

# CHINESE HISTORY – 20<sup>th</sup> Century

*Paul Clark, Ph.D.*

## Part I: Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century

**Overview** In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, traditional China was in the final stages of collapse. The decline of China as a world power had shocked the governing elites in the 19th century. Many simply could not fathom that the philosophy which had undergirded their way of life and their civilization for more than 2500 years was insufficient to meet the needs of an industrialized world. The Confucian system had always worked before. What had caused it to fail in this instance? But by the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it was no longer possible to argue that small, incremental change would yield the desired results. Many leaders and thinkers began to call for bold, wholesale change to society, for the appropriation of western philosophy and its implementation in China. But which of the dominant western philosophies would be best for China to adopt? There were so many: capitalism, liberalism, utilitarianism, nationalism, Christianity, socialism and communism, to name a few. It was also quite clear to most of the governing elites that the imperial household would have to evolve as well, or it too would not survive. The struggle in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century was therefore recast not in terms of how to repair or reform the old system, but rather which of the new governing philosophies would become ascendant. While these issues were being worked out, practical questions arose about what to do with more than 400 million Chinese. Someone had to govern them, keep the peace and deal with the foreigners.

### Events

**The Collapse of the Dynasty.** The moribund Qing Dynasty went out with a whimper in the span of several months in late 1911 and early 1912. The Empress Dowager, Ci'xi, died in 1908. But she had been so successful at eliminating her rivals (or simply outliving them), that there was a power vacuum in the upper levels of government when she died. On her deathbed, she had named China's last emperor to the throne, Pu-yi (1906-1967), who was two years old at the time. He reigned as the Emperor Xuantong (through a regent) until his abdication in 1912 during the Republican Revolution. Thus ended 2300 years of imperial rule in China.

**The Republican Revolution.** There were dozens of groups and thousands of Chinese who were dedicated to the violent overthrow of the Qing Dynasty. The most prominent was the Revolutionary Alliance, led in part by Sun Yat-sen (1866-1925). Members of the Revolutionary Alliance had infiltrated virtually all levels of society and government before 1911. There were members in the various legislative bodies (created after the Boxer Uprising). There were members in the bureaucracy, in the constabulary and in the military. The Revolutionary Alliance was interested in creating the conditions in China which would allow for the rise of democracy. Although Sun Yat-sen's vision of democracy for China did not closely resemble western-style democracy, it was their goal to ultimately create a democratic nation.

Hostilities began in the tri-cities area of Wuchang in the autumn of 1911, when several members of the New Army, who were also members of the Revolutionary Alliance, rose in revolt. When the Qing issued orders to several generals to put down the rebellion, they refused. The Qing then began to negotiate for a limited constitutional monarchy. However, even that was unpalatable to the Revolutionary Alliance and the Qing abdicated with few conditions in the spring of 1912. Soon thereafter, Yuan Shikai (1859-1916) was named premier of China, a position he would hold until his death.

The Republican Revolution and Yuan Shikai's policies were a failure. Within a few months of gaining power, it was clear that Yuan did not support democracy and wanted to reinstitute a monarchy. There was little left of the democratic experiment when his administration collapsed in 1916. Indeed, he left the country much worse off than it had been when he first became premier. China was a failed state and entered what we call the warlord era. There would be no effective central government for more than a decade.

**The Guomindang.** Through all the turmoil of the Republican and warlord eras, one opposition political party, the Guomindang (Nationalist), had managed to survive, although it was often outlawed. As China moved into the 1920s, it was one of the few highly organized, viable political organizations with a nationwide following. In 1926, the Guomindang started a military campaign to unify China. First, Guomindang troops swept through southeastern China. They then subdued Nanjing and made it the capital of the new China. By 1928, China was under the nominal control of the Guomindang, although they controlled much of the territory through alliances with various warlords. It was a very tenuous situation. In the military campaigns of the late 1920s, one general emerged who transcended the military and political elements of the Guomindang: Chiang Kai-Shek (1887-1975). Soon thereafter, Chiang became known as Generalissimo, or commanding general of Guomindang forces. By the 1930s, was Premier of the Republic of China.

**The Chinese Civil War and the War With Japan.** In the late 1920s, the Chinese Communist Party had become a thorn in the side of the Guomindang. The CCP were dedicated to creating a communist state and would not allow anyone or anything to stand in its way. They engaged in the building of soviets in the rural areas of China and maintained a low-intensity civil war. Chiang Kai-Shek decided to hunt them down and eradicate them, and he was almost successful. The Long March (1934-1935) nearly resulted in their demise. However, the Japanese, who had been seizing territory in Manchuria decided to cross the northern border into China proper at roughly the same time. Though the Guomindang was willing to tolerate Japanese aggression in Manchuria, when Japan sent armies into North China proper, the Chinese surprised the Japanese and stood and fought in 1938. It was clear that Japan had underestimated Chinese national sentiment. For the ruling Guomindang leadership, the total eradication of the CCP would have to wait until the end of the Japanese conflict.

The war with Japan was long and bloody, a war of attrition. More than 20 million Chinese died in this conflict alone. China didn't surrender when the Japanese seized Nanjing in 1937 and laid waste to the capital city over a period of several weeks (Nanjing Massacre). Japanese troops then had no recourse other than to occupy as much of China as they could. However, it was not possible for Japan to ever control China if the Chinese didn't collaborate. And the Chinese fought back bravely. By 1940, Japan knew it was in a war with China which was not going well. Although Japan's allies in Europe, Germany in particular, had found success at virtually every turn, Japan recognized that they would have to have more resources to continue the war with China. Southeast Asia provided much of what was needed—tin, aluminum, steel, oil, rubber and the like were available. But the Japanese leadership determined that the United States and Great Britain would have to be dealt with first. The war then expanded to become World War II.

**The Communist Revolution.** When the war against Japan was over in 1945, Chinese Guomindang troops immediately moved back into formerly Japanese-occupied China. But the Chinese people were in no mood to put up with the corruption, malfeasance and incompetence which had characterized Guomindang rule before the war with Japan. And this time there was a choice. The CCP, which had barely survived the Long March and Guomindang efforts at total destruction in 1937, had grown immensely in strength and size by 1945. Led by Mao Zedong (1893-1976) and having enjoyed some success fighting a guerilla war against the Japanese, the CCP turned their attention to fighting the Guomindang. By 1948, the CCP began to defeat Guomindang armies one after the other and the Guomindang collapsed. Within a few months, Chiang Kai-Shek and the remnant of the Guomindang retreated to the island of Taiwan, where they were not very welcome. Though it was thought to be a temporary redoubt only, the CCP has managed to keep them there ever since.

### Government

**The Nationalists.** The Guomindang Party was known in English as the Nationalist Party. They succeeded in bringing unification to large parts of China in the late 1920s. They then ruled for approximately a decade before the war with Japan began. The Guomindang leadership was an ideologically disparate group. Some were dedicated to the radical forms of socialism, others supported more capitalist ideals. Some believed China was ready for democracy, others such as Sun Yat-sen (1866-1925), believed it might take many years of practice before the Chinese people could be trusted with the franchise. For a while, the Guomindang was supported by the Comintern (Communist International) and many of their leaders went to Moscow for training and support, including Chiang Kai-Shek. Others were supported by the governments (or individuals) in western Europe or the United States. It

was simply unclear exactly where many of the Guomindang leaders stood ideologically in the early 1920s. It was, in fact, their intention to garner as much support from whatever source they could. It didn't matter much where it came from. Vladimir Lenin, and later Joseph Stalin of the USSR, however, didn't believe that the Guomindang was sufficiently Communist and decided to support a more pure political party in China. This would later become known as the Chinese Communist Party. For a while, the Soviets supported both parties.

Given the lack of a clear ideology, it is no surprise that the decade of Nationalist rule in China is not remembered fondly. Other than trying to unify the country, there didn't appear to be a larger goal. In their defense, the Guomindang had inherited a fragmented country, much of which was still not under their control. The economy was largely agrarian and suffered from half a century of neglect. Large sections of China had been brought under the control of one or more of the western nations or Japan. In short, China's future as a unified country was very much in doubt. Nonetheless, the Guomindang are remembered for being corrupt, nepotistic and incompetent. But China under Guomindang rule was better than China under the rule of capricious and arbitrary warlords.

**The Chinese Communist Party.** The CCP was established in 1921 in the aftermath of the May 4<sup>th</sup> Movement which had swept the nation beginning in 1919. The May 4<sup>th</sup> Movement had awakened the masses to politics and had created a sense of nationalism which the CCP would later exploit. The CCP was established when two comintern agents, Yang Mingzhai (1882-1930) and Grigori Voitinsky (1893-1953), made contact with one of the leaders of the May 4<sup>th</sup> Movement, Chen Duxiu (1879-1942) and Li Dazhao (1888-1927). This core group announced the first National Congress in 1921 to be held in the French Concession in Shanghai. The first years of the CCP were very bleak. The party was small, quarrelsome, and precarious. As might be expected, it did not grow quickly. To many interested Chinese, it simply appeared to be the left-wing of the Guomindang Party and was therefore not discernable as a separate political entity. Nonetheless, the right-wing of the Guomindang, exemplified by Chiang Kai-Shek, understood very clearly the risks posed by the extreme left. When the CCP engaged in an unauthorized labor action in Shanghai and other actions in Nanchang in the late 1920s, they became the sworn enemy of the Guomindang. This is a "blood-feud" that has still not exhausted itself. Of course, the CCP eventually won the civil war and still rules mainland China today.

## Culture

**The May 4<sup>th</sup> Movement of 1919.** The Chinese had participated in WWI by sending more than 100,000 laborers to work behind the lines in Europe for the British and French. Although only a few thousand died, many came back to their village with a fresh perspective. They were world travelers, had seen the carnage of the trenches, or their aftermath, and were unwilling to allow westerners or Japanese to maintain the fiction of their moral superiority. Among those who traveled to Europe in this program were Zhou Enlai (1898-1976), future Premier of the People's Republic of China (second in command to Mao Zedong) and Deng Xiaoping (1904-1997), leader of the PRC from 1978-1992). The titular Chinese government had also cut diplomatic ties with Germany and eventually declared war in 1917. Although they didn't provide soldiers or much in the way material aid, they did expect that they the German territories in Shandong province would be returned to Chinese control after the war. The problem was that Japan had seized these territories by force during the war and did not wish to relinquish what they had conquered. At the Versailles Treaty talks, the Japanese delegation was able to make its case directly as one of the victorious powers. Nonetheless, when the terms of the Treaty of Versailles were made known in May of 1919, the Chinese erupted in protest because portions of Shandong were to be leased to the Japanese according to the terms of a previous secret agreement between the two nations. The Chinese people felt betrayed by both their government and by President Woodrow Wilson, because of his insistence on the implementation of "National Self-Determination" in all other elements of the treaty. The protest movement was sustained for many months and was felt in virtually all of China's major cities. In the aftermath, it was clear that this was an expression of a strong sense of nationalism in a country in which it had never been seen before. It is unfortunate, for the Japanese in particular, to have missed this dramatic shift in Chinese sentiment.

**The Literary Arts.** The early 20<sup>th</sup> century saw a flowering of new forms of expression in China. New authors using new forms of the language, commenting on things they had never been allowed to write about provided a fresh environment for the literary arts. The most well-known of all Chinese authors in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century was Lu Xun (1881-1936). Lu wrote novels, essays and poems. Many of his books are works of political satire. One of his most

famous is the satirical novella *The True Story of Ah Q*, which first appeared in serial form in 1921. Lu wrote in the modern form of the Chinese vernacular, a development which would eventually characterize all modern Chinese forms of literature. He is thus remembered for his biting political wit and for being a pioneer in the creation of modern Chinese literature. Lu wrote prolifically until his death from tuberculosis in 1936. He is known as one of the leaders in the “New Culture Movement” which sprang up in China after the May 4<sup>th</sup> period.

***New Youth.*** Among the many elements of the “New Culture Movement” was the appearance of a journal known as the *New Youth*, founded by Chen Duxiu (who was also a founding member of the CCP). The first volumes were published in 1915 and pre-date the May 4<sup>th</sup> Movement, but the leadership of the journal happily tapped into the new nationalism of the May 4<sup>th</sup> era. The *New Youth* was also written in the vernacular (as opposed to classical Chinese) and was designed to appeal to the largest audience possible. The articles pointed out weaknesses in Chinese national character and called for the introduction of new ideas and new philosophies into China: communism, capitalism, pragmatism, democracy, nationalism, and the like which, if embraced by large segments of Chinese society could make China stronger. The *New Youth* even published Lu Xun’s short story “A Madman’s Diary” in 1918 (reportedly inspired by Nikolai Gogol’s *Diary of a Madman*). Also included were reprinted articles from abroad. This provides evidence of just how sophisticated and international the “New Culture Movement” was in China.

### Society

**Continuity and Change.** It would be easy to say that Chinese society in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century had devolved into something that neither resembled nor functioned as it had in previous epochs. But that would not be true. It had a well-established, mature society that provided the glue which held China together in the absence of effective government. There were many elements of society that functioned as they always had. In particular, China’s peasants, who constituted at least 90% of society, continued to farm the land and live their lives much as they always had. Village headmen, applying basic Confucian ideology, still acted as intermediaries between individual producers and the authorities. What had changed was who they paid taxes to and who enforced the laws by which they ordered their lives. It is also true that taxes were sometimes very high (more than 50%) and paid in advance or sometimes multiple times per year if a warlord or government changed. One of the primary weaknesses in society in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century was the lack of a strong bureaucracy. The old Confucian elites, the Mandarins, had been dissolved as an official class of society. And, given the lack of a central government, most of those magistrates were not replaced with effective leadership. Neither the leaders of the Republican Revolution nor the Guomindang had succeeded in re-ordering society, but that had not that been among their goals in the first place. While it is true that both wanted to bring China into modernity, a radical restructuring of society was not the highest of their priorities.

One group did emerge who sought the radical restructuring of society: the Chinese Communist Party. As was true of other countries ruled by communists, the CCP wanted to flatten society. All of China would be radically equal. All great landowners would be stripped of their land (and capital) and it would be redistributed to those who actually worked it. They wanted to apply the old socialist adage popularized by Karl Marx (1818-1883) in the 19<sup>th</sup> century: “from each according to his ability, to each according to his need” to all elements of the economy. No one would become wealthy, but no one would be desperately poor either. In the political realm, the politburo would govern until the people of China were educated sufficiently to understand that communism was in their best interests. They would then voluntarily vote themselves into a communist system (the dictatorship of the proletariat). In short, this was the plan that the CCP used when it set up soviets in their 1920s and 30s. However, before it could be instituted, the war with Japan (1937-1945) disrupted society in a way not seen since the Taiping Rebellion (1850-1864).

**Social Disruption in the War With Japan (1937-1945).** Though Japan could not control all of China, it occupied territory in which hundreds of millions of Chinese lived. In these territories, Japanese occupation officials recognized the extent of their limitations. They were governing a people group who had not submitted to their rule and whose government would not surrender. The Japanese therefore ruled with a very, very strong hand and would not allow any dissent. The Japanese traumatized the Chinese people in many ways. First, the Japanese did not perceive of the Chinese as being equally human. They enjoyed no rights not given by the Japanese. Second, the best of all that China produced went to the Japanese: food, housing, clothing, manufactured goods, etc. Third, when the Chinese had the temerity to oppose the Japanese or question any decisions made by the Japanese, the Chinese were killed. Fourth, when the Chinese actively engaged in guerilla war, the Japanese responded with large-scale

slaughter. Individuals, villages, and whole cities survived (or didn't) based on whim and chance. Society, as might be expected, was terrorized and moved into a protective, survival mode. From 1937 until the defeat of the Japanese in 1945, China's losses reached approximately 20 million. It should come as no surprise that many elements of Chinese society still express hatred for the Japanese.

### Economy

**Agriculture.** The Chinese system of agriculture had suffered from decades of neglect by the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Essential infrastructure had not been maintained. Irrigation systems and flood control, in particular, were in serious disrepair. Many Chinese peasants were just getting by season to season. Any small disruption in the annual cycle yielded hardship and hunger. The threat of famine was persistent for the peasantry. China could often not feed itself. During the warlord era (the late teens and much of the 20s), there was no law and order and taxes were extracted at a high rate and at arbitrary times. During the decade of Guomindang rule, conditions moderated in some areas and some advances in agriculture were possible. But in other areas there was famine. During the war with Japan, death and destruction seemed ever present in the occupied territories. Nonetheless, it would be accurate to say that there were real advances in agriculture in China in some areas. In particular, a number of schools opened with the express purpose of teaching new techniques and of applying new technology. Some, such as China Agricultural University (founded in 1905), Nanjing Agricultural University (founded in 1914) and Anhui Agricultural University (founded in 1928), became quite influential and promoted advances in wet-rice agriculture, animal husbandry and dry-land farming. Indeed, these institutions survived the ravages of civil war, foreign invasion and the Cultural Revolution—and still exist today. Nonetheless, China didn't become reliably self-sufficient in agriculture until after the Cultural Revolution.

**Commerce:** If a nation is to have a fully functioning, integrated economy, certain conditions must exist. There must be a strong, effective government capable of creating an environment of predictability. The government must have a monopoly on violence and the extraction of revenue. There must be a common currency, access to capital and relative peace and calm in the realm. Finally, the population must be willing to accept these conditions. These things were not in evidence for most of the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in China. In the warlord era, China was divided into areas controlled by local or regional strongmen. Trade between the various areas, although possible, was problematic. Nonetheless, the macro-economic zones which had characterized the Qing Era (1644-1912) and which had emerged organically during the long period of peace began to fragment in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. It became difficult to transport goods between regional areas because of problems with the transportation infrastructure and because the space between warlord-held territories often teemed bandits and rebels. And since there was no national currency, an economy based on a barter system emerged. This placed serious restrictions on the flow of capital. In short, it was possible to buy and sell goods within small, micro-economic zones—in the big cities and the like. But a national economy did not exist until the Guomindang sought to create one in the late 1920s and early 1930s. And, of course, even this ceased to exist during the war with Japan. It is also safe to say that there was extremely limited large-scale industrial development outside of the major population centers and very little domestic capital one could draw upon if one wanted to open a factory or to develop a manufacturing concern. Cottage industries were widespread, and of course, foreigners operated industrial concerns in the concession areas. When the civil war between the CCP and Guomindang ended in 1949, the CCP surveyed an economic landscape scarred by decades of war, destruction and neglect. The economic road ahead would be long, difficult and bumpy. Tens of millions of Chinese would die of starvation, malnutrition and other privations before the economy would begin to supply the goods and services needed by the population.

### **Readings**

Harold Tanner, *China: A History, Volume 2. From the Great Qing Empire through the People's Republic of China (1644-2009)*, (Hackett Publishing, 2010), pp. 111-192.

David Strand, *Rickshaw Beijing: City People and Politics in the 1920s*, (University of California Press, 1989).

Vera Schwarcz, *The Chinese Enlightenment: Intellectuals and the Legacy of the May 4<sup>th</sup> Movement of 1919*, (Center for Chinese Studies, UC Berkeley, 1990).

Jay Taylor, *The Generalissimo: Chiang Kai-Shek and the Struggle for Modern China*, (Belknap Press, 2011).

Arif Dirlik, *The Origins of Chinese Communism*, (Oxford University Press, 1989).

### **Questions for Discussion**

- 1) What were the elements that brought about the final collapse of the Qing Dynasty? Was the collapse inevitable? Could there have been a constitutional monarchy in China? What would have to have happened in order for there to have been a constitutional monarchy? Do you think a constitutional monarchy would have made a difference for the Chinese people in the chaotic years and decades that followed 1912?
- 2) Both the Guomindang and the Chinese Communist Party consider themselves to be the spiritual inheritors of the May 4<sup>th</sup> Movement. Which group do you think has a more valid claim on its legacy? Why does it matter that the May 4<sup>th</sup> Movement is considered so important by both groups? What did the May 4<sup>th</sup> Movement accomplish that changed China?
- 3) In 1948 and 1949, the CCP won the civil war. The speed and severity of the Guomindang collapse is instructive. What was the central weakness or problem with the Guomindang that caused the people of China to abandon them and embrace the CCP? Can the problem best be understood in the context of what was wrong with the Guomindang or what was right with the CCP? Was it a combination of both? Or was the CCP just in the right place at the right time?
- 4) What dominant ideology won out in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century? (aside from communism) There was another, even stronger, more durable ideology/philosophy that allowed for the rise of the Guomindang, motivated the Chinese to stand and fight the Japanese and ultimately acted as a support mechanism for the CCP? Finally, what is more important—actions or ideals? Are they equally important—or do they simply fulfill different functions? How did they interact with each other in the struggle to rebuild Chinese polity in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century?

## Texts

- 1) Quote from Lu Xun, from *Selected Stories*, in the public domain.

I felt that if a man's proposals met with approval, it should encourage him; if they met with opposition, it should make him fight back; but the real tragedy for him was to lift up his voice among the living and meet with no response neither approval nor opposition just as if he were left helpless in a boundless desert.

- 2) Quote by Mao Zedong on Lu Xun, from William A. Lyell, trans., *Diary of a Madman*, (University of Hawaii Press, 1990), pg. xxx.

Lu Xun was a man of unyielding integrity free from all sycophancy or obsequiousness; this quality is invaluable among colonial and semi-colonial peoples. Representing the great majority of the nation, Lu Xun breached and stormed the enemy citadel; on the cultural front, he was the bravest and most correct, the finest, the most loyal and most ardent national hero, a hero without parallel in our history.

- 3) Excerpt from a speech entitled "Essentials of the New Life Movement delivered by Chiang Kai-shek in 1934. Found in *Education about Asia*, [http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/ps/cup/chiang\\_kaishek\\_new\\_life.pdf](http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/ps/cup/chiang_kaishek_new_life.pdf)

The New Life Movement aims at the promotion of a regular life guided by the four virtues, namely *li* [ritual/decorum], *yi* [rightness or duty], *lian* [integrity or honesty], and *chi* [sense of shame]. Those virtues must be applied to ordinary life in the matter of food, clothing, shelter, and action. The four virtues are the essential principles for the promotion of morality. They form the rules for dealing with men and human affairs, for cultivating oneself, and for adjustment to one's surroundings. Whoever violates these rules is bound to fail, and a nation that neglects them will not survive. ... By the observance of these virtues, it is hope that the rudeness and vulgarity will be got rid of and that the life of our people will conform to the standard of art. ... By the observance of these virtues, it is hoped that beggary and robbery will be eliminated and that the life of our people will be productive. The poverty of China is primarily caused by the fact that there are too many consumers and too few producers. Those who consume without producing usually live as parasites or as robbers. They behave thus because they are ignorant of the four virtues. ... By observance of these virtues, it is hoped that social disorder and individual weakness will be remedied and that people will become more military-minded. If a country cannot defend itself, it has every chance of losing its existence. ... Therefore our people must have military training. As a preliminary, we must acquire the habits of orderliness, cleanliness, simplicity, frugality, promptness, and exactness. We must preserve order, emphasize organization, responsibility and discipline, and be ready to die for the country at any moment.

- 4) Excerpt from a speech delivered by Chiang Kai-shek in January 1939. Found *Education about Asia*, [http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/ps/china/chiang\\_kaishek\\_natl\\_identity.pdf](http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/ps/china/chiang_kaishek_natl_identity.pdf)

... We are now fighting the war [against the Japanese] for our own national existence and for freedom to follow the course of national revolution laid down for us in the Three Principles of the People. ...

... You [high-level Guomintang officials] should instruct our people to take lessons from the annals of the Song and Ming dynasties. The fall of these two dynasties [to the Mongols and the Manchus] was not caused by outside enemies with a superior force, but by a dispirited and cowardly minority within the governing class and society of the time. Today the morale of our people is excellent. ...

... Our resistance is a united effort of government and people. ... Concord between government and people is the first essential to victory. ...

... The hearts of our people are absolutely united. ...

5) From the *Selected Readings of Mao Zedong*, Foreign Press Club, 1971. Report on the Investigation of the Peasant Movement in Hunan, March 1927. Found in *Education About Asia*, [http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/ps/china/mao\\_peasant.pdf](http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/ps/china/mao_peasant.pdf)

During my recent visit to Hunan I made a first-hand investigation of conditions in the five counties of Hsiantan, Hsianghsiang, Henshan, Liling and Changsha. In the thirty-two days from January 4 to February 5, I called together fact-finding conferences in villages and county towns, which were attended by experienced peasants and by comrades working in the peasant movement, and I listened attentively to their reports and collected a great deal of material. Many of the hows and whys of the peasant movement were the exact opposite of what the gentry in Hankow and Changsha are saying. I saw and heard of many strange things of which I had hitherto been unaware. I believe the same is true of any other places, too. All talk directed against the peasant movement must be speedily set right. All the wrong measures taken by the revolutionary authorities concerning the peasant movement must be speedily changed. Only thus can the future of the revolution be benefited. For the present upsurge of the peasant movement is a colossal event. In a very short time, in China's central, southern and northern provinces, several hundred million peasants will rise like a mighty storm, like a hurricane, a force so swift and violent that no power, however, great will be able to hold it back. They will smash all the trammels that bind them and rush forward along the road to liberation. They will sweep all the imperialists, warlords, corrupt officials, local tyrants and evil gentry into their graves. Every revolutionary party and every revolutionary comrade will be put to the test, to be accepted or rejected as they decide. There are three alternatives. To march at their head and lead them. To trail behind them, gesticulating and criticizing. Or to stand in their way and oppose them. Every Chinese is free to choose, but events will force you to make the choice quickly.



## Part II : China from 1949 to the Present

**Overview** When Mao Zedong (1893-1976) and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) surveyed the landscape of China in the aftermath of the war with Japan (1937-1945) and the civil war with the Guomindang (1945-1949), they beheld a country where famine, homelessness, malnutrition, inequity, corruption and turmoil reigned. China was a country shattered by war and political chaos, where death had been a constant companion. All the Chinese had was hope because there were very few material goods available, little industry, virtually no real economic capital, a worn-out infrastructure and scant access to healthcare or education. If there was to be a future where the Chinese would benefit from a stable, competent government and a modern, industrial economy, they would have to build it from the ground up. And this became a possibility because the people of China had just supported the establishment of a communist government, the leaders of which promised to support not just industrialization and modernity, but the creation of a utopian society which would banish forever the threat of famine, malnutrition and other privations. No one would get rich, but no one would suffer from extreme poverty either. The world's largest experiment in social engineering had begun. The state, as articulated by Karl Marx (1818-1883) and interpreted by Mao Zedong, would vanquish all foes if only the people of China supported government initiatives whole-heartedly and worked harder than they had ever worked before. It was a new beginning where economic development could be realized and social and political liberation could be achieved. Unfortunately, however, most of the goals were never achieved.

### Events

**The Establishment of the People's Republic.** The People's Republic of China was proclaimed in October of 1949. Major fighting had ended in the previous months with the rout of Guomindang troops in the eastern provinces. In many areas, Guomindang troops, when abandoned by their leaders, simply laid down their weapons and surrendered to the CCP's People's Liberation Army. However, in the more inaccessible areas of China, the pacification process continued into the 1950s. Nonetheless, peace was at hand in China for the first time since 1937 and a strong, central government exercised power over the entire country for the first time since well before the final collapse of the Qing Dynasty in 1912. Meanwhile, the remnant of the Guomindang fled to Taiwan, where they were not very welcome and where they had to struggle to set up their own government. From Taiwan, Chiang Kai-shek (1887-1975) vowed publicly for decades to re-take China from the CCP. This was a threat that the CCP took seriously, but which never materialized.

**The Korean War.** In the aftermath of WWII, the Korean peninsula (which had been occupied by the Japanese since 1910) was partitioned between the Soviet-occupied north and the US-occupied south. Kim Il-Sung (1912-1994) had emerged to become the communist leader of the north in 1948 and, though more than a puppet, was very responsive to Moscow. In 1949, as the civil war in China was winding down, Kim traveled to Moscow to ask Joseph Stalin (1878-1953) who was leader of the Soviet Union, for permission and support for the forceful unification of the two Koreas. Kim believed that the North Koreans would be warmly welcomed in the south and that the conflict would be short and relatively bloodless. Stalin then gave his consent. Within a few short weeks of the surprise invasion in June of 1950, it appeared that the south would be conquered. However, Kim and Stalin misapprehended the extent of the response from the United States. United States President Harry Truman (1884-1972) convinced the United Nations to intervene in the conflict and by early November 1950, most of North Korea was under the control of US and UN-affiliated troops. (It is worth noting that the Soviets had boycotted, for other reasons, the talks at the UN Security Council which led to the intervention in Korean. There has been no Soviet/Russian boycott since.) However, the CCP became very concerned about UN troop movements near the Yalu River, the boundary between Manchuria and North Korea. Douglas MacArthur (1880-1964), commanding general of UN forces, did not heed Chinese warnings about this and provoked a Chinese invasion in November of 1950. After an additional two years of fighting, neither side was able to defeat the other and a stalemate ensued. When an armistice was signed in 1953, perhaps 300,000 Chinese soldiers had been killed. China therefore had to wait until 1953 before beginning the rebuilding project in earnest.

**Chinese Border Conflicts.** Though it was not possible for China to reestablish the Sino-centered foreign policy of the Qing Dynasty (1644-1912) where all nations both near and far were subservient to the Celestial Empire, the new Chinese leadership was much more assertive in foreign policy than had been the case at any time since the 18<sup>th</sup> century. This was made clear immediately with the Chinese intervention in the Korean War. In other border areas, the Chinese wished to make a statement to their neighbors that they were a force with which to be reckoned. First,

the Chinese fought a successful war with the newly independent India in 1962 over the disputed areas of the northern Kashmir border, territory which also bordered Tibet. Second, the Chinese clashed with the Soviet Union after the death of Joseph Stalin in several border skirmishes, particularly on the western border. Relations with Soviet Russia remained strained until the late 1980s. The third conflict was with the Vietnamese in 1979. The reasons for this conflict are still not well known, although it was apparently conducted by the Chinese in an effort to support their allies, the Khmer Rouge, in Cambodia. The Chinese invaded Vietnam with a force of 200,000 troops and pushed well into the country. The Vietnamese fought using both guerilla tactics and conventional tactics. When the Chinese felt that they had taught a lesson to the Vietnamese, they withdrew. But the Chinese gained nothing and lost approximately 10,000 soldiers.

## Government

**The Communist System.** Beginning in 1949, the CCP determined to completely reshape the government of China. All vestiges of Guomindang rule were abandoned. At the very highest levels, there were to be three top positions: Chairman of the Central Committee of the CCP (political control), President of the People's Republic (civilian control) and Chairman of the Central Military Commission (military control). From 1945 through 1975 Mao Zedong was known simply as Chairman Mao—the supreme leader, since he was so powerful that he didn't need the titles of Premier or Commander of the People's Liberation Army. Since the death of Mao, Chinese leaders who occupy all three offices control all elements of the government and have come to be known as “paramount” leaders. Authority was and is distributed through and by the Party to all other levels of government. For example, the Central Committee named governors of each province, who then named his/her lieutenants in the party on down to the local level. In time, much of the structure of Party bureaucracy remained in place as leaders at the top levels were promoted, purged, retired or died.

**The Party.** The Chinese Communist Party itself convenes as a large group every five years at meetings known as the National Party Congress. In theory, all major decisions are made at these meetings. In reality, however, all decisions are made in advance and the National Party Congress votes to affirm them. The PRC has been and is still governed by a small group of people, an oligarchy working behind mostly behind the scenes. Since 1949, there have only been a few great leaders of China: Mao Zedong (r. 1949-1976)— the supreme leader, paramount leaders Deng Xiaoping (r. 1978-1989), Jiang Zemin (r. 1993-2003), Hu Jintao (r. 2003-2013) and Xi Jinping (r. 2013-present). Recently, political succession at the top levels has become more stable and predictable. But the process remains opaque. Political purges and infighting rarely spill over into the public domain, although power struggles continue unabated behind the scenes.

In a communist system, the Party controls all elements of government, society, economy and culture. This includes the military as well. In theory, nothing happens in the country that the Party is not aware of and controls. Everything from central economic planning, to what crops are planted in what area, to what books are allowed to be printed, to what drama will be allowed to be performed on stage are decided by the authorities. For the ambitious, the only route to success had been through the Party, although that has been changing. For example, until quite recently, only Party members were allowed to attend college. Today there are approximately 88 million members of the CCP. The members of the Party enjoy all the rights of citizenship, including the limited franchise. Chinese who are not members of the Party do not.

**The Cultural Revolution.** In the years following the catastrophe of the second 5-year economic plan (Great Leap Forward, 1958-1962), the Central Committee decided to investigate what went wrong with agriculture and industry in China. It was determined that Mao's policies could not have led to the mass starvation of 20 million Chinese. Furthermore, it was determined that the peasantry also could not have been responsible. Therefore, blame fell on the Party itself which was responsible for implementing Mao's policies. What followed was a political and social purge the likes of which has never been seen anywhere in the world in the modern era. In the early days of the investigation, anyone associated with the Great Leap failures was sent down to the rural areas to be purified by manual labor with the peasantry. Some of these re-education sentences were very harsh and were to last ten or even twenty years. They were effective death sentences for many. Over the course of several years, groups emerged among university students who were dedicated to proving their ideological purity. They would seek out those in society who were not, members of the party or not. They would then be publically humiliated. These groups, who over time expanded from the ranks of students to include all segments of society, became known as Red Guard Units. Conditions nationwide began to degenerate in the late 1960s and it became impossible to tell who was

ideologically pure and who was not. Eventually, society ceased to function effectively. Workers were so busy demonstrating their love for Mao and communist purity that they didn't go to work. Doctors, teachers, engineers, even peasants—all were swept up in the fervor. This amounted to a sort of mass hysteria which lasted for the better part of a decade. Tens of millions took part. Many Chinese were brutalized and killed in the violence and chaos. Finally, in the early 1970s, Mao called a halt to the worst of the excesses of the Cultural Revolution. But the damage was done to society, to the economy and to the culture. It is still rarely spoken of because the blame for it can be laid directly at the feet of Chairman Mao.

## Culture

**Socialist Realism.** The fine arts, performing arts and visual arts were all under the control of the CCP in the years following 1949, as were all human endeavors. For the CCP, the arts provided yet another venue to educate the population on the true socialist path. In the visual arts, Chinese painters, printers and lithographers produced images depicting the ideal communist worker. Most often these images included a very healthy, happy man or woman (or a crowd) engaged in some form of heroic socialist activity: farming, heavy industrial work, large-scale marches, etc. There are few examples of landscapes, portraits or idle workers in evidence. Many, if not most, had an image of Mao Zedong as the benevolent father pointing the way to a brighter future. In virtually all images, the dominant color is red and a communist slogan provides the context. After the death of Mao, artists working in the visual arts were allowed to produce images that were not just to be used to promote communism. Today, there is a thriving visual arts community that produces just about anything they wish, as long as they don't explicitly or implicitly criticize the state.

**The Written Word.** The written word was understood by the communists to be one of the most dangerous but effective tools one can use to shape and mold society. It is not a surprise that in the literary arts in the years following 1949, all writing was strictly controlled by the state. The function of literature was to promote and glorify the communist system, to “serve the people and promote socialism,” according to Mao. Most, if not all, of the literature produced during the revolutionary period is of little intrinsic value and there are very few authors who are remembered as being visionaries. One of the few is Hao Ran (1932-2008), who produced such works as the *Golden Road* (1972) and *Sunny Days* (1977). Hao first and foremost served the state and was even the literary editor of the CCP journal entitled *Red Flag*. It is worth noting, however, that though the literary arts have in the post Mao-era been liberalized to a considerable degree, there is still no freedom of the press and no freedom to write and publish whatever one wishes. The Chinese authorities carefully scrutinize and monitor all written works. Books are still often banned and their authors fined, jailed or worse if there is any criticism of the state detected. This extends to any treatment of China's founding fathers such as Mao Zedong or Zhou Enlai. Therefore, one can write poetry, works of fiction, and even non-fiction as long one does not engage in social or political criticism. One of the most influential novelists in contemporary China is Mo Yan (1955-present), who was awarded the Nobel Prize in 2012. Mo's selection is not without controversy because he has been willing to work within state systems. Indeed, he was vice president of the Chinese Writers Association, an organization recognized and sponsored by the Chinese government. Mo is known for his works *Red Sorghum Clan* (1986) and *The Republic of Wine* (1992).

**The Internet.** In addition to the traditional literary arts in which one uses paper and pen, the written word is also carefully controlled in the virtual world. China today seeks to carefully monitor and control all interaction on the internet. Bloggers in particular are targeted for what they write and face punishment in varying degrees. According to a CNN report from October 17, 2013, the Chinese government employs more than two million people whose sole responsibility is to police the internet for writing that has not been approved by the state. Web sites are regularly blocked on the mainland and there is no free flow of information within the country or from outside the country. This is a monumental task, but one to which the Chinese government is very committed. It is expected that the Chinese government will continue to increase their budget for monitoring the internet in the coming years. The written word remains an extremely dangerous thing for the CCP and the Chinese government is keen to control what topics are permissible in the public realm.

## Society

**Social Engineering.** In the years following the 1949 communist revolution, the ruling party sought to completely level society. There was to be radical equality, true liberation and no class distinctions. In a country where the government had allowed for the stratification of society during the Qing period (1644-1912), this was truly

revolutionary. All large landowners were stripped of their lands and capital and sent to reeducation camps if they were lucky and executed if not. Their land was then used to create agricultural communes where the people who had actually been working the land were given responsibility to work the land for the state. All known supporters of capitalism, bankers, financiers, industrialists (to the extent there were any) had their factories nationalized and their wealth seized. All members, supporters, known associates and family members of the Guomindang party were given a notation in their records that they had a suspect background. Many were sent to reeducation camps. They were then blocked from becoming a member of the CCP or from rising to any position of leadership in society. In the early years, even their children were not allowed access to education on the university level. This black mark followed them through their entirety of their lives. A new social hierarchy emerged, one which valued ideological purity and membership in the CCP above all else. The CCP governed society, the economy, the military, the state and everything else of value.

**The Peasants.** Mao sought to glorify the rural peasantry in Chinese society. His version of Marxism substituted the agricultural worker for the industrial worker. This was a subtle, but extremely important, shift in communist ideology because most Chinese were still engaged in agricultural pursuits—and there was very little industry. It was therefore difficult for the Chinese industrial worker to, as Marx wrote, become “alienated from the means of production.” Instead, the government during the revolutionary era sought to elevate the lowly peasant to the equal of all in society. Their way of life, which was characterized by the CCP as exemplifying hard work, frugality, responsibility and rectitude appealed to the politburo. Mao wanted all of society to emulate the best qualities of China’s peasants.

Mao Zedong died in 1976 and, after a short period of transition, was succeeded by Deng Xiaoping (1904-1997). Deng is remembered most for liberalizing the Chinese economy and for allowing for limited capitalism in the economy. However, when China began on its path to capitalism, the government also moved away from relying on the rural peasant for social and economic inspiration. Today, China has a large and thriving middle class and a very large number of industrialists and super-wealthy. There are also tens of millions of poor, homeless and marginalized. Though the communists are still in power, they have abandoned most of their economic ideology and, through that, the attempt to bring radical equality to all members of society.

**One child policy.** China’s current population is approximately 1.4 billion. It is the most populous nation, by far, in the world. The only nation that comes anywhere close is India, which has a population of approximately 1 billion. China’s leaders struggled for decades after the revolution to make the nation nutritionally self-sufficient. But that didn’t happen in most years. More alarmingly, it became clear to the Chinese central economic planners in the early 1970s that the population would continue to rise to the point that famine and malnutrition would be an ever-present specter. The push to bring more and more land under cultivation would lead to environmental degradation and ultimately, the collapse of the social and political order. Therefore, the government instituted its draconian “one child” policy in 1979—which limited all women to bearing one child only. While the policy was in place, one had to acquire permission from the authorities to procreate. Children born without permission were often denied full social benefits including healthcare and education. As expected, this policy was extremely unpopular in China and created a number of other social problems up to an including infanticide if the baby showed any signs of abnormality, infant abandonment if the child was female (and not a male who would carry on the family name), forced abortions and sterilizations. But the policy did yield results and the population of China is expected to begin declining sometime around 2045. Therefore, some of the most intolerable elements of the law were relaxed in 2013. However, Chinese society has been forever changed as a result of this policy. Having a large family had been a marker of one’s wealth until 1979. Now, smaller families are not just encouraged by the government but have become the social norm.

## Economy

**The Great Leap Forward.** In 1958, Mao had grown frustrated with China’s efforts at rapid industrialization. He wanted faster, exponential growth. The CCP then adopted an extremely ambitious plan known as the Great Leap Forward. In this 5-year plan, the Chinese were to create heavy industry on a massive scale. They were to do this by applying all of China’s considerable revolutionary energy to the task. It would become the sacred duty of all Chinese to implement the plan. China’s leadership hoped to catch up with the Soviet Union by 1962 in the production of the most important element of industrialization: steel. Factories were to be built wherever possible. Raw materials were to be provided on a massive scale by the state to factories. And workers were removed from

agricultural production and put to work in the steel mills. Where it was not possible to build a factory, hard-core workers still felt it was their duty to produce steel. This led to bizarre efforts up to and including back-yard cauldrons being employed in the production of severely sub-standard and unsafe steel. Much of the steel produced during this period was worthless. But they met their quota. In addition, the Great Leap Forward also required society to be completely communized. Communal kitchens were provided for workers and families, and child care was provided. In theory, this freed women, retired workers, older children and all members of society to also engage in productive labor for the state. Many went out into the fields to farm or did jobs not suited to their capabilities. As might be expected, shortages in agriculture began to appear. But the government had moved emergency granary supplies to areas not affected by the lack of food. Serious hunger and malnutrition began to be felt as early as 1959. Soon thereafter, there was a famine unlike anything seen in China for a century. In the famines associated with the Great Leap Forward, approximately 20 million people starved. Mao's attempt at social and economic engineering had proved a catastrophic failure.

The Cultural Revolution that emerged in the aftermath of the Great Leap Forward drove China into a persistent state of economic and social chaos. For more than a decade, until the early 1970s, China engaged in radical, often violent, political revolution. Meanwhile, its economy suffered greatly and many economic reforms were reversed. When Mao died in 1976, China had not emerged as an industrial power, nor was it able to feed itself. Mao's promised utopian society had proven to be illusory.

**Economic Liberalization.** When Deng Xiaoping (1904-1997) emerged to be the paramount leader of China in 1978, he took stock of the economic situation and was not particularly pleased to see that most of Mao's attempts at social and economic engineering had not produced the desired effects. China, though an increasingly industrialized nation, was still considered to have a "developing" economy. There were pockets of extreme poverty in China and shortages of most consumer goods. The economic element of communism seemed to have failed. In response, Deng liberalized the economy and set about creating the conditions which allowed for the privatization of some of China's state-run industries. It also freed some workers (who had previously all worked for the state) to decide for themselves what sort of job they wished to do. Of course, this could only happen following the regulations of the communist state, which meant that workers could not just move anywhere to take any sort of job without permission. This would change later and Chinese laborers moving (sometimes illegally) to the cities produced an excess labor force willing to work in industry for extremely small sums. The government also strictly controlled the flow of capital in and out of the country, limiting the development of the industrial and financial sectors in the early 1980s. Nonetheless, when allowed some freedom, Chinese entrepreneurs and budding industrialists demonstrated that they could compete with any company worldwide. As the business environment in China improved, foreign companies began to use Chinese industrial capacity to produce goods for their home markets. It was cheaper for many western companies to build a factory in China, pay well-educated and highly motivated Chinese workers a pittance to do a job and ship goods home than it was to produce the same items at home. Of course, Chinese industry was also producing for the domestic market as well and successful domestic companies soon far outnumbered foreign concerns. The economy grew at a remarkable rate. For more than four decades, China has enjoyed many years of double-digit growth rates. Today, it is the second largest economy in the world and is projected to become the world's largest within two decades.

**Economic Slow-Down.** It should be noted that no economy can sustain double-digit growth forever. Indeed, there are hints in the Chinese economy that a serious slow-down has arrived. The Chinese economy is still growing, but at a slower pace. There now appear to be fewer Chinese workers who are willing to work for a pittance than before. That, coupled with higher transportation and production costs, is causing many foreign companies to rethink the "offshoring" of industry to China. Though not entirely mature, perhaps the best way to describe the current Chinese economy is that it is no longer "developing"—at least in the cities. Pockets of extreme poverty in the rural areas of China remain. This is not the communist economy envisioned by Mao Zedong in 1949. Indeed, it is the opposite. Deng's economic vision for China has proven successful. However, communism in the political realm remains firmly entrenched and has not been much affected by economic development. The CCP still carefully controls politics in China much as it did in 1949.

## Readings

Harold Tanner, *China: A History, Volume 2. From the Great Qing Empire through the People's Republic of China (1644-2009)*, (Hackett Publishing, 2010), pp. 194-276.

Jonathan Spence, *Mao Zedong: A Life*, (Penguin Books, 2006).

Frank Dikötter, *Mao's Great Famine: The History of China's Most Devastating Catastrophe, 1958-1962*, (Walker Publishing, 2010).

Andrew G. Walder, *Fractured Rebellion: The Beijing Red Guard Movement*, (Harvard University Press, 2012).

Ezra Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China*, (Belknap Press, 2011).

## Questions for Discussion

1) In 1948 and 1949, the Guomindang military was quickly and resoundingly defeated by the People's Liberation Army. What caused this turn of events? Was there a problem with the Guomindang (government or military) or did the CCP offer such promise that the people of China, when faced with a choice, simply preferred the CCP?—or is the answer somewhere in between, a little of both—or something else altogether? In other words, why did the people of China appear to side with Mao and the CCP? Do you think that they regretted their decision?

2) The Korean War is little known and poorly understood in the English-speaking world. However, by any measure, it was a major conflict with millions of casualties that dragged on for three years. What about it has allowed it to be mostly forgotten, even while many combat veterans still live? China's role in the war is also similarly forgotten. What were the motivations behind China's intervention in the war? Did Mao and the CCP succeed in their goals with the war?

3) The Great Leap Forward was recognized as a catastrophe even during Mao's lifetime and is remembered publicly as being one of his few major mistakes. Historians study it and there is public discussion of it. However, some of Mao's other major mistakes, such as the Cultural Revolution, are generally off limits for study. Why do you think that the CCP allows there to be public memory of one and not the other? What about the Cultural Revolution makes it mostly off limits for study and discussion? When might it become acceptable for historians and scholars to carefully consider? How would conditions have to change before there can be a frank and open public discussion of the Cultural Revolution?

4) Contemporary China has become an economic powerhouse and is now the world's second largest economy. Deng Xiaoping's dream of a wealthy nation is becoming a reality. But this was not Mao's dream. He wanted to see a utopian society where there was no class distinction. Which of these dreams is most noble? Why do you think one worked when the other did not. Is economic liberalization sustainable in the absence of commensurate liberalization of politics? Can authoritarian forms of political communism persist alongside economic capitalism? If so, for how long? Why do you think that the CCP has allowed this cognitive dissonance to last as long as it has?

## Texts

1) Quotes from Mao Zedong (1893-1976), *Little Red Book*, in the public domain. [first three] and from a speech delivered on July 1, 1949 [fourth quotation], found at [http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/ps/cup/mao\\_zedong\\_leaning.pdf](http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/ps/cup/mao_zedong_leaning.pdf)

- 1) A revolution is not a dinner party, or writing an essay, or painting a picture, or doing embroidery; it cannot be so refined, so leisurely and gentle, so temperate, kind, courteous, restrained and magnanimous. A revolution is an insurrection, an act of violence by which one class overthrows another.
- 2) War, this monster of mutual slaughter among men, will be finally eliminated by the progress of human society, and in the not too distant future too. But there is only one way to eliminate it and that is to oppose war with war, to oppose counter-revolutionary war with revolutionary

war, to oppose national counter-revolutionary war with national revolutionary war, and to oppose counter-revolutionary class war with revolutionary class war. ... When human society advances to the point where classes and states are eliminated, there will be no more wars, counter-revolutionary or revolutionary, unjust or just; that will be the era of perpetual peace for mankind. Our study of the laws of revolutionary war springs from the desire to eliminate all wars; herein lies the distinction between us Communists and all the exploiting classes.

- 3) Chiang Kai-shek always tried to wrest every ounce of power and every ounce of gain from the people. And we? Our policy is to give him tit for tat and to fight for every inch of land. We act after his fashion. He always tried to impose war on the people, one sword in his left hand and another in his right. We take up swords, too, following his example. ... As Chiang Kai-shek is now sharpening his swords, we must sharpen ours too.
- 4) "You are leaning to one side." Exactly. The forty years' experience of Sun Yat-sen and the twenty eight years' experience of the Communist Party have taught us to lean to one side, and we are firmly convinced that in order to win victory and consolidate it we must lean to one side of socialism. Sitting on the fence will not do, no is there a third road. ... "Victory is possible even without international help." This is a mistaken idea. In the epoch in which imperialism exists, it is impossible for a genuine people's revolution to win victory in any country without various forms of help from the international revolutionary forces, and even if victory were won, it could not be consolidated. This was the case with the victory and consolidation of the Great October Revolution as Stalin told us long ago. This was also the case with the overthrow of the three imperialists powers in WWII and the establishment of the people's democracies. And this is also the case with the present and the future of People's China.

2) Dialogue used by interrogators in the Cultural Revolution, found in Lee Hong-yung, *The Politics of the Chinese Cultural Revolution: A Case Study* (University of California Press, 1978), pp. 292-293.

Disclosure is better than no disclosure

Early disclosure is better than late disclosure

Thorough disclosure is better than reserved disclosure.

If one sincerely discloses his whole criminal story and admits his crimes to the people humbly, he will be treated leniently and given a way for safe conduct, and his case will not affect his family.

3) Guidelines for the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, 1966. Found at [http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/ps/cup/sixteen\\_points.pdf](http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/ps/cup/sixteen_points.pdf)

Although the bourgeoisie has been overthrown, it is still trying to use the old ideas, old culture, and customs, and habits of the exploiting classes to corrupt the masses, capture their minds, and endeavor to stage a comeback. The proletariat must do just the opposite: it must meet head-on every challenge of the bourgeoisie in the ideological field and use the new ideas, culture, customs and habits of the proletariat to change the mental outlook of the whole society. At present our objective is to struggle against and crush those persons in authority who are taking the capitalist road, to criticize and repudiate the reactionary bourgeois academic "authorities" and the ideology of the bourgeoisie and all the other exploiting classes and transform education, literature, and art and all other parts of the superstructure that do not correspond to the socialist economic base, so as to facilitate the consolidation and development of the socialist system.

The masses of the workers, peasants, soldiers, revolutionary intellectuals, and revolutionary cadres form the main force in the Great Cultural Revolution. Large numbers of revolutionary young people, previously unknown, have become courageous and daring pathbreakers. ...

4) Quotes from Deng Xiaoping (1904-1997) from speeches delivered in 1979, [first] found at [http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/ps/cup/deng\\_xiaoping\\_uphold\\_principles.pdf](http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/ps/cup/deng_xiaoping_uphold_principles.pdf) and second, third and fourth, from a 1992 speech, found in the public domain.

- 1) The Center believes that in realizing the four modernizations in China we must uphold four basic principles in thought and politics. They are the fundamental premise for realizing the four modernizations. They are as follows:
  - a. We must uphold the socialist road.
  - b. We must uphold the dictatorship of the proletariat.
  - c. We must uphold the leadership of the Communist Party.
  - d. We must uphold Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong thought.

The Center believes that we must reemphasize upholding the four basic principles today because some people, albeit an extreme minority, have attempted to shake those basic principles. ... Recently, a tendency has developed for some people to create trouble in some parts of the country. ... Some others also deliberately exaggerate and create a sensation by raising such slogans as "Oppose starvation" and "Demand human rights." Under these slogans, they incite some people to demonstrate and scheme to get foreigners to propagandize their words and actions to the outside world. The so-called China Human Rights Organization has even tacked up big character posters requesting the American president "to show solicitude" toward human rights in China. Can we permit these kinds of public demands for foreigners to interfere in China's domestic affairs? A so-called Thaw Society issued a proclamation openly opposing the dictatorship of the proletariat, saying that it divided people. Can we permit kind of "freedom of speech," which openly opposed constitutional principles?

- 2) Socialism essentially aims to release and develop productive forces, wipe out exploitation and eliminate polarization between poor and rich and finally achieve common prosperity.
- 3) *If we are to seize opportunities to promote China's all-round development, it is crucial to expand the economy. The economies of some of our neighboring countries and regions are growing faster than ours. If our economy stagnates or develops only slowly, the people will make comparisons and ask why.*
- 4) *Slow growth equals stagnation and even retrogression. We must grasp opportunities; the present offers an excellent one. The only thing I worry about is that we may lose opportunities. If we don't seize them, they will slip through our fingers as time speeds by.*

4) *Excerpts from The Republic of Wine (1992) [below first] and Red Sorghum (1986) [below second and third] by Mo Yan*

- 1) Am I drunk?" he asked Crewcut.  
"You're not drunk, Boss," Crewcut replied. "How could a superior individual like you be drunk? People around here who get drunk are the dregs of society, illiterates, uncouth people. Highbrow folks, those of the 'spring snow,' cannot get drunk. You're a highbrow, therefore you cannot be drunk.
- 2) I sometimes think that there is a link between the decline in humanity and the increase in prosperity and comfort. Property and comfort are what people seek, but the costs to character are often terrifying.
- 3) Over decades that seem but a moment in time, lines of scarlet figures shuffled among the sorghum stalks to weave a vast human tapestry. They killed, they looted, and they defended their country in a valiant, stirring ballet that makes us unfilial descendants who now occupy the land pale by comparison."