communists (particularly Mao himself) and the pragmatists or modernisers who supported Liu and Deng's more ideologically flexible economic policies.
- Mao became alarmed about the direction of Deng and Liu's economic reforms. Up until 1962, Mao seems to have continued to regard Liu Shaoqi as his most likely successor. However, in January 1962, Mao began to have serious doubts about Liu after the latter had, at the '**7,000 Cadre Conference**', openly supported the 'household responsibility' system which CCP officials had experimented with in some areas. Mao saw this system as tantamount to abandoning socialism and he was horrified to see it extended so that by the summer of 1962, 15–20% of arable land was being farmed individually.
- From 1962 onwards, therefore, Mao sought to restore his influence over the CCP. He was desperate to prevent the Party becoming, in his eyes, increasingly '**revisionist**' and going further down the 'capitalist road'.

KEY EVENT

7,000 Cadre Conference:

A meeting of 7,000 representatives of the CCP in January–February 1962, held to consider the policies that were required to ensure economic recovery after the Great Leap Forward.

4.5 The Impact of the Cultural Revolution on China's Economy

The economy was not severely damaged by the Cultural Revolution, although industrial production fell in 1966–7 by between 15–20% as a result of the turmoil in China's cities. By 1969 industrial output had risen to above the level of 1966 and China's GDP

KEY TERMS

Revisionist: Deviating from orthodox Marxist-Maoist ideology.

continued to grow in the years up to Mao's death in 1976 at an average of nearly 6% a year. However, much of the state's investment in 1964–72 was in the '**Third Front**', military-industrial developments in North West and South West China and this proved to be a waste of resources.

Agriculture was less disrupted than industry by the Cultural Revolution but production only continued to develop modestly at around 3% a year in the late 1960s and early 1970s. As the population increased at 2% a year in the same period, there was no rise in rural living standards. During the Cultural Revolution, Mao reduced the amount of arable land that was farmed by private households. Under Liu and Deng in the early 1960s, around 15–20% of China's total arable land was farmed by private households; in Mao's last decade, this fell to just 5%.

4.6 China's Economic Growth under Mao Zedong

- There was limited progress in agriculture, with an average annual increase in grain production in the period 1957–78 of just 2%. To put that into context, China's population roughly doubled in the period 1949–80.
- China's foreign trade hardly increased at all between 1959 and 1970.
- China's **Gross National Product (GNP)** increased by an annual average of 5% under Mao; by contrast, it grew by 9% under Deng Xiaoping in the period 1979–90.

China took off as a modern, industrial power only in the 1980s and 1990s as a result of Deng Xiaoping's reforms; Deng introduced elements of capitalism and the free market and encouraged foreign investment and trade with the West.

This guide's primary focus is on the emergence and rule of Mao's authoritarian state in China but, in the section that follows, it also provides an overview of Deng Xiaoping's economic reforms, which took China in a fundamentally different direction from the path steered by Mao Zedong. In order to put Mao's economic policies into perspective, it is important to have some understanding of the way in which Mao's economic policies were abandoned by Deng, with the result that China's economy enjoyed much greater growth rates than under Mao. Politically, Deng largely continued the policies pursued by Mao, retaining a highly authoritarian and repressive one-party system, so I have not added a section on that aspect of Deng's rule.

After Mao's death, Deng Xiaoping began to increasingly take China down what Mao would have viewed as the 'capitalist road'. On the other hand, Deng maintained the CCP's one-party system and politically the PRC remained highly authoritarian. So, under Deng, economic policy went in a radically different direction from that of Mao but politically there was continuity between the Dengist and Maoist periods. However, Deng did not favour Mao's use of mass movements to promote continuous revolution, so, under him, there were no CCP sponsored movements like the Cultural Revolution.



KEY TERMS

Third Front: In the period 1964–72, the CCP invested in large-scale industrial centres in remote, western parts of China (which became known as the 'Third Front'), so that, in the event of a nuclear strike by the USSR or the US against China's more developed industrial regions in the east, China would retain substantial industrial capacity.

Gross National Product (GNP): Total value of goods and services produced by a country.



KEY ISSUES

What were the Four Modernisations of 1977?

- Agriculture
- Industry
- National Defence
- Science and Technology.

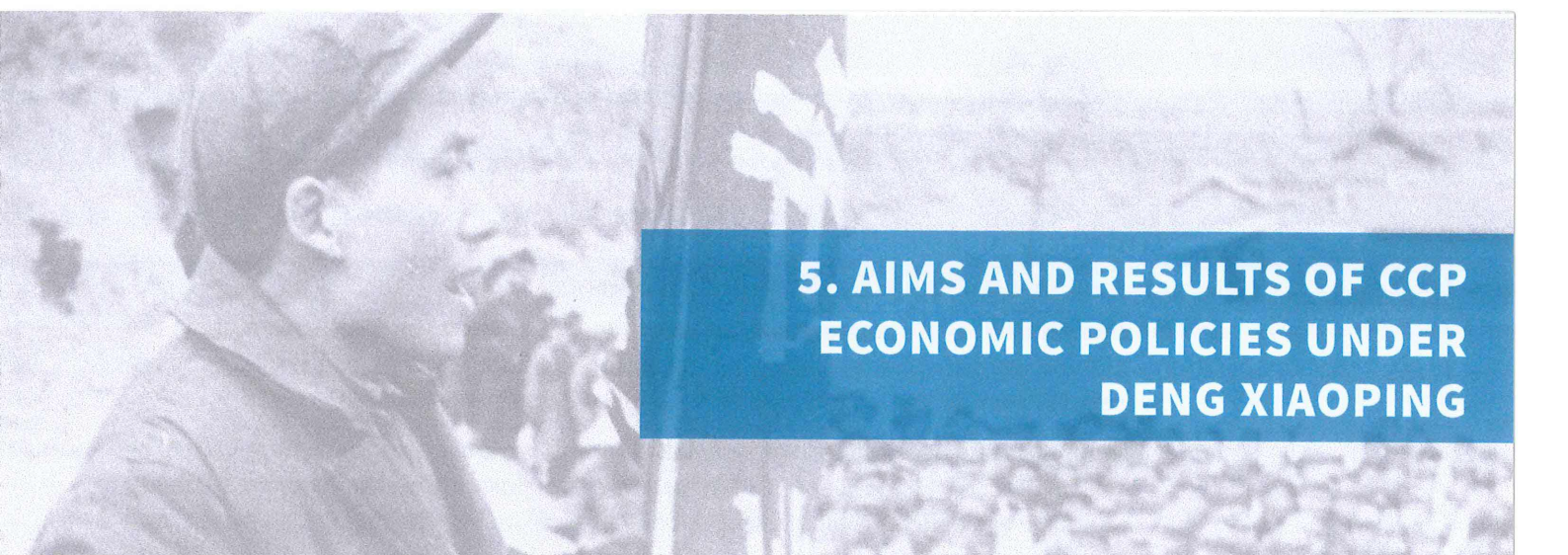
The Four Modernisations constituted a programme of modernisation first put forward by Zhou Enlai back in 1964. Zhou revived the slogan in January 1975 at the Fourth National People's Congress. Zhou envisaged encouraging foreign technology and investment. This was bitterly criticised by the more radical party leaders in the mid-1970s.

By August 1977, however, the radicals were much less influential following the arrest of the Gang of Four and the rehabilitation of Deng Xiaoping. In that month, the party officially committed itself to the Four Modernisations, with the aim of catching up with the industrialised West by the year 2000. Deng was to take this programme forward with tremendous success in the period 1978–97.

the 1950s, the Chinese government had to deal with the threat of a new foreign invasion from the north. The Soviet Union, which had been a close ally of China since the 1940s, had recently broken off diplomatic relations with China and had withdrawn its troops from Manchuria. This left China vulnerable to a potential invasion by the Soviet Union, which was now a member of the Warsaw Pact.

In response to this threat, the Chinese government launched a massive military buildup in the 1950s. This included the development of a nuclear weapons program, which was completed in 1964. The Chinese government also increased its military spending and expanded its military forces. This was done in order to deter a potential Soviet invasion and to ensure the security of the Chinese mainland.

The Chinese government's military buildup in the 1950s was a direct result of the Sino-Soviet split. The Soviet Union's withdrawal from Manchuria and its new alliance with the United States had left China in a vulnerable position. The Chinese government had to take steps to ensure its own security, and this led to the development of a nuclear weapons program and a massive military buildup. This was a key factor in the Chinese government's decision to launch the Great Leap Forward in 1958, which was a major economic and social experiment that ultimately failed.



5. AIMS AND RESULTS OF CCP ECONOMIC POLICIES UNDER DENG XIAOPING

TOPICS

Agriculture

Industry

Special economic zones

Growth of foreign trade

Overview

This chapter is provided partly as a postscript to the study of the CCP under Mao, but also to shed more light on the question of how successful Mao was in the long term in creating a new socialist economic order.

Deng Xiaoping dominated the CCP's economic decision-making from the late 1970s until 1997 and moved China, first slowly, and then increasingly rapidly, away from the socialist economic principles and structures laid down by Mao.

The chapter outlines Deng's key free market reforms in agriculture, industry, and foreign trade, which transformed China into a major world economic power and opened up its relations with the rest of the world.

Mao's socialist economic policies were all but abandoned, although the one party political system created by Mao was maintained by Deng.

5.1 Deng Xiaoping's Economic Policies

From the late 1970s, through to his death in 1997, Deng was the dominant figure in the CCP. He was a moderniser, seeking greater trade with the US and Japan and introducing reforms such as increased financial incentives and decentralisation.

Deng Xiaoping began to increasingly take China down what Mao would have viewed as the 'capitalist road'. However, as Edwin Moise explains, this was not 'in a neat, orderly fashion, with policies clearly defined in directives from Beijing. Instead, provincial and local leaders were encouraged to experiment freely, and the successful experiments became models for national emulation.' (Moise, 2008, p. 214)

The underlying theme in both agricultural and industrial reform was the transfer of power and responsibility away from central government to the localities and to individuals.

5.1.1 Agriculture

Economic reform started with agriculture. Until 1978 Chinese agriculture continued to be based on collectivisation, which had been introduced in the mid to late 1950s. Peasants were only permitted ownership of very small private plots on which to grow fruit and vegetables; the bulk of the land was under public ownership. However, under this system of collectivised agricultural production rose only modestly, averaging 3.1% p.a. in the period 1966–78.

Dazhai discredited

Furthermore, shortly after Mao's death the collective model was discredited by revelations that the most famous example of successful collectivised agriculture, the Dazhai Production Brigade, had been a fraud. Dazhai was in northern China, near to the border with Hebei province, and from the mid-1960s it achieved celebrity status as, under the local party leader, Chen Yonggui, it allegedly produced record harvests. Mao put this down to the Dazhai Brigade's emphasis on revolutionary enthusiasm, massive mobilisation of manpower for irrigation projects, and commitment to collective endeavour. Mao urged peasants across China to 'learn from Dazhai' and Chen Yonggui was eventually promoted to the Politburo in 1973.

Not long after Mao died, it was revealed that the Dazhai Brigade's achievements were not based on their own efforts, but on a huge amount of state investment and the use of military personnel for large-scale projects. The *People's Daily* exposed this in 1980.

In the late 1970s Deng launched two reforms which would lead to a marked increase in agricultural productivity: the extension of private plots and the introduction of the household responsibility system.

1. The extension of private plots

From 1979 the peasants were encouraged to maximise the use of their private plots. In the early 1980s the peasants' private plots were expanded so that they amounted to 15% of the total arable land in China. By 1982 the income from these private plots made up nearly 40% of peasant families' total income.

2. The introduction of the household responsibility system

Begun in 1978, but extended throughout China in 1981, the 'household responsibility system' was introduced. This system had been tried in parts of China in the early 1960s, but Mao had prevented its extension and he had insisted on the retention of collectivised agriculture.



KEY ISSUES

How did the 'household responsibility system' work?

Each peasant household:

- could farm its own land, although, their land would still technically be part of the collective farms
- could take responsibility for producing an agreed amount of grain which the state was obliged to buy
- was allowed to sell any surplus above this quota on the open market.

In 1982 a new constitution replaced the 55,000 communes with 96,000 township governments. The following year, the *People's Daily* announced that 'the people's commune in the old sense no longer exists' (cited in Luo, 2005, p. 463). By 1983, most peasant households had changed to the household responsibility system. By 1986 nearly 20% of total agricultural output was sold directly by peasants on the open market.

- Initially responsibility contracts were for just one year.
- In 1984 peasants were permitted to contract out land for up to 15 years.
- In 1987 this was extended to 50 years and land could be transferred to family members instead of returning to the production team. This meant in effect land could be 'inherited'.

Symbolising this change in official attitudes to private enterprise, the slogan, 'To Get Rich Is Glorious', appeared and peasant families that prospered under the responsibility system came to be known as 'ten thousand yuan' households.

By the late 1970s the CCP had recognised that collectivisation would not allow the development of a modern, efficient agriculture. Therefore, incentives and greater autonomy for the peasants had to be provided. 1978–84 saw a rapid rise in agricultural output, with a record grain harvest of more than 400 million tonnes in 1984.

The expansion of rural industries

The household responsibility system also led to the expansion of rural businesses and industries. Peasant families began to branch out in to providing services and establishing light industries. These new private businesses became larger, with peasants coming together to establish rural enterprises. By 1987 over 50% of the rural economy in China was made up of non-agricultural activities.

Agricultural problems persist

This picture of sustained growth in agriculture, however, must be qualified by pointing out that the peasants enjoyed less favourable conditions in the mid-1980s when the state cut the price it paid for grain purchases and the cost of fertilisers rose steeply. Furthermore, agricultural reforms did not address China's basic shortage of arable land, which was compounded by the rising population and the demands on land for industrial and residential purposes.

KEY FACT



In the mid-1990s, China had 22% of the world's population but only 7% of the world's arable land.

KEY TERMS



People's Daily: Daily newspaper founded by the CCP in 1948; it is the CCP's official newspaper and so its content is tightly

controlled by the party's leadership.

**CROSS-REFERENCE**

For further coverage on Hua Guofeng see the 'Who's Who in China' section.

5.1.2 Industry

Up until the 1980s, there was no fundamental movement away from centralised planning and state control of industry. Up until Deng's reforms, prices were fixed by the state and on the whole workers were guaranteed a job for life. Under Hua Guofeng, a Ten-Year Plan had been started which concentrated largely on heavy industry and set unrealistically high production targets. However, from the late 1970s, major reforms were initiated.

5.1.3 The Special Economic Zones (SEZ): China Looks to Foreign Investment

Deng Xiaoping abandoned Mao Zedong's policy of national economic self-sufficiency and distrust of foreigners. In 1979 a law on joint ventures was passed, permitting foreign investment in Chinese businesses. In the same year, in order to draw in foreign capital, four SEZs were set up at:

- Shenzhen, just north of Hong Kong (Xianggang)
- Zhuhai, just north of Macao (Aomen)
- Xiamen
- Shantou.

**KEY ISSUES**

Why did China establish SEZs?

- China desperately needed an influx of western technology and investment.
- The SEZs were seen as an opportunity to show that capitalist enterprises could prosper within the PRC and thereby facilitate the return of Hong Kong (and possibly of Taiwan too) to the PRC. Three of the four zones were near Hong Kong, whilst the fourth was opposite Taiwan. By 1989 Hong Kong businesses employed more people in the PRC than in Hong Kong.

Tax concessions and low labour costs proved very attractive to foreign companies. By 1984, 14 coastal cities were designated as places where fully foreign owned businesses could be established. These measures massively increased foreign investment in China and China's foreign trade.

5.1.4 The Growth of China's Foreign Trade

- China signed trade agreements with both the US and Japan in 1978. In the period 1979–83, Japan lent China a total of \$1.5 billion. In 1979 China established full diplomatic relations with the US, following the US's cancellation of its Defence Treaty with Taiwan, and Deng visited the US.
- China joined the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank in 1980. This marked an increasing integration of China within the international community, as foreign trade became pivotal to China's modernization.
- In the period 1978–93, China's foreign trade grew from \$20 billion to just under \$200 billion.

In 1992 Deng visited Guangdong province, which was at the heart of this expansion, and predicted that Guangdong's economic importance would mean that in time it would become the 'fifth little dragon' alongside the 'four little dragons' as the economic powerhouses of Xianggang (Hong Kong), Singapore, Taiwan, and South Korea were known.



KEY ISSUES

What reforms occurred in the industrial sector?

1. **Greater emphasis was placed on the production of consumer goods in order to provide incentives for workers and peasants.** One statistic will serve to illustrate the rapid expansion in consumer products; in the 1970s, only 3,000 televisions were made annually, whereas by 1990, over 90% of all urban households had a television.
2. **From 1978 state enterprises were permitted to keep hold of part of their profits and distribute them among their workforces to provide incentives.** In 1981 the government gave urban workers a measure of freedom in choosing where they worked; previously the government allocated workers to jobs.
3. **In 1984 state control over industry was reduced, for example, the fixing of prices by the state was partially ended.** It was retained for some goods but market forces were allowed to determine the price of shortage goods. This did lead to significant inflation.
4. **From the mid-1980s managers were given more freedom to set wages and in the hiring and sacking of workers.** This undermined the principle of the 'iron rice bowl', the guarantee of permanent employment for workers in state-owned industries.
5. **In the mid- to late-1980s, the urban economy grew at a faster rate than agriculture.** The Chinese government allowed private enterprises to be set up from the 1980s; by 1986, there were more than 12 million in China.

Scott Morton and Charlton M. Lewis (2004) point out that, although the proportion of urban enterprises that were state-owned declined markedly, from nearly 80% in 1978 to just over 40% by 1996 (and to just 24% by 2001), this was in contrast to the USSR where Gorbachev allowed state enterprises to be wound up much more quickly and where the result was to fatally destabilise the Soviet economy. In China the CCP's approach was more cautious but nonetheless economic growth and change were rapid: in the period 1980–93, China's GNP increased by an average of 9.6% p.a.

By 1994 China was the world's fourth largest aggregate economy. However, this progress was achieved at a cost as social problems intensified as a result of this economic growth.



KEY ISSUES

In what ways did economic modernisation destabilise China?

1. **There was increasing social inequality.** In the towns, there was much discontent among state employees such as teachers and workers in state-owned factories because they were living on fixed incomes at a time of inflation and when the incomes of people employed in private businesses were rising.
2. **There was rising unemployment.** By the late 1980s, workers in state industries were losing their jobs in significant numbers; 400,000 were made unemployed in Shenyang province in 1988 alone. Unemployment levels also rose because of an influx of migrant workers from the countryside into the cities.
3. **There was an upsurge in the number of strikes in the late 1980s.** For example, there were 129 in 1987.
4. **Inflation was running at 26% in 1988.**

REVISION AND ESSAY-WRITING ACTIVITIES: THE EMERGENCE AND RULE OF THE AUTHORITARIAN STATE IN CHINA UNDER MAO

Below you will find two essay questions that cover most of the issues that I have dealt with in this revision guide. By examining these questions, you will be able to test your understanding and recall of that material, as well as gain insights into how to construct responses to IB essay questions. In the first sample essay, I have given you some ideas about how the essay could be tackled and then provided you with space to add examples and further points. The second is a very good answer to the question about Mao's maintenance of power but could perhaps be improved further with a bit more in the way of differing perspectives. I have left you space at the end to add in your own points.

1. To what extent were the social and economic policies of one ruler of an authoritarian state that you have studied successful?

In answering this question, it is first necessary to point out that, although he dominated the CCP, there were times when Mao's influence on CCP policy was less complete, for example, in the aftermath of the Great Leap Forward when Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping led China's economic recovery. Next it is necessary to identify what Mao's aims were. On the next page I have started by examining, briefly, some of the differing historical interpretations surrounding his social and economic aims and then listed what his main aims were. Following this, I have created a detailed plan, which evaluates Mao's success in certain areas of policy. I have also indicated other aims that would merit assessment in this essay, and I have left space for you to provide your own points and examples/evidence you might use in answering this question.

Your own/additional points:

2. To make China into a modern economic power?

Though progress was made in 1953–7 and 1961–5, China was not a major world economic power by Mao's death, partly because of his disastrous policies in 1958–60 and from 1966 onwards.

The First Five-Year Plan had led to impressive growth in heavy industry (which grew at 9% p.a. compared to India in 1950s where it was less than 2%), but Mao was disappointed at agricultural growth (just 3.7% p.a. and the population increased by 2.4% p.a.) and wanted rapidly to catch up with the West—hence the radical Great Leap Forward (1958–60). Its results were disastrous; China’s economic development was put back. Gross National Income fell by 30% between 1958–60; the harvest in 1960 was 26% less than in 1957.

Recovery under Liu and Deng (1961-65): heavy industrial output had doubled by 1965, aided by the discovery of the Daqing oilfield; by 1965, grain output had recovered to the 1957 level but population had risen by 80 million. The economy was further disrupted by the Cultural Revolution (1966-76), though not that badly. However, much of the state's investment in 1964-71 was in the 'Third Front', military-industrial development in North West and South West China, and this was a waste of resources.

Limited progress was made in agriculture (the average p.a. increase in grain production 1957–78 was just 2%, and China's population roughly doubled in the period 1949–90); foreign trade hardly increased at all between 1959 and 1970 (by less than 0.5%).

China took off as a modern industrial power only in the 1980s and 1990s as a result of Deng Xiaoping's reforms; Deng introduced elements of capitalism and the free market and encouraged trade/investment from the West. China's economy grew at 9% p.a. 1977–2000.

Your own/additional points:

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper appears to be a standard notebook page.

3. To what extent did Mao create a classless society and socialist economy?

By the mid-1950s the old ruling elites had been eliminated and private enterprise ended. However, Mao was worried in the early 1960s when there was a return to some families farming land independently of the communes under the household responsibility system.

Your points/examples:

4. To what extent was Mao successful in creating and embedding a communist culture?

Mao failed to inculcate communist values among the population at large—the Cultural Revolution being his most large-scale attempt to effect such a change—and despite frequent rectification campaigns, was unable to prevent CCP officials emerging as a new ruling elite.

Your points/examples:

5. To what extent did Mao raise living standards and promote social reform?

There was some progress in terms of social reform, notably in provision of health care and primary education, but living standards did not rise significantly until after Mao's death.

Your points/examples:

Your Conclusion (drawing together my points and your points):

2. To what extent was the maintenance of power by one authoritarian ruler a result of successful economic policies?

Having come to power in October 1949, Mao very quickly consolidated CCP control of China, completed by 1954 when single-party rule was formally established. Successful economic policies certainly were a significant factor in maintaining Mao's power in the 1950s until the disastrous Great Leap Forward which undermined his authority. Economic recovery in the 1960s was important for the maintenance of power but was led by other CCP leaders and was disrupted by the Cultural Revolution. Throughout Mao's rule, it is clear that other factors such as the use of force, mass movements, and propaganda were more important in enabling him to stay in power.

Mao's First Five-Year Plan (1953–7) was very successful in terms of industrial growth, strengthening the regime economically and increasing the CCP's prestige, thereby helping secure the population's loyalty. This economic policy completed the nationalisation of industry and led to a threefold increase in heavy industrial output. Consequently, China's urban population increased from 57 million (1949) to 100 million (1957) and the CCP's institution of work units known as the '*danwei*' ensured the CCP unprecedented control over the lives of urban Chinese. The socialisation of agriculture from the early 1950s was even more important, with, by 1958, 80% of rural households organised in co-operatives. Mao managed to maintain his power despite such a revolutionary step because he introduced collectivisation gradually in order to avoid the disasters of Stalin's collectivisation in the 1930s. As a result of collectivisation, which the historian J.K. Fairbank characterises as 'a modern serfdom under party control', the CCP not only maintained its power but achieved far greater control over the rural population than any previous regime.

Whilst a successful economic policy up to 1958 was a significant factor in Mao's maintenance of power, the Great Leap Forward (1958), Mao's radical vision for closing the gap with the more advanced economies, proved a disaster, seriously eroding Mao's authority. Mao, in launching the Great Leap, was not only driven by the desire to simultaneously develop agriculture and industry, but also by the aim of undermining the peasantry's traditional loyalty to their families and villages, in order to increase the CCP's hold over them. The devastating famine of the 'Three Bitter Years' of 1959–61, costing 40 million lives, threatened the CCP's rule as peasants in four provinces rebelled and the PLA had to be deployed to restore order. Though it appears that Mao had already been planning to retreat from day-to-day leadership, the Great Leap's failure forced him further into the political background than he had envisaged. Although Philip Short argues that Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping, to whom the CCP turned to lead economic recovery, still had to receive Mao's approval for any major decisions, which would suggest that this economic disaster did not turn Mao into the 'dead ancestor' as is claimed, the fact that Liu and Deng were able to introduce the household responsibility system which Mao so detested indicates that the latter's power was significantly curtailed.

From 1962 to 1966, economic policy was far more successful, with industrial output doubling and grain harvests recovering to their 1957 level, and this certainly helped the CCP maintain its control over the country. However, this economic success was led by Liu and Deng, and Mao was bitterly opposed to the allegedly 'capitalist road' being taken by them. Mao launched the Cultural Revolution in 1966 in order to reassert his authority and redirect the CCP down the socialist road. The result was once more disruptive to the economy, although nowhere near as disastrous as the Great Leap. By Mao's death in 1976, CCP economic policies had led to a modest degree of success in industry with an average growth rate of 5% p.a. and a much slower development of agriculture at an average of 2% p.a. growth. This economic growth resulted in a modest rise in living standards, which would have helped generate popular support for the regime but, more importantly, it provided the tax base for the CCP to maintain its large security apparatus which was the key factor in keeping power.

Ultimately Mao and the CCP depended most on their powerful party apparatus and security forces to maintain their power. CCP membership and its bureaucracy grew enormously to around 18 million by 1958, giving many Chinese a stake in keeping it in power. At 2.5 million strong, the PLA was the world's largest army and could be relied on to maintain the Party's authority, as shown in its suppression of rebellions during the Great Leap and its bringing the Red Guards under control in 1968–9. The PLA was supplemented by the secret security forces, led by Kang Sheng, and the laogai, a network of prison camps, served to deter opposition. The CCP also used terror to buttress its authority, notably during the Campaign Against Counter-Revolutionaries (1950) which saw 750,000 alleged opponents executed. Mao also resorted to violence to reassert his own authority during the Cultural Revolution, galvanising the Red Guards into purging over 500,000 people, many of them CCP members whom Mao suspected of being 'capitalist roadsters'. Dissent was only tolerated very briefly during the Hundred Flowers (1957), which ended in the Anti-Rightist Campaign with 500,000 people sent to labour camps for 'thought correction'. Also of great importance in Mao's maintenance of power was his use of propaganda and mass movements, such as the Three-Anti and Five-Anti Campaigns (1951–2). Unlike in the USSR, the CCP sought to mobilise the people in campaigns aimed at destroying enemies and inculcating the correct socialist values. These helped create a climate of fear, which contributed to the CCP's maintenance of power. However, the biggest movement, the Cultural Revolution, which although it enabled Mao to remove leading rivals, threatened CCP power because, by 1967, the country appeared on the brink of civil war as violence escalated. Tang Tsou (author of *The Cultural Revolution and Post-Mao Reforms*) has convincingly argued that the Cultural Revolution was a functional expression of 'people power' that limited the power of the government and paved the way for reforms after the death of Mao. The fact that the CCP felt obliged to deploy the PLA in 1968 to deport 12 million Red Guards to the countryside indeed suggests that the Cultural Revolution constituted a serious challenge to its power.

Overall, successful economic policies played a role in Mao's maintenance of power in the 1950s but the disastrous Great Leap undermined Mao's authority, and economic development was much more uneven in the 1960s and early 1970s. Much more important factors were the creation of powerful party and security apparatuses, the use of force, and the deployment of propaganda.

Points/examples you would add to the above:

GLOSSARY

7,000 CADRE CONFERENCE

A meeting of 7,000 representatives of the CCP in January–February 1962, held to consider the policies that were required to ensure economic recovery after the Great Leap Forward.

B

BOLSHEVIKS

The faction within the Russian Marxist movement that was led by Lenin. ‘Bolshevik’ means ‘majority’ in Russian.

BOURGEOIS INDIVIDUALISM

Art that explored the individual’s emotions and thoughts.

C

CADRES

Party officials or activists.

CHINESE COMMUNIST PARTY (CCP)

Revolutionary party that broadly followed the ideas of Karl Marx and came to power in China in 1949 under Mao Zedong’s leadership.

CHINESE NATIONALISTS

In the context of China, nationalists wanted to revive China’s power and independence, bringing to an end foreign exploitation of their country.

COMINTERN

The Russian Communist Party’s agency for spreading worldwide revolution.

CONFUCIANISM

A way of life taught by Confucius in China in the 6th–5th century BCE. It is primarily concerned with ethical principles.

D

DALAI LAMA

The title for the spiritual head of Tibetan Buddhism. It means ‘big master’ in Tibetan/Mongolian.

F

FEDERAL

System of rule where there are different tiers of government, with the national government exercising authority over the whole country for certain matters (for example, defence) and then other bodies at a regional or state level exercising authority locally over matters such as education

FIRST OPIUM WAR (1839–42)

War in which British naval forces attacked China after the Chinese authorities tried to stop British merchants from importing opium into China.

FOOT-BINDING

Traditional practice in China whereby the feet of young girls were bound up to keep them from growing properly, so that they had tiny feet which were regarded as attractive. Often, this led to deformed growth and chronic pain.

FOUR MODERNISATIONS

A proposed programme of modernisation for agriculture, industry, national, and defence.

THE FOUR OLDS These were what Mao directed the Red Guards against, namely: old thought, old culture, old practices, and old customs.

G

GUOMINDANG (GMD) Chinese nationalist party founded by Sun Yat-sen after the 1911 Revolution that saw the overthrow of China's last imperial dynasty. The GMD came to power in 1927.

GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT (GDP) The value of a country's economic output and financial services.

GROSS NATIONAL PRODUCT (GNP) Total value of goods and services produced by a country.

I

INTELLECTUALS The CCP defined 'intellectuals' as those people who had received a high school or university education or who were academics, artists, or writers.

L

LAOGAI Forced labour camps, collectively known as the laogai, were set up, with perhaps 1.5 million people imprisoned in them in the 1950s.

M

MARXISM The ideas put forward by Karl Marx, a German revolutionary, who published the Communist Manifesto in 1848. Marx predicted all societies would go through a series of revolutions which would eventually lead to the creation of perfect societies in which there was no poverty and all property and assets would be communally owned.

MAY FOURTH GENERATION Those Chinese who experienced the May Fourth demonstrations of 1919 and looked forward to a strong, united China.

N

NANJING DECADE (1927-37) The period of GMD rule when the government was based in Nanjing; in 1937 they were driven out of Nanjing by the Japanese.

NATIONAL BOURGEOISIE Members of the middle classes who were prepared to work with the CCP against the Japanese occupying forces.

P

PARIS COMMUNE Following France's defeat by Prussia in 1871, the workers of Paris temporarily took control of France's capital and established a collective, workers' government.

T

**TAIPING REBELLION
(1850–64)**

A rebellion in southern and central China that was largely made up of peasants, led by Hong Xiuquan who sought to overthrow the Qing dynasty and establish the Heavenly Kingdom of Great Harmony. It took the Qing 14 years to suppress the rebellion in the course of which possibly 20 million people died.

**TEST BAN
TREATY**

Agreement by the USSR, US, and Britain to limit nuclear bomb tests to below ground.

THEOCRACY

A form of government where religious leaders rule a society.

**THIRD
FRONT**

In the period 1964–72, the CCP invested in large-scale industrial centres in remote, western parts of China (which became known as the ‘Third Front’, so that, in the event of a nuclear strike by the USSR or the US against China’s more developed industrial regions in the east, China would retain substantial industrial capacity.

**THE THREE
SELFS**

Freedom from foreign finance, freedom from foreign influence, and, in relation to Roman Catholics, freedom from control by the Vatican.

**THE TWENTY-ONE
DEMANDS**

A series of demands made by Japan for China to concede territory, notably Shandong, to Japan and allow Japan to exert influence over China’s government. The weak Chinese government gave in to most of these demands.

U

**UNEQUAL
TREATIES**

Term given to the treaties that China was obliged to sign by the use or threat of force by several Western powers and Japan in which China agreed, under pressure, to concede territory or trading privileges to other countries.

UNITARY

System of rule where a single government has authority over the whole country.

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