

*unit 2: authoritarian regimes in europe and asia*

## *communism in china under mao*

What is **authoritarianism**?

Emphasis on "authority of the state"

- Non-elected leaders most of the time
- Leaders are known as dictators
- Unregulated exercise of political power
- Limited civil liberties
  - E.g. lack of freedom of speech/press, strict censorship
- Lack of opposition
- Control by coercion or persuasion

Communism - China, Mao

Nazism - Germany, Hitler

### *what is communism?*

The political theory of socialism, which gave rise to communism, had been around for hundreds of years by the time a German philosopher named Karl Marx put pen to paper. Marx, also known as the father of communism, spent most of his life in exile in Great Britain and France. He wrote the Communist Manifesto in 1848, which later served as the inspiration for the formation of the Communist Party. Communism is also known as "Marxism."

Marx believed that a truly utopian society must be **classless and stateless**. (It should be noted that Marx died well before any of his theories were put to the test.) Marx's main idea was simple: Free the lower class from poverty and give the poor a fighting chance. How he believed it should be accomplished, however, was another story. In order to liberate the lower class, Marx believed that **the government would have to control all means of production so that no one could outdo anyone else by making more money**.

Marx described three necessary phases toward achieving his idea of utopia.

- Phase 1: A **revolution** must take place in order to overthrow the existing government. Marx emphasized the need for total destruction of the existing system in order to move on to Phase 2.
- Phase 2: A **dictator or elite leader** (or leaders) must gain absolute control over the proletariat. During this phase, the new government exerts absolute control over the common citizen's personal choices -- including his or her education, religion, employment and even marriage. Collectivization of property and wealth must also take place.
- Phase 3: Achievement of utopia. This phase has never been attained because it requires that all non-communists be destroyed in order for the Communist Party to achieve supreme equality. In a Marxist utopia, everyone would happily share property and wealth, free from the restrictions that class-based systems require. The government would control all means of production so that the one-class system would remain constant, with no possibility of any middle class citizens rising back to the top.

**10 essential tenets of communism:**

- Central banking system
- Government controlled education
- Government controlled labor

- Government ownership of transportation and communication vehicles
- Government ownership of agricultural means and factories
- Total abolition of private property
- Property rights confiscation
- Heavy income tax on everyone
- Elimination of rights of inheritance
- Regional planning

In the communist society that Marx described, the government has supreme authority through its total control of land and means of production. Because the government distributes land and property among the people, communism sets a standard of equality – both economically and socially – among its followers.

### Communist-related terms

- **Socialism:** A system that advocates the state's ownership of land, industry and capital. Communism is a branch of socialism.
- **Capitalism:** Economic system in which individuals or corporations own land and means of production (*communism is countering this*)
- **Bourgeois:** The middle-class/upper-class, or the owners of land and means of production
- **Proletariat:** The working class

Communism vs. Socialism		
Attribute	Communism	Socialism
Basic Philosophy	From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs.	From each according to his ability, to each according to his contribution.
Economy Planned By	Central government	Central government
Ownership of Economic Resources	All economic resources are publicly owned and controlled by the government. Individuals hold no personal property or assets.	Individuals own personal property but all industrial and production capacity is communally owned and managed by a democratically elected government.
Distribution of Economic Production	Production is intended to meet all basic human needs and is distributed to the people at no charge.	Production is intended to meet individual and societal needs and distributed according to individual ability and contribution.
Class Distinction	Class is abolished. The ability to earn more than other workers is almost nonexistent.	Classes exist but differences are diminished. It is possible for some people to earn more than others.
Religion	Religion is effectively abolished.	Freedom of religion is allowed.

# *communist reforms in china*

## **Social**

- *Education*
  - Many schools were opened to reduce the illiteracy rate, which was as high as 80 percent
- Women were given equal rights in marriage
- Public health campaigns were undertaken to bring diseases under control
- Opium dens and brothels were closed

## **Economic**

- *Finance*
  - Government nationalised China's major banks, railways and heavy industries
  - The People's Bank was established to control monetary matters including issuing of notes  
→ Successful; inflation was brought under control
- *Agriculture*
  - Land reform
    - Mao introduced an Agrarian Reform Law in 1950 and sent Communist Party workers to each village to enforce the law
    - They shared out the land in the village between the peasants
    - Got peasants to put the landlords on trial in so-called "People's Courts"
      - Landlords were accused of things like charging high rents or mistreating their tenants
      - Some were let off, some were imprisoned/executed
    - Increased peasants' support for Mao
  - Cooperatives
    - To solve problem of insufficient food production to avoid famine (land reform was not enough)
    - Mutual Aid Teams - peasants worked on each other's land, fertilising, killing pests or harvesting so that each family's plot would become more productive
    - Government supplied extra fertiliser and extra tools to reward families who grew more food
    - From 1953 Mao encouraged cooperatives
- *Industrial development*
  - Soviet Union loaned China \$300 million over five years
  - 10,000 Soviet engineers were sent to help China
  - 8,000 Chinese were sent to the Soviet Union for technical training
  - Like Stalin's industrialisation programme in the 1930s, priority was given to the heavy industries (e.g. steel, coal) and light industries were neglected
  - Living standards were sacrificed to make the industrialisation programme succeed

## **Mao's Five Year Plans**

- Economic problems facing China in 1949
  - Farming
    - Small units of land
    - No farm machinery, no fertilisers
    - Old-fashioned methods of farming by hand
    - Many peasants were on military service and were away from their villages
  - Industry
    - Years of foreign and civil wars had caused widespread damage to Chinese industry
    - Lack of investment
    - Outdated machines
    - Damage to transport systems (roads, rail, bridges)
  - Inequalities between rich and poor
    - In the countryside, most of the land was owned by a few rich landowners
    - The ordinary people lived in great poverty, poor housing, working long hours, often in dangerous conditions, for low pay, poor health, little education
    - In the cities, factories and businesses were owned by an elite rich
- Mao's economic aims
  - Mao wanted China to be a great military power which could dominate other countries but China was poor and most of the population were peasant farmers (over 90%\_
  - If China was to be strong, prosperous and independent, both Chinese industry and farming had to be reformed
  - Achieved by
    - Five Year Plans - based on the Russian model, Russian advisers brought in to help
    - Iron and steel - Mao made iron and steel production the central focus of his industrial reform programme
    - Farming reforms - cost of modernising industry would have to be paid by selling farm produce (need for farming reform)
  - Heavy industries → basic industries a country needs to develop before other economic areas can expand (chemical fertiliser, cement, coal, oil, steel, iron)
  - Mao wanted to develop heavy industries first as it helps develop infrastructure
  - Developing heavy industries first is also an ideology in Communist economic reform
  - How was the Five Year Plan organised?
    - Idea borrowed from Stalin's Russia
    - Nationalisation
      - Private businesses and industries are taken over and run by the national government (state control)
    - Central planning
      - All decisions about the economy are decided by the central (national) government
    - Targets/quotas
      - To increase output the government sets production 'targets' which to be met within a five year time span

- Incentives
  - To encourage workers and supervisors to work harder to reach the targets set, 'incentives' are offered e.g. bigger food ration, better apartment, better schooling for their children (...not Communism?)
- How did the Chinese people feel about the Five Year Plan?
  - Pride in helping to build a strong, modern and industrialised China
  - Concern due to increasing shortages both of food and luxury and consumer goods
- Most surplus farm produce was being sent overseas to buy machinery for China's industries
- The Chinese economy was focused on developing heavy industries and there were few resources available for consumer products (e.g. soap, clothing)
- Movement of peasants from countryside into cities to work in the new industries → more mouths to be fed

### **Hundred Flowers Campaign (百花运动), 1956**

- Slogan: *let a hundred flowers bloom, let a hundred schools of thought contend*
- Mao invited the people to assess the performance of the CCP and offer advice
- Mao's intention - prevent comparison between him and Stalin, as Stalin was attacked by his predecessor for his 'cult of personality'
- Mao: "It is only by using discussion, criticism and reasoning that we can really foster correct ideas, overcome wrong ideas and really settle issues."
- Was this a failed campaign?
  - Didn't fulfil intentions of correcting ideas, creating a more positive impression of the government, **exposing opposition (dissidents) and creating public discourse**
  - Successful campaign in terms of solidifying Mao's rule
- Results of the campaign
  - Mao silenced potential opponents
  - Mao instilled fear amongst the educated classes who were now less willing to stand against him
  - Mao prepared the ground for introducing the Great Leap reforms - communes, 'backyard furnaces' and an extreme form of communist society
  - China's intelligentsia (artists, writers, journalists, etc) were decimated which set back China's cultural development
  - Many students had their education interrupted due to the death of so many teachers (5 million children had their schooling terminated)
  - Some 4 million people may have lost their in the anti-rightist campaigns which started afterwards

## **The Great Leap Forward (GLF), 1958-1960**

- Second Five Year Plan
- Was to be achieved through mass mobilisation (unlock all the potential the workers' had to push the nation forward)
- But was really a gigantic experiment that ended with the deaths of over 20 million Chinese
- The Three Banners
  - The General Line
    - To "go all out, aim high and achieve greater, faster, better and more economical results in building socialism"
  - The Great Leap Forward
    - To surpass Britain and catch up with the US in industrial production within 15 years
  - People's Commune
    - Mass mobilisation would be achieved by joining the agricultural production cooperatives together
- Why was a new plan needed?
  - Mao believed the first Five Year Plan was too slow and resulted in too much bureaucracy
  - Mao envisaged a decentralisation of control to local Party cadres (leaders) who would mobilise the masses across China
  - China could then achieve rapid and sustained economic growth that would take China from the stage of Socialism to the stage of Communism
- Reasons for GLF
  - Political
    - Mao wanted another revolution to take control of industry and agricultural away from middle class 'experts'
  - Social
    - Still a lot of unemployment and Mao believed he could mobilise the masses in a continuing revolution to boost growth
    - Private family life would prevent this so had to be abolished
  - Economic
    - Mao was determined to turn China into a powerful industrial nation as quickly as possible
    - Greater factory and agricultural production was needed
- Key Features
  - Communes
    - New method of peasant life to achieve mass mobilisation
    - Mao wanted to abolish the private, family sphere of peasant life
    - August 1958: Collective and cooperative farms were joined into 24,000 communes with a population of 30,000 people in each
    - People in communes were organised into brigades of workers between 1000-2000 and then teams of workers of 50-200
    - Government tried to persuade people to join communes through propaganda
    - By October 1958, about 99.1% of the rural population had joined communes

- Seemed like the ideal way to organise China's peasant labour force:
  - Large enough to tackle large projects like irrigation and could run their own local schools and clinics
  - They also set up their own local industries to mine coal and iron and make steel in blast furnaces
- Life in the commune was lived communally - peasants ate in mess halls and nurseries looked after children
- Roles of the Commune
  - Large-scale farming district
  - Unit of local government
  - Local defence
  - Large-scale industrial and manufacturing unit
- Party Propaganda
  - Posters, slogans and newspaper articles were all used to encourage mass enthusiasm and long hours of work
- Industry

#### The General Line

- Cadres ignorant of rudimentary agriculture advised on planting techniques - all foolish ideas e.g. deep ploughing
- Imposed impossible quotas and targets in order to please superiors and demonstrate enthusiasm for the new commune system - reported exaggerated harvests to central government
- Peasants were reluctant to criticise and challenge authority, led to disasters in agriculture production

#### Cultural Revolution

- Mao resigns
  - Mao resigned as President of China in 1959
  - He remained Chairman of the CPC
- Revolution declared
  - By mid-1960s Mao was becoming concerned about the direction of China under Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping
  - Middle-class experts and townspeople again seemed to be getting wealthy at the expense of peasants
  - In 1966, Mao summoned the young people of China to Tiananmen Square and told them that the revolution was in danger from the leaders of the CCP ('Red Guards')
  - Mao called for young people to rise up and rid China of the anti-Communist elements within the Party, schools, universities and society
  - Why young people?
    - Too young to be impacted by previous policies (unaffected by the problems)
    - Impressionable, want to be galvanised for a cause
    - Educated to worship Mao
    - Prone to rebellion (lmao)

- Motives for the Cultural Revolution
  - Power struggle
    - After the GLF, Mao's own political position was weakened and his economic policies rejected
    - He wanted to defeat his opponents and regain political supremacy
  - Purify communism
    - Mao hated the development of a new CCP middle class which he saw as corrupt
    - He also labelled the economic reforms of moderates as 'capitalist'/'revisionist'
    - Chinese culture also had to change
  - Education & culture
    - Education was attacked as it produced this 'bureaucratic class' - it needed to be more revolutionary, less academic
    - Traditional Chinese culture was seen as bourgeois
  - Mao's comeback
    - Mao was confident enough to launch the Cultural Revolution as from 1965 he gained the support of Lin Biao and the PLA (People's Liberation Army)
    - He created the Red Guards and used propaganda to ensure support
- Red Guards
  - Loose grouping of college and secondary school students who embraced the cult of Mao and the aims of the cultural revolution
  - Supported by the PLA under Lin Biao and Mao's wife Jiang Qing
  - Mao denounced the Four Olds: old culture, ideas, customs and habits - Jiang Qing turned Mao's slogan into a programme for the eradication of traditional Chinese culture
  - A 'proletarian culture' was to be created and Lin Biao ordered the PLA not to oppose the Red Guards who attacked anything seen as capitalist/bourgeois
  - August 1966 - Mao ordered the Red Guards to 'bombard the headquarters' and attack the CCP from top down
  - Children denounced their own parents as anti-Communist - schools closed and many teachers were beaten and abused
  - By 1967 law and order had broken down as Red Guards fought 'reactionaries' with the death of over 400,000 across China
    - They shaved off the hair of girls with Western haircuts and ripped off Western-style clothes
    - Smashed windows of shops selling Western merchandise
    - Burnt bookstores, libraries and closed museums, art galleries, churches, temples and theatres
    - Stopped couples from holding hands
- Attacks on the Party
  - After attacking the Four Olds, Jiang Qing urged the Red Guards to attack what she called 'black dogs, slippery backsliders and rotten eggs' in the CCP
  - Liu Shaoqi was the main target - he was accused of being the no. 1 enemy of Communism
  - He was physically attacked and forced to write his own confession - he died in 1969 after being refused medical treatment for diabetes



- The cult of Mao
  - Mao was worshipped as the new emperor
  - Every day workers would gather before his portrait and read from his little red book
  - 740 million copies were printed 1966-1969
  - Statues and portraits of Mao were put up everywhere
- End of the Revolution
  - By 1967, the Cultural Revolution was spinning out of control - the Red Guards began to divide into rival factions
  - The PLA was used to restore order by Mao
  - Mao then sent the Red Guards to the countryside to 're-educate' themselves by learning from the peasants
  - By 1969 law and order had been restored in most areas - Mao once again had supreme control over China but over 1 million people had been killed
- Effects of the Cultural Revolution
  - Industry
    - Factories were reorganised to give power to the workers
    - Prizes and bonuses for workers were abolished
    - All workers were given equal wages
    - Technicians were dismissed and production fell
    - Transport ground to a halt
  - Education
    - Seriously disrupted
    - Students refused to sit exams as they showed up inequalities
    - All students were now made to learn from peasants and factory workers on work experience
    - Some schools were closed for over 2 years
  - Countryside
    - Students and graduates sent to work alongside peasants
    - Private land taken away from the peasants again
    - Markets and restaurants closed in villages
  - Government
    - Opponents were killed or sent into exile
    - Deng Xiaoping was removed
    - Revolutionary committees were set up by the PLA to run the country instead of the government
    - CCP members sent to the countryside for 're-education'