joined Zhao in promising that basic modernization policies, including openness to the West, would not be affected. The campaign to oppose bourgeois liberalization was restricted to party members and to urban areas. Some prominent reformers were criticized and disciplined, especially the astrophysicist Fang Lizhi, who had advocated a Western-style democracy with scientists as the new political elite, but the disciplinary measures were very mild.

The Thirteenth Party Congress in October 1987, planned as the retirement congress for Deng and his elderly colleagues, turned out to be indecisive. The old leaders retired from their formal positions but remained active behind the scenes, and Deng Xiaoping retained his post as chair of the Military Affairs Commission. While the reformer Zhao was confirmed as party secretary, the conservative Li Peng replaced Zhao as premier. In his address to the congress, Zhao pledged to continue reform policies in every area, but economic difficulties and continued pressure from the conservatives frustrated his plans. The inflation and food supply problems of 1988 were blamed on the reforms, and an economic policy of austerity and strengthened central control was forced on Zhao by the conservatives in September 1988. By the beginning of 1989 Zhao was on the defensive, and there was little momentum behind further reforms.

Tiananmen

In the early months of 1989 the intellectuals and students were beginning to stir as they had in 1986, but the circumstances were different. Previously, they had assumed that the party leadership was on their side because of Hu Yaobang’s support; now they felt that the government was deadlocked. The government was not very responsive either positively or negatively: petitions to grant amnesty to political prisoners were ignored, but the petitioners were not punished. People were quite open about expressing grievances and disagreements with the government, and students organized “democracy salons” in which they discussed ideas for reform.

Hu Yaobang’s unexpected death on April 15 provided the catalyst for student demonstrations in Beijing in favor of reform. It was the perfect occasion because Hu had been removed for his tolerance of the students two years earlier, but the authorities could hardly suppress processions commemorating a major party leader. The students made demands for reforms and evaded attempts to limit their demonstrations, but at this stage they were careful to be orderly and not to challenge the CCP’s political leadership. They criticized corruption and petitioned for democracy and for the recognition of autonomous student organizations. Nevertheless, an authoritative editorial was published in the People’s Daily on April 26 which accused the demonstrators of causing turmoil and claimed that a handful of counterrevolutionary instigators were responsible. The students and the Beijing public were outraged, and hundreds of thousands participated in new demonstrations calling for the repudiation of the editorial and announcing a boycott of classes.

Zhao Ziyang had been on a state visit to North Korea on April 26; he did not participate in drafting the editorial and did not see it in its entirety before its publication. When he returned to Beijing, he tried unsuccessfully to persuade Deng to repudiate the editorial. On May 4 Zhao gave an important speech in Beijing in which he said that the students were acting out of patriotism, implicitly distancing himself from the editorial. This mollified the students somewhat and the class boycott dissipated, but it also encouraged other groups—journalists, social scientists, workers, even policeman’s groups—to join in the demonstrations. Media publicity concerning the demonstrations became more favorable, and similar movements began to occur in most cities. As the occupation of Tiananmen continued, the student leadership became more and more radical. A massive hunger strike was initiated on May 13 which started with 400 participants and eventually involved thousands. On May 15 Mikhail Gorbachev visited Beijing, but Tiananmen had to be scratched from his itinerary because of the demonstrations. This was a major embarrassment for Deng Xiaoping, and the world press gathered for Gorbachev’s visit brought even more attention to the demonstrators. While Zhao attempted through various emissaries to contact the demonstrators and to satisfy their original demands, the student leadership, heedless from their success, refused to compromise or withdraw. The confrontation was vividly symbolized by a televised exchange between Premier Li Peng, who obviously wanted to squelch the demonstrations without making concessions, and a student, Wuerkaixi, who said that no one would leave Tiananmen until everyone was satisfied.
On May 19 Deng Xiaoping decided that harsh measures were needed to restore order. Zhao refused to be the spokesperson of the new policy and resigned as general secretary of the CCP. His last appearance in public was a tearful midnight visit to the students at Tiananmen. The following day martial law was declared and the demonstrators were ordered out of the square, but hundreds of thousands of Beijing residents went to major intersections to block the troops. By the end of May, the number camped out in Tiananmen had dwindled to a few thousand, but a statue called the “Goddess of Democracy” had been erected in the square and tensions were mounting. On the night of June 3 the army shot its way into the center of Beijing, killing hundreds of civilians as it approached Tiananmen from several directions. According to official accounts, more than 1,000 military vehicles were destroyed in the street fighting and more than 6,000 martial law forces were injured, with a few dozen killed. Unofficial estimates place the number of civilian fatalities between 700 and several thousand. The troops were much more careful in the square itself. After a tense confrontation between the soldiers and the remaining students in the square, the students were allowed to leave peacefully. Sporadic fighting between troops and citizens continued over the next few days in Beijing. On June 9 Deng Xiaoping thanked the troops and his conservative colleagues, the “veteran proletarian revolutionaries,” for rallying around the party and beating back the “counterrevolutionary rebellion.”

The 1990s

Tiananmen was a shattering experience for Chinese politics, even though on the surface order was restored. Both Chinese and foreigners had assumed that China was on a path toward reform and modernization that might have its ups and downs but was almost inevitable. Now the old leaders seemed to have turned on their country’s future and shot it dead in the streets. The prestige and credibility of the party was badly damaged. Basic uncertainty was reintroduced into Chinese politics. Deng and his colleagues did not seem to know where to go. They were united in opposing the demonstrators, but Deng was more reluctant than his conservative friends to roll back reform and to dismiss reformers.

The Fourth Plenum of the Thirteenth Central Committee of the CCP held in late June was the first authoritative meeting after Tiananmen, and it confirmed the dismissal of Zhao Ziyang as general secretary and named Jiang Zemin, the party secretary of Shanghai, as Zhao’s replacement. Jiang is a rather cautious person and not known as a reformer, but he does not have the blood of Tiananmen on his hands like Li Peng. Deng Xiaoping has thrown the weight of his prestige behind Jiang and has called on the entire leadership to accept him as his successor. In November 1989 Deng resigned from his post as chair of the Military Affairs Commission in favor of Jiang.

There have been some political elbowings within the central leadership in the five years since Tiananmen, but in general the struggles have been muted and the results have strengthened the regime’s commitment to Deng Xiaoping’s combination of economic reform and political conservatism. In the first few years there were various conservative initiatives to redirect foreign policy toward socialist countries, to prevent further economic reforms and to tighten central control over the provinces, but the conservatives did not manage to establish a new policy direction. Then in early 1992 Deng Xiaoping made a southern tour, during which he launched a decisive campaign in favor of further economic reform. His initiative was confirmed at the Fourteenth Party Congress in the fall of 1992, and the following two years saw many bold initiatives in economic policy. Unfortunately, the green light to economic growth led not only to very high growth rates, but also to an inflation rate that reached 25 percent by mid-1994. As a result, the policies of restraint and control which are associated with conservative management are again under consideration.

The personnel of the top leadership has remained remarkably stable since 1989. Thanks to Deng’s active support Jiang Zemin has strengthened his position. In March 1993 he added the title of President to his more significant ones of Party General Secretary and head of the Military Commission. The former President, Yang Shangkun, and his brother Yang Baibing suddenly lost their influential positions in the Military Commission in late 1992, evidently because Deng felt that they were challenging his authority. Li Peng has managed to continue as Premier, although several hundred delegates to the National People’s Congress refused to vote for him at his reelection in 1993. An important figure who has emerged as a reform leader is Zhu Rongji. As head of
the Central Bank and Vice-Premier, Zhu has been in charge of fiscal reform and macroeconomic controls. The relative stability of policy direction and leadership over the past five years is founded partly on continued economic success, but it has also depended on the longevity and continued political influence of Deng Xiaoping. Deng, who turned 90 in August 1994, personally intervened in 1992 in order to strengthen reform. But his most important political influence is a more passive one: Questions of succession cannot be raised or disputed while he is alive. There has been a waiting game at the center of Chinese politics in which everyone moves cautiously. Clearly, Deng’s preference is to have Jiang succeed him and continue his policies, but Deng’s influence will diminish when he dies. Like Mao before him, Deng greatly weakened his influence over future politics by removing two previous anointed successors. It is impossible to know who is ambitious unless, like the brothers Yang, they are exposed by premature failure.

Regardless of shifts in central leadership, it is not likely that the general direction of economic reform and international openness will be immediately affected by the death of Deng Xiaoping. This policy direction has proven so effective and stable over the past 15 years that it is more likely to be modified than replaced by future leaders. It is not clear, however, that future leadership will feel as constrained to support political conservatism. New leaders feel impelled toward bold initiatives in order to establish momentum, and one possibility open to future leaders would be to “reverse the verdict” on Tiananmen, much like Deng reversed the verdict on the Cultural Revolution. Such a gesture would imply a more politically active regime, but it is unlikely that any new leadership would change the basic political structure or the leading role of the Chinese Communist Party.

The problem with predicting leadership succession in China is that politics is not always confined to the elite. Popular perceptions of divisions among the top leadership have often elicited unstructured mass demonstrations, with Tiananmen being the most recent example. While it is not likely that demonstrations would topple the regime, the problem of how to deal with spontaneous popular activities will be complex and possibly divisive.

Another challenge for future leadership is China’s regional development and diversification. As Figure 14.6 makes clear, while all provinces have made progress under Deng, some have become much richer than others. There have been economic conflicts between rich coastal provinces and the inland provinces from which they buy their raw materials. There have also been confrontations between Beijing and provincial leaders, especially in Guangdong. While it is highly unlikely that provincial differences would lead to separatism, it is clear that there are now differences of interest and of power among the provinces, and that these will affect national politics as well as center-provincial relations. Meanwhile, the problem of diversity will assume a new dimension when Hong Kong reverts to China in 1997.

International relations will also be a growing challenge for China as was evident in the summer of 1995 when a U.S. decision to let Taiwan’s president Lee Teng-hui give a commencement address at Cornell University (his alma mater) led to an escalation of military tension in the Taiwan streets. China’s rapidly growing military power coupled with its claims to Taiwan and islands in the South China Sea, will make external issues increasingly critical and possibly volatile issues in Chinese politics.

The Political System’s Changing Environment

We conclude this survey of post-1949 history with a few general observations on the social and economic transformation that has accompanied four decades of CCP rule. In society, the most obvious change has been in class structure, with some social strata eliminated or neutralized and others expanded. The civil war and early campaigns not only destroyed the GMD governmental elite and its warlord allies, but also dispossessed landlords, merchants, industrialists, and other local political leaders. The new political elite, defined almost solely by CCP membership, differs significantly in ideology, political experience, and social origin. A new intermediate stratum of moderately privileged groups has emerged, consisting of skilled industrial workers, college and middle-school graduates, and professional, scientific, and technical workers. The 1980s also saw the emergence of an entrepreneurial class in response to the relaxation of central controls. This group, the individual households (gezi bu), has a tainted reputation because it often makes large profits in the gray areas of Chinese society and economy, but considers itself the victim of state overregulation and corruption, and enthusiastically supported the demon-
stratifications of 1989. Although most peasants remain poor and by far the largest class—perhaps 75 percent of the population lives in rural areas, though not necessarily engaging in agriculture—they are now better educated and more secure economically.

The nuclear family remains the basic residential and kinship unit, and continues to be a key economic unit for personal income and expenditures. The larger kinship groups (lineages and clans) have lost the power they once held. Instead, the work unit (the village in rural areas, the factory in urban areas) has become the primary social unit above the family. Membership in the work unit is usually permanent, and the unit provides a comprehensive range of services to its members. Within the family, the domination of older males has weakened, with much greater opportunity and mobility for women and young people. Clear differences remain in sex roles, but the change from traditional patterns has been great.

Finally, there has been a major shift in the relationship between government and society, centering on expansion of the government’s resources, personnel, operations, claims, and power. Although old indicators of economic and social status still have some relevance, increasingly it is government action that determines the citizen’s social and economic role and defines favored and disfavored status. This concentration of power in the hands of the party-state-army bureaucracies has had some leveling effect on Chinese society, particularly in conjunction with the egalitarianism of the Maoist ethic. At the same time, the expanded scope and responsibilities of government have made the political process more receptive to claims from society, to competition for social and economic rewards. In short, the new government is both more powerful and more responsive, in relation to society, than its predecessors. Since 1978, the CCP’s attempt to enlist all societal forces in the modernization effort has improved the prestige and strengthened the political influence of specialists and intellectuals.

As Table 14.3 and Figure 14.6 at the end of this chapter illustrate, China’s economy has changed tremendously since 1949, and these changes have reshaped the state’s resources and policy goals. The early economic goals of the regime were to reestablish a war-torn economy and to provide the necessities of life to a large population. Now the PRC has a fairly well-educated, healthy, and well-fed population with more sophisticated needs. Its industrial base has become quite impressive. In 1991 China was the world’s third largest steel producer; in 1949 it ranked twenty-eighth. China has become the world’s largest producer of coal, cement, cloth and television, and ranks fifth in oil production and fourth in electricity generated. From 1980 to 1992 the value of China’s industrial production rose almost four times; by comparison, U.S. industrial production rose 29 percent in the same 12 years, and Hungary’s production dropped by one-fourth. The results have also been impressive in agriculture. China is now the world’s largest producer of grain, meat, seafood, cotton and tobacco. It has also made impressive progress in technology. In 1986 U.S. firms began to contract for Chinese rockets to launch their satellites, and in 1990 China became the world’s third largest producer of computer diskettes, after the United States and Japan.

The economic reforms of the post-Mao era loosened central controls, emphasized material incentives, and allowed individual entrepreneurship. Private markets and small businesses became common in the cities, and a great variety of industries sprang up in rural areas. These nonstate activities utilized the unemployed and the underemployed and added greatly to China’s productivity and prosperity. A new level of society came into being which did not depend closely on state institutions, and the CCP’s capacity for tight control of the economy began to slip. Inflation became a serious problem in 1985 and reached more than 20 percent in urban areas in 1988 (see Figure 14.5). The government’s harsh retrenchment measures in 1989 brought down inflation, but they also depressed sales and production and increased unemployment. The cycle of rapid growth bringing with it the threat of high inflation has continued in the 1990s. In late 1994 a poor harvest increased inflationary pressures, leading to the adoption of price controls on some commodities. But China’s problems with inflation are basically the result of rapid growth rather than of overspending or shortage.

The special problem of the Chinese economy remains that of the rural work force and food production. Chinese agricultural growth must be intensive rather than extensive because of its land shortage. To give some comparative perspective on the problem, the United States would be in a situation similar to China’s if the United States had a population of 2 billion people. Conversely, China achieved the cur-
rent U.S. ratio of population to arable land by the middle of the 17th century with a population of 123 million, roughly one-tenth of its current population. In contrast to Khrushchev’s “virgin lands” development policy, the PRC has actually lost arable land because of urban growth. In 1978 each Chinese agricultural worker used three-quarters of an acre of arable land, compared to 1.5 acres in Japan, 4.8 acres in the Soviet Union, and 39.4 acres in the United States. Intensive cultivation in China produces high yields per acre—1,612 kilograms as against 1,417 kilograms in the United States, and 759 kilograms in the USSR—but the productivity of each farmer is limited by the land at his or her disposal. From 1960 to 1978 productivity per worker grew only 23 percent in China, compared to 215 percent in the United States and 247 percent in the USSR, and much of the growth during this period was the result of increasingly costly investments in fertilizer and irrigation. Since 1978 productivity per worker has doubled, partly because of the increased incentives of the responsibility system and partly because of commercialization and the growth of rural enterprises. The proportion of rural income earned from farming declined from 70 percent in 1978 to 50 percent in 1987. Nevertheless, the crushing pressure of people on arable land means that agricultural production and population control will remain key problem areas for the Chinese economy. China’s total arable land may only be capable of supporting a total of 1.5 to 1.6 billion people, a figure that may well be reached in 40 years even with strict family planning.

The effect of the land and population constraint on Chinese agriculture can be seen in Figure 14.1. China’s grain production rose in the 1950s, dipped in 1959–61 (with the loss of life of 20 to 30 million), rose through the 1960s and 1970s, and then rose sharply from 1979 to 1984. A plateau of production appeared to be reached in 1984, despite an exceptional harvest in 1990 it is very unlikely to be repeated in 1991. Meanwhile, because of population increases, per capita production of grain remained close to 1952 levels until the 1980s, and it is gradually lessening as grain production stagnates and population continues to grow. And prosperity encourages people to eat more, and to eat more meat. Given the size of its population China must continue to strive to grow its own food.

These broad social and economic parameters are politically significant in two respects. First, they suggest the extent and limits of revolutionary transformation in modern China and the political system’s performance in guiding that transformation. Second, they emphasize the social and economic logic of the new policies after Mao’s death. The PRC of the 1990s is vastly different from that of the 1950s, let alone the 1930s when Maoism took shape. Now a budding international power—possessing nuclear weapons and space technology, deeply involved in global politics, and seeking foreign trade and technology—the PRC cannot sustain the earlier isolationist policy of self-reliance. Domestically, the increasing complexity and sophistication of Chinese society, and the dependence of economic growth on an accelerated technical revolution, and decentralized market forces, have made the political domination of the CCP more difficult and less justifiable.

CONSTITUTION AND POLITICAL STRUCTURE

The political structure of the PRC consists of two major organizational hierarchies—the state and the party—plus the army and a variety of mass organizations that provide additional links between these hierarchies and the citizenry. All these institutions have undergone significant changes since 1949, both internally and in relation to each other. In the Maoist era, politics took command of institutions, creating considerable uncertainty and fluidity in the political structure, whereas post-1976 institutionalization has clarified the structure.

State

The PRC’s initial state structure, from 1949 to 1954, was a temporary administrative system that relied heavily on regional military units to oversee reconstruction and early reforms. A constitution was adopted in 1954, establishing a centralized government to administer the transition to socialism. Soon, however, the Great Leap Forward brought important changes, as decentralization and CCP assertiveness weakened central state organs, while the communes created new patterns of local adminis-
FIGURE 14.2

STRUCTURE OF THE STATE, 1982 CONSTITUTION

tration. The Cultural Revolution further unsettled the 1954 system and, in effect, abolished the constitution. State structure remained in limbo, without effective guidelines, until a second constitution was adopted in 1975. The 1975 constitution incorporated many principles of the Cultural Revolution, but in 1978 another new constitution was adopted, which was somewhat closer to the 1954 model. In 1982 a new constitution was adopted, reflecting Deng’s interest in legal and institutional reform. We discuss the 1982 constitution, but most of the terminology applies in earlier periods as well (see Figure 14.2).

According to the constitution, the National People’s Congress (NPC) is the highest organ of state power. It is a large representative body, consisting of 3,000 deputies elected by provincial-level congresses and army units. It meets once a year for five years. The constitution, however, allows NPC meetings to be advanced or postponed in emergencies; there was no meeting of the NPC between February 1965 and January 1975, for example. In any case, NPC meetings have been short and mostly ceremonial, for deputies hear and then ratify major reports and documents presented to them by party leaders. The NPC symbolizes the regime’s popular base, but in practice it is not the highest organ of power. That power resides in the CCP, which exercises leadership over the state and all other organizations.

The NPC has extensive formal powers of amendment, legislation, and appointment. It elects the president and vice-president of the PRC, the chairman of the Central Military Commission (CMC), the president of the Supreme People’s Court, and the chief procurator of the Supreme People’s Procuratorate; decides (approves recommended choices) on the premier, vice-premiers, ministers and commissioners, and the members of the CMC; and may recall all these officials it has chosen. Except for the most important formalities, all these powers may be exercised by the NPC’s Standing Committee, a smaller body of officials resident in Beijing and hence able to meet in regular working sessions throughout the year. The president of the PRC is executive and ceremonial head of state; since 1993 Jiang Zemin had held this office in addition to his most important post of General Secretary of the CCP. The CMC is another new organ of state, because previous constitutions assigned top control of military affairs to the CCP, but at present its membership is identical with that of the party’s Military Commission.

The State Council is the chief administrative organ of government. It includes the premier (Zhou Enlai, 1954–76; Hua Guofeng, 1976–80; Zhao Ziyang, 1980–87; and Li Peng, 1987–present), several vice-premiers, and the ministers who head the ministries and commissions of the central government, and it meets once a month. The State Council consists mainly of high-ranking party members. As translator of party decisions into state decrees, with control over government action at all levels, it is the administrative center of state power. The core of the State Council is its Standing Committee, which meets twice a week.

The constitution entrusts judicial authority to a Supreme People’s Court at the central level and to unspecified local people’s courts. All courts are formally responsible to the congresses at their respective levels. The procuratorates, also formally responsible to the congresses at each level, are supervisory and investigative bodies set up to ensure observance of the constitution and the law. These organs were first established in the 1950s but were bypassed during the Maoist period. Their restoration in the 1978 constitution, which had expanded sections on the court system as well, coincided with the renewed interest in legality that has marked the post-Mao period. Even so, actual operation of the PRC’s formal legal organs appears to be controlled by the political-administrative hierarchy.

Local state structure includes three levels of government: provincial, county, and basic. Each unit at the first three levels includes a people’s congress defined as the “local organ of state power” and an administrative structure called the people’s government. Like the NPC, local congresses meet rather briefly and irregularly. The standing committees of provincial and county congresses are a recent innovation to give representative organs more constant and thorough supervision over their governments, courts, and procuratorates. Nonetheless, local governments and their departments are the most significant local organs of state. They are part of a centralized administrative hierarchy in which higher governments supervise all those beneath them, with power to revise or annul lower-level actions. Control
from higher governments (ultimately the State Council) and local CCP bodies outweighs the limited supervision of local congresses.

Provincial congresses, including those of the three great cities (Beijing, Shanghai, and Tianjin) directly administered by the central government and the five autonomous regions, have five-year terms and are indirectly elected by the lower-level congresses within their jurisdictions. The same rules apply to other cities large enough to be districted, although they are technically county-level units under provincial jurisdiction. Congresses at the county level have three-year terms and are elected directly by the voters. The term “autonomous” or “nationality” denotes units heavily populated by non-Han Chinese minorities. These units have constitutional guarantees for preserving minority culture and representation but differ little administratively from regular units.

Basic units are in the most direct contact with citizens. They include the township (called the commune from 1958 to 1982) and smaller towns, along with smaller, less formally organized neighborhood committees and villages. The township government is not as elaborately organized as the county and its people’s congress does not have a standing committee, but it is charged with the oversight and implementation of most of the ordinary business of government as it affects people’s lives. In rural areas the village (called the brigade or production brigade from 1958 to 1982) is an important unit of local decision making, but from the point of view of formal governmental structure it is a unit of self-management by the masses rather than a level of government.

The 1982 constitution gave formal expression to several new tendencies in Chinese politics. It increased congressional powers, specified the roles and autonomy of the state more clearly, limited most high officials to two terms, and extended direct election of deputies from the basic level to the county level. These attempts at structural clarification and reform of government were supported by a number of new laws, as well as by various efforts to promote the rule of law and the correct functioning of institutions. Greater attention was paid in the media to the meetings of people’s congresses and the opinions of delegates, and occasionally cases would be reported in the 1980s in which a people’s congress or standing committee successfully prevailed against the wishes of local party leadership. In general, however, it remained true that the party was in control of politics, and the people’s congresses had only an advisory role to play. Reformers hoped for more, and during the Tiananmen crisis a serious effort was made to have the National People’s Congress take political control and revoke the declaration of martial law. The party reasserted its power without difficulty, but it is imaginable that a new reform phase or a new crisis could present the NPC with increased political power.

Party

The CCP constitution adopted at the Twelfth Party Congress in September 1982 sets forth an organization roughly parallel to that of the state (see Figure 14.3). Positioning some form of party organization alongside most state organs strengthens CCP leadership of the state by encouraging party knowledge about and supervision of issues handled by state agencies. Whatever formal powers a state organ holds, the party organ at the corresponding level is the authoritative political voice. Although the 1982 constitution goes much further than previous ones in insisting that party members observe the state constitution and other laws, so that the CCP does not encroach on nonparty powers, it affirms the CCP’s general leadership in all areas of Chinese life.

The 1982 party constitution, like its state counterpart, grants impressive powers to a hierarchy of party congresses. As in the state system, however, the congresses at various levels meet infrequently and briefly, and it is the committees elected by these congresses, or the standing committees and secretaries elected by the full committees, which actually wield the party’s immense power. Party congresses are elected by the congresses immediately below them in the hierarchy; ordinary party members choose their representatives directly only at the lowest level. The National Party Congress is to meet every five years, although the constitution remarks that meetings may be advanced or postponed. Historically, CCP congresses have been irregular: the Seventh Party Congress met in 1943, the eighth in 1956, the ninth in 1969, the tenth in 1973, the eleventh in 1977, the twelfth in 1982, and the thirteenth in 1987. The most recent congress was the fourteenth; 2,000 delegates
met for one week in October 1992. Despite the irregularity in convocation, congresses are important events. Each has elected a significantly altered Central Committee and ratified changes in the CCP’s general program.

In addition to formal approval of major policy changes, the National Party Congress elects the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection and the Central Committee. The Discipline Commission (which had antecedents in the Control Commissions of the 1956 constitution that were abolished in the Cultural Revolution) was set up in 1977 to oversee party compliance with various laws and regulations and to improve party discipline and effectiveness. It also has supervisory powers over the work of similar commissions at provincial and county levels.

The Central Committee (CC) acts for the Congress and is the most important representative body.
in the PRC. It is identified by the number of the congress that elected it, and its full meetings are known as plenums and also numbered sequentially. Thus, the first CC meeting following the Thirteenth Party Congress was the First Plenum of the Thirteenth CC. The constitution calls for plenums at least once a year, a provision followed closely since Mao’s death, though not during the Maoist period. Many partial or informal CC meetings occur between plenums because most CC members are high-ranking officials holding important positions in Beijing or provincial capitals. Through plenums and other meetings, the CC provides a forum for discussing and ratifying major policies, if not actually initiating or deciding them.

The CC’s most important duty is electing the party’s top leadership, namely the Politburo and its Standing Committee, the general secretary, and the Secretariat; it is also said to decide on the membership of the party’s Military Commission (more commonly known in the past as the Military Affairs Committee), although it is likely that top elites actually choose the members of this sensitive body. The Politburo, and particularly the Standing Committee of the Politburo, exercise all functions and powers of the CC between plenums and constitute the supreme political elite of China. Until 1982 they were headed by the party chairman, a position held by Mao from the 1950s until September 1976, by Hua Guofeng until June 1981, and by Hu Yaobang until September 1982. The 1982 constitution abolished the chairmanship, leaving the general secretary as effective chairman of the Politburo and head of the Secretariat. Although the general secretary is the highest-ranking party leader, he is not all-powerful. Hu Yaobang was forced to resign by an enlarged meeting of the Politburo in January 1987. Premier Zhao Ziyang replaced him as acting general secretary until the Thirteenth Party Congress which confirmed the appointment. On May 19, 1989, an enlarged Politburo meeting deprived Zhao of his power, and in June a Central Committee plenum appointed Jiang Zemin in his stead. The enlarged Politburo meetings have been so powerful because in times of crisis they have been gatherings of all the old leaders, who then unite their prestige behind a decision.

Under the 1956 constitution, a staff agency known as the Secretariat supervised all the central party departments and committees responsible for particular lines of work. The 1973 and 1977 constitutions omitted reference to it in a bow to Maoist principles of bureaucratic simplicity. Although badly damaged by the Cultural Revolution, the party’s powerful central bureaucracy survived and gradually assumed its former role. The Secretariat was reestablished at the Fifth Plenum of the Eleventh CC in February 1980 and was duly formalized in the 1982 constitution. Through it and its departments, presided over by the secretary general, the Politburo supervises execution of its decisions by lower-level secretaries and party committees in all localities and units in China.

The organizational principle of the party is democratic centralism. Democracy requires election of all leading bodies by their members or congresses, regular reports to members and representative bodies, and opportunities for discussion, criticism, and proposals from below. Centralism requires unified discipline throughout the party. As the constitution says, individuals are subordinate to the majority, lower levels are subordinate to higher levels, and all party members and organizations are subordinate to the National Congress and its CC. Centralism is also evident in committee powers to convene their congresses and in higher-level powers of approval over all lower-level decisions.

Both post-Cultural Revolution constitutions have contained strong language on the need to maintain party discipline and combat factionalism. The most concrete sign was creation of the discipline commissions in 1977. The 1982 constitution gave even more attention to the operation of these commissions and went into great detail on the conduct required of party members and circumstances under which they might lose their membership. Nevertheless, corruption at all levels within the party has been a growing problem in the post-Mao period.

Army

The People’s Liberation Army (PLA) has always had a uniquely important role in Chinese Communist politics. From its founding in the late 1920s until 1949, the PLA organization was virtually inseparable from the party organization, and the army held major government responsibilities in the areas under CCP control. Since 1949 the PLA (which includes
the navy and air force as well as ground forces) has continued to perform a variety of nonmilitary functions, including party recruitment and training, economic construction, and education. During the early reconstruction years and the Cultural Revolution, it also assumed important administrative powers. Moreover, the salience of internal and external security issues in Chinese politics has placed the PLA, willingly or not, close to the center of many national policy debates. In the 1980s China’s more peaceful international posture and the modernization needs of the civilian economy pushed the PLA more into the political background. Of course, the declaration of martial law and the massacre in Beijing returned the PLA to an active function in central politics, and it has been rewarded with a larger share of the budget. It is clear, however, that there were mixed emotions within the PLA about its repressive activities.

The PLA lies administratively in the State Council’s Ministry of National Defense, and the 1982 state constitution vests leadership of it in the Central Military Commission; the previous constitution had named the CCP chairman commander of the armed forces. Despite this shift toward more formal state authority, the CCP has exercised and will probably continue to exercise de facto leadership of the PLA through the party CC’s Military Affairs Commission and the system of political departments within the PLA. The Military Affairs Commission has always been one of the most important party organs and has held general responsibility for military affairs throughout PRC history.

Political departments, headed by commissars, are a regular part of each PLA unit’s general headquarters down to the division level; below that, they are represented by a political office in the regiment and by political officers in battalions, companies, and platoons. Thus, a commissar (or political officer at lower levels) works alongside the commanding officer of every army headquarters or unit, and is responsible for implementing CCP policies and carrying out political education among the troops. Political departments and their commissars are subordinate, not to the military commanders in their military units, but to the next highest functionary in the CCP organization. Their chain of command within the army ascends through higher political departments to the General Political Department and the Military Affairs Committee. At the same time, each is responsible to the CCP committee in its own military unit.

**Mass Organizations**

Chinese political institutions also include many mass organizations that mobilize ordinary citizens, supplementing and supporting the two dominant institutions. In general, mass organizations are national in scale and have a hierarchy of units extending down to a mass membership defined by a common social or economic characteristic, such as youths, students, women, workers, or other occupational groups. These organizations play a large role in implementing the party’s mass line, “coming from the masses and going to the masses.”

The most important mass organization before the Cultural Revolution was the Communist Youth League (CYL). During the 1950s and early 1960s, the CYL was responsible for leadership of all youth activities and other youth organizations, was a major source of new recruits for the CCP, and generally assisted in implementing all policies at the basic level. Other important mass organizations before the Cultural Revolution included the Young Pioneers, for children aged 9 to 15; the All-China Women’s Federation; the All-China Federation of Trade Unions; and a variety of associations for occupational and professional groups. Closely related were the democratic parties, a collective name for eight minor parties that cooperated with the Communist-led United Front in the late 1940s and continued to operate after 1949 under CCP leadership. Their umbrella organization, the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), was responsible for drafting the 1954 state constitution, and it continued to meet in conjunction with national and local people’s congresses until the early 1960s.

All these mass organizations were suspended during the Cultural Revolution. They were replaced by the Red Guards (mainly student organizations) and “revolutionary rebels” (mainly organizations of workers and peasants), localized popular organizations that played a vigorous, militant, and sometimes independent role in the Cultural Revolution. Despite their early prominence, their evident urban strength, and their close ties with some Maoist leaders, Red Guards and rebels never established themselves as
national organizations and were disbanded in the later stage of the Cultural Revolution.

The old mass organizations began to revive after 1969. Following the fall of the Gang of Four, which was blamed for wreaking havoc on mass organizations, reactivation accelerated. National congresses of the CYL, Women's Federation, and Trade Union Federation were held in late 1978. The professional associations became prominent again, and even the democratic parties—which had been portrayed in the Cultural Revolution as strongholds for China's "bourgeois intellectuals"—reappeared. The CPPCC has returned to its role as a symbol of a united front, now in the service of modernization, and has resumed its meetings in conjunction with people's congress meetings. Mass organizations including the CYL and the CPPCC were prominently in favor of reform, but they have continued normal functioning since Tiananmen. Their publications support the repression, but they contain many hints of opposition and critical distance. In the 1990s the party has continued to defend the monopoly of these established mass organizations and has not permitted autonomous labor unions, student organizations or other groups that might be beyond the reach of party leadership. The right to form autonomous organizations was a major demand of Tiananmen demonstrators.

POLITICAL CULTURE AND POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION

Two thousand years of imperial rule reinforced by Confucian orthodoxy had given traditional China a remarkably stable and sophisticated political culture that was moralistic in tone and centralized in direction. But in the twentieth century the collapse of traditional institutions led to a rejection of imperial Confucian ideology and thereby to a profound crisis in cultural orientation and values. The warlord period was a time of cultural chaos as well as political disunity. While the GMD responded by attempting to reinstitutionalize Confucian values, the CCP has always had as part of its mission the founding of a "new China" in a social and moral sense. It was eager to promote a complete socialist society and to do battle with what it considered the remnants of feudalism and the temptations of capitalism.

Since 1949 the policies and values of the CCP have had a massive effect on life in China. As we will see in this section, the family, the educational system, and the media have each been transformed several times. But the lingering influence of both the imperial past and the turbulence of the twentieth century can still be seen. Although the content of the culture has been changed, the CCP strives to instill a highly moralistic, centralized political culture as did its Confucian forebears. Unlike the long-established orthodoxy of traditional China, there have been numerous radical changes in the ideology of the PRC. As a result, political socialization in China is not simply the product of the party's new institutions and messages; it is also deeply affected by each individual's personal experience of political turbulence and ideological change. Moreover, the loosening of societal controls and exposure to foreign influences under Deng Xiaoping has given the post-Cultural Revolution generation a critical distance from the CCP's message that earlier generations did not have.

Revolutionary Values

The CCP views its efforts to instill a revolutionary morality in China as a constant struggle against remnants of feudalism, bourgeois temptations, and human weakness. The idealism and destructiveness of the struggle was most clear in the Cultural Revolution. At that time activities such as raising goldfish or collecting stamps were condemned, and the smallest failings of individuals were used to condemn them for "going the capitalist road." Red Guards even reversed traffic signals for a while, feeling that it was bourgeois to stop on red, the revolutionary color.

The fanaticism of the Cultural Revolution was followed by a general relaxation of political and ideological demands by the post-Mao regime. Pastimes and private money-making ventures were tolerated, and clothes became fashionable. There was considerable confusion among the public and within the party and the Communist Youth League as to what was enlightened and what was immoral. But the party did not forsake its role of moral leader and defender of orthodoxy. In 1979 it stipulated that everyone must uphold the four fundamental principles (as noted earlier: the socialist road, the leadership of the CCP, the dictatorship of the proletariat, and Marxism-Leninism Mao Zedong Thought). In 1981 a
crackdown on crime began which involved thousands of executions, some of them public. And in 1983 there was a brief campaign to “oppose spiritual pollution,” in which such things as pornography, Western hairstyles, and disco dancing were condemned. The campaign was halted when it became apparent that its spirit was contrary to modernization and openness to the West. In the aftermath of Tiananmen, there have been new campaigns to emulate revolutionary heroes, respect Chinese culture, oppose pornography and corruption, and cherish the PLA, but now many Chinese view such movements as empty rituals. Popular culture in the 1990s has become more materialistic and hedonistic than it was in the 1980s, influenced by the disillusionment of Tiananmen.

Agents of Socialization

The Family  The traditional Chinese family has been a major object of reformers’ attacks for the last hundred years. The traditional ideal was a multigenerational family under one roof, ruled absolutely by the senior male, with wives marrying into their husband’s family and subordinated to their mother-in-law, and supplemented by concubines and bondservants. Beginning with campaigns against foot-binding, progressives pressed for the end of arranged marriages, polygamy, and subjection of women within the family. The plays of Henrik Ibsen that dramatized the plight of Victorian women were a powerful inspiration to Chinese progressives in the 1920s. Women students and factory workers were major elements of early CCP membership, and in rural areas women’s unions founded by the party were instrumental in transforming marital relations in the countryside. Nevertheless, the family, not the individual, remains the basic unit of Chinese society. Therefore, it is particularly important to understand the fate of the family since 1949.

Family policy might be divided into three main phases. The first occurred in the early 1950s and was the culmination of the progressive ideals of the CCP. Symbolized by the marriage law of 1950, freedom of marriage and divorce and equality of the sexes were recognized, while the power of lineages over local affairs was replaced by that of the party. Needless to say, habits did not change overnight, but tremendous grass-roots effort was put into reducing the violence and domination that had been an accepted part of family life. The second phase, from the mid-1950s to 1980, was one of the decline of family power under political and economic pressures. Politically, the turmoil of the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution subjected families to generational and ideological cross-pressures. Economically, the emergence of the production team in the countryside and the work unit in the city reduced the family’s role as an independent unit of production, even though it remained the unit of residence and consumption.

The third phase is marked by some important policies that are somewhat contrary in their effects. The policy of decollectivizing agriculture has again made the family a unit of production, a fact that puts more weight on the familial decision-making structure. At the same time, a new marriage law adopted in 1980 has further liberalized divorce, although obtaining a divorce remains a difficult process.

Probably the most important policy affecting family life is the “one child per family” birth control policy. This policy, introduced in the late 1970s, favors families with one child and, depending on local enforcement, penalizes or prohibits more than one child. The policy was adopted because of the unsupportable population increase that would occur if the current generation reaching childbearing age were to have more than one child. Given the great importance attached to carrying on the family name, the birth of a girl as the family’s only child provoked serious crises in many households, and it led occasionally to abuse of child and wife, divorce, and even infanticide. All these actions were strenuously opposed by the government, but they occurred because of the collision between a strict population policy and China’s strong and patriarchal family tradition.

Ethnicity and Religion  Only about 7 percent of China’s population belongs to non-Chinese ethnic groups; therefore, China’s ethnic problems are not as serious as those of the former Soviet Union or Yugoslavia. Minority ethnic groups are usually concentrated in the border provinces, and areas with a significant minority population are designated as minority autonomous areas. Five whole provinces are autonomous areas: Inner Mongolia, Tibet, Guangxi, Yunnan, and Ningxia, and thirteen other provinces contain minority units. Despite the low population, minority areas are important to China because they
cent of primary school graduates went on to high school. Not only has China transformed the educational opportunities of its population, but it is also providing educational services that are considerably broader and more effective than those of the average developing country. But education has not simply been a success story. The entire system was shut down for a time during the Cultural Revolution, and students led the challenges to the regime in the 1980s. Despite accomplishments, educational policy has pursued a zigzag course and has occasionally posed acute political problems for the regime.

The first phase of educational development (1949–57), was characterized by rapid expansion at all levels, but especially at the university level. By 1957 there were more places available in universities than there were middle school graduates. Also during this period the diverse collection of private and public schools that the regime inherited was reshaped into a uniform state educational system based on the Soviet model.

In the leftist phase (1957–76), the pattern of growth was reversed. University enrollment slowed and eventually declined, while the expansion of primary and junior middle schools in the countryside became the target. The educational system remained under central control, but many of the new schools were locally financed, and the teachers were recruited locally. The leftist period put primary education within the reach of virtually every child. Secondary education, which had been a rare chance to attend a boarding school in a rural town, now became a common part of the local school system. Perhaps inevitably, the overall quality of education declined.

The big event in education during the leftist period was of course the Cultural Revolution. In the universities, radical critiques of bourgeois tendencies in education played an important part in the early development of the movement, and student organizations of Red Guards in high schools and colleges were active in much of the destruction and chaos from 1966 to 1968. The entire school system was shut down by the end of 1966, and the universities did not reopen until 1970. Even after 1970 the colleges continued to be disrupted by various leftist experiments, including the abolition of entrance exams, the assignment of faculty and students to work in the countryside, and constant ideological and po-
litical activities. China’s colleges did not resume normal functioning until 1977.

Educational policy of the post-Mao period has reversed leftist priorities and emphasized qualitative improvement rather than expansion. The shift of emphasis from quantity to quality was made possible by the achievement of near universal primary schooling and broad availability of secondary schooling during the leftist period. It was also encouraged by a shrinking cohort of school-age children as a result of birth control policies begun in the early 1970s. Universal compulsory education to the ninth grade remains a major goal, but the most spectacular changes occurred at the college level, partly because of the modernizing goals of the regime, but also partly because of the imbalance in the system created by the rapid expansion of the primary and secondary schools in the previous two decades. The imbalance can be illustrated by comparison with the United States. In 1990 China had four times as many primary and high school students as the United States, approximating the population ratio, but only 15 percent as many college students. But in 1970 China had less than 1 percent as many college students. The new emphasis on academic quality, higher education, and international openness transformed the educational world of the 1980s. To be sure, the CCP and the CYL continued to occupy central institutional roles, and open challenges to authority remained risky. But the requirement of ideological correctness became a more distant and intermittent influence on academic life. Faculty pushed for more control over academic matters, and promotions tended to be made on the basis of scholarly reputation rather than loyalty. Because admission to universities was based primarily on national examinations starting in 1977, ambitious high school students concentrated on preparing for the exams. University students could dream of going to graduate school abroad. Over 70,000 Chinese students were studying in the United States and Japan in 1991. Chinese students are now the largest group of foreign students in the United States.

The shift in China’s academic environment in the post-Mao period was the result of the CCP’s own emphasis on modernization. In order for China to make progress in science and technology, universities had to be expanded, and experts had to be encouraged and respected. But there was a deep-seated contradiction between the new role of the universities as agents of modernization and their old role as agents of socialization into the party-state. The students who participated in the demonstrations of December 1986 and April and May 1989 had become part of a new world which was quite different from that of Deng Xiaoping.

University students and faculty had been at the forefront of demonstrations not just in Beijing but throughout the country, and they were the group most profoundly affected by the repression of 1989. Military drills and study sessions were implemented, and there was little continuing protest. However, the loss of faith in Deng Xiaoping, in the CCP, and in their own political hopes led to a general alienation and cynicism. Of course, intellectuals had been the victims of many previous turns in Chinese politics, but hitherto the intellectuals as a group tended to accept the regime’s criticism and, as in the case of the Red Guards, became divided among themselves. The university atmosphere of the early 1990s appears more like that of the intelligentsia in Eastern Europe in the 1970s: a disengaged, apolitical cynicism about public authority, disillusionment about the possibility of effecting significant change, and pursuit of private interests. Disillusionment contributes to the apolitical, materialistic atmosphere fostered by the repressiveness of the regime and universal caution in anticipation of Deng’s death. Of course, political moods in China can change, and nowhere more quickly than in the universities.

The Communications System China has only recently become a mass media society. The completion of the wired radio network in the early 1960s finally brought most residents into instant, direct touch with Beijing. The wired network was supplemented in the 1970s by the spread of transistor radios, and in the 1980s the television became the most desired consumer good. China is now the world’s largest manufacturer of televisions. The publication of newspapers and magazines has also increased enormously since 1949, although the Cultural Revolution led to a suspension of most periodicals. As Table 14.2 suggests, the post-Mao era has been a golden age of media, with the amount, quality, and variety available to the public expanding every year.

Domestic media in China can be divided into three categories: mass media (print, radio, and