

CHINESE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC HISTORY

Section 1 (Setting the scene: geography, ethnicity, religion, language)

Empire: 221 BC – 1911 AD

- **confucianism** (630), Merit-based bureaucracy, and Million+ small village creates structure of local elites
- Brought to its heels by population growth, economic stagnation, social unrest, and British imperialism (19th c.)

Nationalism and Civil War: 1912-1949

- Nov 1912, **Sun Yat-Sen**, a Western-educated revolutionary, establishes Republic of China
- **Chiang Kai-shek** succeeds Sun (d. 1925) in 1927
- Chinese Communist Party (CCP), formed in '21, retreats inland, granting it greater strength with the massive peasantry
- 6,000-mile **Long March** (1934-5) (over 90% died en route) to Yan'an
- 1937: Japan invades China, weakening Nationalist popularity—then, in 1945, Chiang Kai-shek flees to Taiwan

Mao's Era (1949-1976)

- Land reform—taking from the 'rich' and giving to the poor—and the **collectivization** of agriculture (1953-7)
- **Hundred Flowers Movement** (1956, aborted) and the **Anti-Rightist Campaign** (1957)
- **Great Leap Forward** (1958-60): possibly the biggest central planning disaster in history. Why?
- The Great Proletarian **Cultural Revolution** and the **Red Guards** (1966-76)

Deng's Era (1977-1997)

- Purged during the Cultural Revolution, **Deng Xiaoping**—one of the few surviving Long Marchers—assumed power
- A radical break with Mao: increased role for market forces in coastal 'economic zones'
- The openness wrought by Deng's era fostered 'democracy walls' and, eventually, **Tiananmen Square** (1989)

The Technocratic Era (1997-present)

- The rise of **Jiang Zemin**: political stability and economic growth, but: unemployment, corruption, and inequality
- **Hu Jintao**'s ascendancy to PRC presidency in 2003. Both Jiang and Hu are '**technocrats**', not revolutionaries
- economic reform and political repression continues under Hu, for which see: Tibet, Xianjin, the internet, and elsewhere

Section 2

An average of *10% economic growth per year* in China for the last 30 years. This is really huge.

- State socialism and the command economy under Mao ("Five-Year Plans"): Great Leap Forward / Cultural Revolution
- "China goes to the market" under Deng Xiaoping (1978+)
 - "individuals...encouraged to work harder...to make money *for themselves* rather than to 'serve the people'"
 - (relative) privatization of industry, although there are still many state-owned enterprises
 - Consumer revolution: urban China as a shopper's paradise for the new middle (and upper) class
- Remaking the Countryside
 - From land reform in 1949 to collectivization in the '50s to the **household responsibility system** under Deng.
 - Rural industrializations: took off in the early '80s with **township and village enterprises** (TVEs)
- Broader trends
 - What is the **iron rice bowl**?
 - Negative changes have also come about with the easing of Maoism: collapse of national health coverage, corruption, income/employment no longer guaranteed
 - Pros and cons of the **one-child policy** (instituted in 1979)
 - The role of severe **environmental degradation** and the role of sustainable development

Section 5

- Comparing 5 provinces: what are some of the differences you notice?
- "The PRC has evolved from totalitarianism toward a less intrusive but still basically dictatorial political system that has been characterized as a "consultative authoritarian regime""
- Which would you rather have: 'democracy without development', as much of the rest of the developing world seems to be getting, or 'development without democracy', China's current path?