CHAPTER III

The Political Framework: Institutions and the Evolution of Policy

The study of stable political systems, whether democratic or authoritarian, often begins with analysis of the institutional framework within which politics takes place. Political structure is a logical place to start because it channels the flow of political transactions and usually offers a more durable image of the system's character than do the political personalities or issues that dominate particular periods. Institutions are not immutable, of course, nor do they determine political outcomes, but in most cases it is helpful to understand institutional structures and relationships before attempting to analyze political processes.

In revolutionary regimes, institutions are less important. Revolutionary elites are usually committed to the destruction of some institutions, suspicious of others, and reluctant to devote their energies to building new ones. There is still a structure of political activities, of course, but it often consists of informal personal relationships, polemics over strategies and policy programs, shifting power relations within the revolutionary movement that are largely concealed from outsiders, and the like. The effective structure is not likely to be found in formal political institutions, which typically come and go with bewildering speed or, if they endure, simply fail to exercise the powers attributed to them.

The elusive role of institutions in a revolutionary system is a problem for the student of Chinese politics. During the years surrounding the revolutionary victory of 1949 and during the long Maoist push of 1958–1976, Chinese political institutions were generally in flux and often in disarray, providing few guidelines for understanding the political scene. Yet, briefly in the mid-1950s and especially since 1976, PRC institutions have been more important as guides to the actual distribution and management of political power. Moreover, a few institutions have been relatively stable for most of PRC history and all of them have been part of the vocabulary of Chinese political debates, so the student still needs to know the names and relative importance or durability of the principal institutions. Accordingly, we begin analysis of the political framework with a brief discussion of some relatively constant organizational principles, followed by a look at the CCP, the state structure of the PRC, and the mass organizations.

Identifying institutions is still only a first step toward understanding the framework of Chinese politics. This is so because that framework derives primarily from two other sources: first, the policy sets, models, or “lines” that have dominated key periods of post-1949 history, and second, the ideology of the ruling party. The pattern of post-1949 policy changes provides the single most important component of the political framework because it establishes the general characteristics of each period—the policies, campaigns, and goals as well as institutional relationships—that have in fact been the focus of most Chinese political debate and action. Without an appreciation of this kind of periodization, one cannot understand why the significance of formal institutions fluctuates and how the framework has evolved over time. Hence, after its opening survey of institutions, the chapter extensively discusses the evolution of post-1949 policy, treating institutional development as only one of several key indicators of changes in the political framework. Ideology, the other major source of systemic guidelines, is analyzed in Chapter 4 in an effort to reconcile enduring features of the Communist framework with patterns of change within it.

A. POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS

CONSTANTS OF CHINESE POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

Although Chinese politics appears to change completely in each phase of its development, some organizational features are
The Political Framework

Levels of Hierarchy. Almost all institutions and policies involve four broad levels of organization: center, intermediate, local, and basic. The center has always been in Beijing. The most important intermediate level has usually been the province (including "autonomous regions" and the three largest cities), but there are other intermediate levels as well. Generally, counties and cities have been the most important local level of hierarchy, and the basic level includes a variety of units within counties and cities. The interrelationships of these levels are frequently the target of discussion and reforms; however, the situation of a multilevel organizational structure appears inescapable, and the features of each level are fairly constant.

The center is the policy-making level. From its vantage point, all other organizational levels are "local."

The scope of its powers is not restricted by rights or responsibilities reserved to intermediate or local levels. It is quite common for the center to intervene in provincial and even local and basic level affairs, and any significant action by a lower level is reported to the center. Center personnel are quite aware of their political importance, but they are also vulnerable to policy shifts and struggles within the higher leadership. Therefore, the political atmosphere in Beijing is more exciting, tense, and volatile than in the rest of China—quite comparable to "Potomac fever" in Washington, D.C.

The primary task of intermediate levels is to manage lower levels of government in the implementation of center policy. The size of China makes intermediate management a necessary task. The average province has a population of over 30 million, compared to the average American state's population of less than 5 million. Because they are indispensable, intermediate levels have their own weight and momentum vis-a-vis the center, even though they lack key policy-making rights. Inevitably, they control a vast reach of personnel and administrative decisions that are beyond the routine oversight of the center. In addition to the provinces, the intermediate level has included multiprovincial regions that were especially important in 1949–1954 and prefectural districts between the provincial and county levels. Since 1988, the importance of major cities as an intermediate level of government has increased rapidly. One-fourth of China's counties are now under the administration of a city government.

The execution of policy occurs at the local level. Comprehensive local-level administration is coordinated by the county in rural areas and by towns or city districts in urban areas. This is the lowest level at which the organizational apparatuses of the party and state are complete. At over 300,000, the average population of county-level units is still quite large. Local government is responsible for more activities than the comparable level in capitalist countries because the public ownership of enterprises puts them under government control, and the smaller ones are often directly under local government control. Still, many of the problems handled at this level include zoning, lighting, and roads, which would be familiar to counterparts elsewhere. Like the province, the county has been a durable level of administration despite fluctuations in its powers.

In contrast to the levels of administration discussed above, which were inherited from earlier Chinese governments, fundamental innovations in political structure have been made at the basic level. The proliferation of grassroots organizations puts every Chinese in touch with government policies and enables large-scale mobilization of popular energies. The success of the revolution was made possible by effective basic-level organization in the countryside, and yet the most notable organizational failures have also occurred there. One example of organizational failure is the commune, a combined political-economic unit that was introduced in 1958 and replaced by the township (xiang) in 1983.

The basic-level organizations below the county are the townships—averaging between 15,000 and 20,000 people—and

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1Official documents referring to "local" (dìfang) organizations usually mean all levels except the center. For instance, "The Organic Law for All Levels of Local People's Congresses and All Levels of Local People's Governments of the PRC" discusses state organization from the township through the province.

below them are the villages (formerly “brigades”) and teams. The comparable urban levels of basic administration are the street and lane, or the work unit. As its name suggests, the “work unit” is the place where one works, but it is also a political, social, and residential entity. A large work unit will have its own schools, party committee, and election district for the people’s congress as well as housing and canteens, and it may also own farms and organize sideline enterprises for unemployed children or spouses of workers. Since there is very little labor mobility between work units, they provide a stable and close “urban village” environment. The lowest levels of party, state, and mass organizations coalesce at the work unit and provide political structure and direction in this informal and familiar setting.

Relationships between levels of the hierarchy are a constant source of concern to the leadership. If center control is too strong, then the bureaucracy becomes top-heavy, policy becomes too uniform, and local initiative is discouraged. On the other hand, if the center is too lax, then abuses of power occur at the lower levels, and effective planning becomes difficult. According to Mao Zedong, relations between the center and lower levels were one of the “ten major relationships” of Chinese politics. The fact that lower levels are completely vulnerable to upper-level intervention encourages undesirable bureaucratic behavior. Cadres tend to be cautious about assuming responsibility for decisions, but they enjoy the power they have over underlings and outsiders. Each official is the anvil of his superiors and the hammer of his subordinates.

Democratic Centralism. Democratic centralism is the major operational principle of Chinese organizations. Its premise is that there should be full democracy before decisions are made and complete centralism in implementation. Although borrowed from Bolshevik party organization, the years of Chinese revolutionary experience have given the term a special meaning. On the one hand, (democratic centralism commits decision makers to a constant process of consultation and investigation.) Any decision maker or leading body is surrounded by ever-widening circles of persons and institutions who can expect some form of access. As a result, leaders often complain of confronting “a mountain of documents and a sea of meetings.” On the other hand, there is really no appeal against a decision once it is made. There are no rights of opposition, and there are no immunities against intervention from authority. Inevitably, centralism is more powerful than democracy.

Among organizations, democratic centralism implies the hegemony of the party. The function of mass organizations and even of the state and the people’s congress system is on the consultative side of the process. To oppose party leadership on an issue would be quite risky, and to organize opposition could be condemned as factionalism. However, the party is obligated to consult and to exercise its leadership through persuasion. Centralism is the power of the party; democracy is its recommended style.

Ambiguity of Power and Procedure. Power is difficult to define in any political system, but in China it is particularly ambiguous. One reason is that the guerrilla style of leadership combined military, political, and economic functions. This experience reinforced and gave a special twist to the traditional Chinese esteem for the omniscient scholar. Since the party’s leadership style has been practical and generalist, it avoids organizational patterns that fragment problems into specialist and professional bailiwicks. Not only do the party and the center generally feel free to intervene wherever they see fit, but powerful persons do not feel bound to currently assigned roles. The relationships of important persons often displace the lines of command shown on organizational charts. Often, it seems that the importance of the organizational role is measured by the importance of the person filling it. The guerrilla style also encouraged mass mobilization campaigns that often by-pass or disrupt organizational formalities.

Another contributing factor is the antilegislative bias of Marxism-Leninism. Since Marx criticized the capitalist equality of citizens under the law as a sham that masks class rule, Communist states have adopted a very different constitutional structure. In China and other Communist states, the class leadership of the proletariat is openly expressed in the leadership of the

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The Political Framework

Communist Party, while the equality of citizens and democratic control of the state are expressed in the people's congress system. It would appear from the constitution that the people's congress system would provide a powerful democratic control over the state and also exercise important legislative powers, but in fact the party's monopoly on policy making, as well as its controlling influence within the people's congress, vitiate the importance of the elective part of government.

These constants of Chinese political organization are an intimidating introduction to Chinese political institutions. The ambiguity of power reduces the salience of the organizational charts and constitutions, that will be discussed in this chapter. The principle of democratic centralism gives a special and rather restricted meaning to the more consultative areas of Chinese political organization and amplifies lines of authority as they run from the center or from the party. The many levels of Chinese hierarchy ensure that any organizational arrangements will have a complicated structure, and policies adopted at the center may be slowed or modified in the process of transmission.

THE CHINESE COMMUNIST PARTY

Center, Province, and City. The formal organization of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is set forth in the party constitution. The most recent party constitution was adopted by the Twelfth Party Congress in 1982. Although the party is now declared to be subordinate to the state constitution and laws, its tasks of providing political, organizational, and ideological leadership assure its position as the dominant political organization. According to the constitution, the party 'must see it to that the legislative, judicial and administrative organs of the state and the economic, cultural and people's organizations work actively and with initiative, independently, responsibly, and in harmony.'4

The party exercises its leadership functions through the party members active in other organizations. The positioning of some

The Political Framework

form of party organization alongside state organs strengthens CCP leadership of the political system by encouraging institutional supervision and the assignment of many party cadres to overlapping roles in both hierarchies. Whatever formal powers a state organ holds, it is the party organ at the corresponding level that is the politically authoritative voice. Major organizations at the central and provincial levels have “leading party members’ groups” (dang zu) that are directly under the control of the provincial or central party committee and are responsible for the implementation of party directives. At lower levels, the party structure within each organization is responsible for that organization’s compliance with party wishes.

The organizational principle of democratic centralism takes a particularly centralized form within the party. Lower organs are expected to “request instructions and make reports” (qing shi baozao), transferring as much discretion as possible to their superiors. The representative organs meet so infrequently that their powers are necessarily assumed by small groups of leaders. Nevertheless, the “democratic” side of democratic centralism does not disappear. Collegial decision making is emphasized. A leader should not squelch differing viewpoints and should submit to the majority. Party members at all levels are expected to comply with the same norms of behavior, and all have certain rights of expression, criticism, and self-defense.

The party constitution defines the representative congresses as the “leading bodies” at their respective levels. However, as in the state system, the committees elected by these congresses—or the standing committees and secretaries elected by the full committees—exercise congressional powers while the congress is not in session. Moreover, higher party committees have the power to review leadership elected by lower congresses and can assign leadership to lower levels without their approval. The constitution states that the National Party Congress shall be convened every five years and that it may be convened early or postponed. Historically, party congresses have been irregular. Each of the last five has produced a new constitution and elected a significantly altered Central Committee (CC).

Although national party congresses have marked changes in party leadership, the delegates have little control over the proceedings. The agenda and nominations for offices are controlled by the standing committee of the congress presidium. The presidium standing committee, which had thirty-two members at the Twelfth Party Congress, is elected by the congress, which in turn is nominally elected by the congress delegates on the day before the congress opens. During the congress, delegates spend much of their time in small groups discussing leadership reports and candidate lists for the CC, the Commission for Discipline Inspection, and the Advisory Committee. Although election procedure now provides for more candidates than positions, there is no open election competition.

The 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, with its full meetings known as “plenums.” Thus the first full meeting of the CC elected by the Twelfth Congress was the First Plenum of the Twelfth CC. Plenums are to be held at least once a year. Besides the plenums, there are many partial, informal, and enlarged meetings of CC members. Sometimes, CC plenums merely confirm decisions hammered out at preceding informal meetings. The historic “Communique of the Third Plenum of the Eleventh CC” of December 1978, which confirmed the party’s commitment to economic modernization, was actually the result of a month-long working meeting that preceded the brief plenum.

The active political leadership of the PRC is provided by the Secretariat, the Politburo, its Standing Committee, and the General Secretary of the party. All of these are elected by the CC, and the General Secretary is the presiding officer of the CC, the Politburo, and its Standing Committee. The title of the General Secretary replaced that of Party Chairman when Hu Yaobang succeeded Hua Guofeng in 1981.

There is an informal division of labor within the Politburo and, less clearly, in its Standing Committee. With only six members, the Standing Committee cannot carry specialization too far, but one position is reserved for the chairman of the Military Commission, another for the First Secretary of the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection, and another for the chairman of the Central Advisory Commission. Two of these reserved positions are now concurrently held by Deng Xiaoping. In the Politburo, the portfolios (kou) of individual members are more evident, although they are still informal.
Politburo members speak out frequently and with an authoritative tone in areas of their responsibility.

While the Politburo and its Standing Committee are the highest decision makers, the administrative and detail work of the party center is handled by the Secretariat. The Secretariat was disbanded during the Cultural Revolution because of bureaucracy, but it reemerged as a very influential organization in 1980 and regained constitutional status in 1982. Four of its nine secretaries are Politburo members, and the rest are CC members. It is elected by the CC but works under the direction of the Politburo and its Standing Committee. The Secretariat’s work is carried out by a large number of departments. Through this bureaucracy, the Politburo controls the execution of day-to-day party work from the central level down to the basic party groups that are established in every unit of Chinese society.

The Military Commission is elected by the CC and controls the military through the army’s General Political Department. Its function of political control over the military might appear to overlap with the state’s Central Military Commission, but in fact the membership of the two organizations coincides.

The military is a unique and powerful organization in Chinese politics. The success of the revolution was based on the victories of the People’s Liberation Army, and many top leaders have had some military experience. Mao Zedong was a founder of the army and the originator of its strategy of guerrilla warfare. Because Lin Biao had politicized the army along Maoist lines before the Cultural Revolution, the army was spared that campaign’s disorganizing effects and stepped in to restore order in 1967. The army’s organizational challenge to the shaken hegemony of the party reached its apex in Lin Biao’s failed attempt to assassinate Mao in 1971. The army retains a strong but diminished role in central politics. It tends to be a less progressive influence within the leadership, perhaps because it benefitted from some Cultural Revolution policies that reformers now criticize. The army emphasizes ideological discipline and has less to gain from experimental forms of economic modernization.

The Central Commission for Discipline Inspection has a very broad charge to investigate the implementation of party policy and to handle disciplinary matters regarding party organizations and members. Its members are elected by the National Party Congress, and it is responsible to the CC. Lower-level commissions are responsible both to their respective party committees and to the higher commission. Although the party has had similar organs since the 1960s, they have been especially prominent since their reestablishment in 1979 and the promulgation of the “Regulations Concerning Inner-Party Life.”3 The center’s desire to restrict “feudal” abuses of power by local leaders and to prevent the erosion of the party by the pressures of modernization has contributed to a heightened interest in discipline.

The Central Advisory Commission is a new organ created by the 1982 party constitution to help ease the transition in leadership personnel from the older generation of Long March survivors to younger successors. Its members must have been party members for at least forty years. It has a consultative rather than a decision-making function. Its members can attend plenary sessions of the CC as nonvoting participants, and its vice-chairmen may attend plenary meetings of the Politburo. Its chairman is an ex-officio member of the Politburo Standing Committee. Deng Xiaoping became the first chairman of the Advisory Commission in order to lend his prestige to the organization and encourage the retirement of older party leaders. The commissions are viewed as temporary organs for the benefit of the current older generation.

The structure of the party at the provincial level is a copy of the center on a smaller scale. The provincial level is comprised of all administrative units directly under the center, including the major cities of Beijing, Shanghai, and Tianjin, five autonomous regions, and twenty-one mainland provinces. Taiwan is listed as a province but, of course, is not under PRC administration. The provincial party congresses also meet once every five years, and their primary functions are to elect the provincial party committee, discipline inspection commission, advisory commission, and delegates to the National Party Congress. The provincial committee and its standing committee correspond to the CC and the Politburo. The committee meets once a year, as do all other CCP committees down to the general branch level. The provincial first secretary has the most powerful political position in the

province. Party leadership in provincial ministries, writers' associations, trade unions, and the like is exercised through leading party members' groups (dang zu). The province directly appoints leadership at the prefectural level (the intermediate administrative level between the counties and the province), but it is also in firm control of the nominally elected leadership at lower levels. Party organization at the city level, which includes autonomous prefectures, follows the pattern of the provincial level, with reduced staffing and complexity. City party congresses meet once every five years.

**Party Organization: Local and Basic.** County-level organization includes the districts (also translated "wards") of large cities, smaller cities that are not divided into districts, and autonomous counties and banners. It is a major level of administration, especially in rural areas. The county party congress meets once every three years and elects its committee, standing committee, and secretary. The party had a policy of periodically transferring county party secretaries and government heads in the 1950s and revived the practice in 1984.

The basic levels of party organization correspond to the basic organizations of Chinese society, described in the party constitution as "factories, commercial enterprises, schools, institutions, streets, people's communes, cooperatives, rural markets, military companies, etc." If an organization has at least three party members, it can establish a basic party organization. Generally, the party organization of a unit is then responsible for the implementation of party directives within the unit. However, if the unit has a dang zu, then its party organization is under the policy leadership of the dang zu as well as the higher levels of party authority.

The number of party members in the unit determines its level of organization. If there are more than one hundred members, a basic party committee may be established. This highest level of basic organization is similar in structure to the county and also has three-year terms of office, but its representative congress meets once a year. Party members belonging to a basic party committee are further organized into general branches and branches corresponding to subdivisions (shifts, workshops, academic departments, brigades, etc.) of their unit.

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*Figure 3.2: CCP Organizations: Local and Basic*

Control
Electoral
Equivalency (smaller group can exercise powers of the larger while it is not in session)

A general branch will be established if there are more than fifty but less than one hundred party members in a unit. The entire membership of a general branch meets twice a year. The general branch committee, which also meets twice a year, is elected for a two-year term. There is no standing committee, so the secretary is not as tied to collegial decision making at this level.

The party branch is the lowest level of party organization. A unit with more than three but less than fifty members may be organized into a branch, and all other levels of party organization have branches as their lowest unit. Every party member should be a member of a branch. Especially for noncadres, party life is organized at the branch level, and decisions concerning admission and expulsion of members are made here. The branch membership meets four times a year and elects a branch committee of three to seven members for a two-year term. One organization manual lists eight posts within the branch committee: secretary, assistant secretary, organization, propaganda, discipline inspection, security, youth, and women. Branch members may be further organized into small groups of three to five members for discussion and study purposes, but these have no decision making powers and therefore do not constitute a level of party organization.

**PRC State Structure**

China has a unified state organization that includes four major hierarchies: the people's congress system, the government, the courts, and the procuratorate. Although the army could be included as a part of the state according to the definition used in China, it is usually treated separately. The people's congresses are representative assemblies meeting once a year. According to the state constitution, they are the highest organs of state power, and their ability to oversee governmental affairs was strengthened in 1979 by the creation of standing committees at the provincial, city, and county levels. The government, from the state council to local administrators, is the executive and administrative bureaucracy of the state. Typically, its highest officials are elected by the people's congress at each level. Officials of the two legal hierarchies, the judiciary and the procuracy, are also elected by the people's congress. Although the army sends delegates to
people's congresses, it is largely independent of the civilian governmental system except at the highest level.

The state structure of the PRC has some similarities to Western governments, but it would be a mistake to assume that it is simply a copy of familiar institutions. Communist constitutional theory is fundamentally different from that of capitalism, and as a result even apparently similar institutions function differently. The most important difference is the explicit class basis of the PRC: it is a people's democratic dictatorship. People is a political concept. It means friendly classes—those allied with the working class—as opposed to enemy classes. The government of China is supposed to be a democracy among the people, but a dictatorship toward internal enemies. Class enemies presumably have rights as citizens, but these are ambiguous given the constitutional hostility of the state.

The class basis of the PRC did not change when Hua Guofeng announced the abolition of enemy classes as such in 1979. According to the official viewpoint, hostile elements are being produced continually by internal and foreign influences, and the possibility exists for problems with class enemies in the future. The utility of the class enemy category is that it gives the government a free hand in defining and dealing with political criminality—in effect, they become nonpeople to the People's Republic of China. However, it precludes a truly universal citizen-based state or legal system.

The constitutional history of the PRC reflects the major turns of Chinese politics. The first Communist governments in China were organized in the Jiangxi base areas in 1928–1934. From the beginning, the Russian model of people's soviets and party leadership were predominant, but the situation of guerrilla war required the Chinese Communists to be more concerned than the Russians were with the quality of mass participation. However, this concern was more reflected in the party's political style than in institutional innovations. 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; the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), a holdover from the pre-1949 United Front, served as the nominal national representative authority under the Common Program, a provisional constitution drafted by the CPPCC in September 1949. The first state constitution was adopted in 1954, establishing a centralized government on a modified Russian pattern. From 1954 until the Anti-Rightist campaign of 1957, serious efforts were made by a part of the CCP leadership to develop a working legal system and to standardize administrative procedures. Soon, however, the Great Leap Forward (1957–1960) brought important changes. Decentralization and CCP assertiveness weakened central state organs, while the introduction of people's communes in 1958 created new patterns of local administration. The Cultural Revolution (1966–1969) further unsettled the 1954 system. Although the 1954 constitution was not formally abolished, many of its provisions for institutions, procedures, and rights were disregarded. State structure remained in limbo, with no legal guidelines in operation, until a second constitution was adopted in 1975. The 1975 constitution incorporated many Cultural Revolution principles and significantly altered the previous structure. After the death of Mao Zedong and the fall of the Gang of Four in 1976, another constitution, which was closer to the 1954 model, was adopted in March 1978.

Toward the end of 1978, with the decisive victory of Deng Xiaoping's “practice faction” within the top leadership of the CCP, new reforms began to be contemplated that would move significantly beyond the efforts of the 1950s. The second session of the Fifth National People's Congress in 1979 adopted for the first time direct elections for the county-level people's congresses, an election system with more candidates than positions, and standing committees for intermediate and local people's congresses. The trend of “democratic and legal institutionalization” (minzhuhu fazhuhua) continued with measures to increase the autonomy of government officials vis-à-vis the party and to make the people's congresses more effective. The reforms culminated in the 1982 state constitution, the product of two years of drafting, revision, and public comment. The following dis-

*For an extended discussion of the evolution of political participation in China down to the Cultural Revolution, see James R. Townend, Political Participation in Communist China (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967).
discussion is based on the 1982 constitution and its accompanying legislation.7

A major business of the National People’s Congress (NPC) is to discuss and approve work reports and the state plan, to discuss and approve legislative drafts, and, during the first session of its term, to elect the major officials of government. It is a large body with approximately 3,000 delegates who meet once a year for a five-year term. Delegates to the NPC are elected by provincial-level people’s congresses. Provincial delegations meet before each session to discuss agenda items. The NPC has six permanent committees: minorities, law, finance, foreign affairs, overseas Chinese, and one that covers education, science, culture, and health. Legislative drafts and motions of inquiry or censure are submitted to the appropriate committee. A praesidium with a standing committee presides over sessions of the NPC and controls the agenda, the routing of legislation, and nominations for offices. The main function of the NPC is to symbolize the regime’s legitimacy and popular base, rather than to chart the political course of the country. The latter is the function of the CCP. Nevertheless, the post-Mao reforms in the state structure have strengthened the consultative role of the NPC. Research by Dorothy Solinger has shown that significant policy debates are discernible at NPC meetings.8

The NPC’s extensive formal powers of legislation and oversight are exercised by its Standing Committee, a much smaller body (155 members in 1985) meeting once every two months. It serves essentially as a clearing house for the ratification and issuance of state decisions. A certain degree of autonomy is provided for the Standing Committee by the stipulation that government officials

are ineligible for membership. The Standing Committee has in turn an even smaller group, the chair committee, that controls its agenda. The chair committee is led by the chairman of the Standing Committee, currently Peng Zhen, and includes the vice-chairmen and the secretary, a total of twenty-two members. The Standing Committee also has specialized subcommittees that are active in coordinating legislation between different governmental organs and in communicating with provincial governments and standing committees. Interlevel contact is encouraged by allowing the leadership of provincial standing committees to attend meetings of the NPC Standing Committee. NPC delegates are encouraged to attend the sessions of the provincial people’s congress that elected them.

The 1982 constitution reconstituted the office of chairman of the PRC government, and Li Xiannian was elected for a five-year term in 1983. This office has the function of ceremonial head of state. Mao held the office from 1954 to 1959, succeeded by the ill-fated Liu Shaoqi (1959–1966). The office had been omitted in the 1975 and 1978 constitutions.

The State Council is the chief administrative organ of government. The State Council usually meets once a month and has a standing committee meeting twice a week, which consists of the premier, vice-premiers, secretary, and state counselors. It issues decisions, orders, and administrative regulations and can submit legislative proposals to the NPC. It is headed by the premier—Zhou Enlai from 1954 until his death in 1976, Hua Guofeng from 1976 to 1980, and now Zhao Ziyang, who was reelected to a five-year term in 1983. It also includes several vice-premiers and the ministers who head the ministries and commissions of the central government. The State Council consists almost entirely of high-ranking party members. As the central administrative clearing house for governmental actions at all levels, it is the functional center of state power, if not the center of political decision making. The priority of economic modernization since 1978 has increased the influence of the State Council.

The Central Military Commission is a new organ charged with the direction of China’s armed forces. The chairman of the Commission nominates the membership of the committee for approval by the NPC. On the vital question of control of the military, there is no semblance of separation of party and state.

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The chairman (Deng Xiaoping) and vice-chairmen of the CCP military committee are the chairman and vice-chairmen of the state organ. As Peng Zhen said in introducing the 1982 constitution, “The leadership by the CCP over the armed forces will not change with the establishment of the state Central Military Commission.”

The legal system of the PRC is based on the Russian model, with a system of general courts and procurators corresponding to major administrative levels, as well as numerous special courts. The Supreme Court and the Supreme People's Procuratorate are responsible to the NPC and its Standing Committee, and the provincial and local courts and procurators are responsible to their respective people's congresses. Procurators are supervisory, investigative, and prosecutorial officials who are involved in the investigation of individual cases and also in the supervision of the legality of government work and the proper operation of the court system. There have been important reforms in Chinese law, which will be discussed in Chapter 7, but the structure of the legal institutions is the same as it was in the 1950s.

Recent reforms have made provincial state organization even more similar to the central structure. Until 1980, the provincial people's congress did not have a standing committee, so it could not exercise the supervisory role of the NPC. Also, the provincial people's congress first received the power to pass local legislation in 1980. Since the adoption of these two basic reforms, the provincial congress has enhanced its organization and activities each year on the model of NPC functions. It has permanent committees, which become involved in governmental policy in their areas, and its standing committee meets once every two months to supervise activities of the provincial government. Meanwhile, the devolution of considerable economic decision making power to provincial and lower levels has increased the importance of provincial government, although it has not changed its constitutionally vulnerable status in a unitary and centralized system.

The provincial-level, city-level, and county-level people's congresses each elect the heads of their respective governmental organs and discuss and approve their annual reports and the budget. They and their standing committees have the power to remove officials and to demand explanations for official actions. Perhaps more importantly for the individual delegate, any motion made and seconded by three other delegates obligates the appropriate government authorities to make an official response. Hundreds of these motions are made at each people's congress session, many dealing with very concrete items of constituent interest. Delegates are encouraged to be in close contact with their constituents.

One of the most interesting political reforms since the death of Mao was the adoption in 1979 of an election system with more candidates than positions and with direct elections to the county level. Previously, the Chinese had appeared even more disdainful of elections than the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union has direct but noncompetitive elections to every level of its system of soviets, but China's elections above the basic level were both noncompetitive and indirect—and often irregular as well. The 1979 election law presented basic changes. It provided for a more open nomination process, a secret ballot with a choice of candidates, and the possibility of primary elections. The new election procedure not only applies to the election of county people's congress delegates but also to the election of delegates to higher-level people's congresses and to the election of government officials. The more candidates than positions approach has also been adopted by the CCP for elections within the party and is also used in many work units for the election of factory directors and other leaders. It is easy to overestimate the practical effect of the procedural change. The more important the position to be filled, the less likely it is to be left to chance. Nevertheless, it is an important procedural reform. In combination with direct election at the county level, the establishment of a county standing committee, and the major economic reforms at the local level, the management of public affairs at the county level could change significantly in some localities.

At the basic level, state organization tends to lose its distinction from party, economic, and mass organizations. In large work...
units, state and party activities follow the structure of the unit, and state functions and personnel can be hard to distinguish from party and union business. In rural areas, the people's commune combined governmental, economic, and party functions from 1958 to 1983. The recent establishment of township (xiang) government to replace the commune is difficult to evaluate given the other momentous changes in rural policy. At the most basic level in rural areas, that is the production team, leadership has been elected since the early 1960s, subject to the approval of the brigade party leadership. Similarly, the progressive trend in urban areas is toward the election of work unit leadership.

The presence of autonomous regions, autonomous counties, banners, and so on among China's administrative units is a reflection of a policy toward national minorities that promises self-administration in places where a minority is the dominant ethnic group. Although the Chinese population as a whole is overwhelmingly of the Han nationality, the other ethnic groups tend to be concentrated in border areas where they constitute the majority of the local population. Following the example of the Soviet Union, where the nationalities problem is much more extensive, certain provincial-level, prefectural-level, and county-level units are designated at autonomous units. They are charged with protecting the political, economic, and cultural peculiarities of their ethnic groups, and special efforts are made to guarantee ethnic participation in leadership. Even in areas where minorities do not constitute a large fraction of the population, they are guaranteed at least proportional representation in the people's congresses.

MASS ORGANIZATIONS

Chinese political structure also includes many mass organizations that mobilize ordinary citizens and supplement and support the party and state institutions. In general, mass organizations are national in scale and have a hierarchy of units extending downward from the central level to a mass membership defined by a common social or economic characteristic (e.g., youth, women, workers, or other occupational groups). These organizations play a key role in implementing the party's mass line of "coming from the masses and going to the masses." They provide a sounding board for popular opinions, channel representatives into state and party structures, and mobilize support for CCP policies from different segments of the population. In some cases, they perform administrative and service functions for the groups they represent.

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 over all youth activities and other youth organizations, was a major source for new recruits for the CCP, and generally assisted in the basic-level implementation of all party policies. Another organization that played a unique role in the early period was the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC). It included members of the CCP as well as members of eight political parties that sided with the CCP late in the civil war. After serving as the provisional national legislature from 1949 to 1954, the CPPCC remained active as a symbol of multi-party cooperation in PRC programs. Other important mass organizations in the period before the Cultural Revolution included the Young Pioneers, for children aged nine to fifteen years old (seven to fifteen years old since 1965); the All-China Women's Federation; the All-China Federation of Trade Unions; and a variety of associations for specialized occupational and professional groups.

All of these mass organizations were suspended during the Cultural Revolution. Indeed, the term mass organization took on an entirely different meaning with the appearance of the Red Guards in 1966. Instead of orderly hierarchies of persons assisting the party and state, the revolutionary mass organizations of the Cultural Revolution appeared spontaneously, criticized party and state officials, and eventually engaged in armed warfare among themselves. These groups were formed at the work-unit level and joined in alliances against opposing groups. In early 1967, there was an attempt to base provincial-level government on these groups, but it was quickly abandoned. Instead, "revolu-
tionary three-in-one combinations" were endorsed, which included mass representatives, party and government officials, and army representatives. Gradually, the influence of the mass representatives declined, and after the Lin Biao affair in 1971 the role of the army lessened as well.

The post-Cultural Revolution mass organizations began to revive after 1969. By the early 1970s, the CYL, the All-China Women's Federation, the All-China Federation of Trade Unions, and Young Pioneers were reorganizing at the local level, as were some of the professional associations. Rebuilding was slow, however, suggesting that these organizational forms remained controversial. Following the death of Mao and the fall of the Gang of Four in 1976, reactivation accelerated, and national congresses of the CYL, the All-China Women's Federation, and the All-China Federation of Trade Unions, as well as a national science conference, were held in 1978. At the same time, the disruptive mass activities of the Cultural Revolution were officially criticized.

Since 1978, the postrevolutionary institutionalization of Chinese society has been exemplified by a strengthening and proliferation of mass organizations. One of the most interesting cases has been the rebirth of the CPPCC. Its constituent parties have recruited new members and are engaged in a variety of educational and cultural activities. The national, provincial, and city congresses of the CPPCC are held at the same time as the respective people's congresses and are given comparable attention. Evidently the new purpose of the CPPCC is to encourage a united front of patriotic intellectuals to contribute to China's modernization. The other major mass organizations have also expanded, and the number of professional societies holding meetings and publishing journals is larger than it has ever been. The basis of membership in mass organizations has shifted away from class membership and toward functional and professional criteria. For example, the Young Pioneers recently announced it would raise its recruitment target from 80 percent to 100 percent of the appropriate age group. This indicates a shift from restricting membership only to those children with good class background to opening the organization to all, a change that might be an important socialization experience for Chinese children of the 1980s.

This brief review has identified principal PRC political institutions and some of the major changes in them since 1949. We turn now to a different kind of survey, one of post-1949 policy periods, that puts institutional analysis in a different light. Although most of the institutions just described appear from time to time in this survey, what is striking is the way in which they have been shaped or even discarded to meet the demands of political campaigns. Institutions do not channel politics but rather serve as its targets or even enemies, whereas programs concerned with the direction, timing, and pace of change—as reflected in campaigns or developmental models—establish differing political guidelines for each policy period. Although the post-1976 institutionalization suggests that campaign dominance of institutions may be a thing of the past, or at least greatly reduced, that dominance has been a fundamental characteristic of the PRC for most of its history.

B. THE EVOLUTION OF POST-1949 POLICY

RECONSTRUCTION, 1949–1952

The CCP came to power in 1949 with good reason for confidence. The Red Army had inflicted a decisive military defeat on the Nationalist forces, producing for the first time in decades a Chinese government that did not face the threat of large-scale armed opposition within its mainland territory. The party was disciplined and experienced by its long years of struggle, including considerable practice in administration of large areas of rural China. Its political authority was solid for a new revolu-


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13 China Daily, October 14, 1984, p. 5.
tionary regime, partly due to positive support generated by its nationalist and reformist programs—particularly among youth and intellectuals and within the areas in which it had operated—and partly due to its demonstrated military and political effectiveness, which brought widespread acceptance, if not support, from a population very weary of strife and uncertainty. These conditions stimulated high hopes for the rapid emergence of a China in which the citizen might find increased opportunity as well as national respect. For a variety of reasons, however, the new system was to take shape more slowly and with much more turmoil than these factors would suggest.

The Sino-Japanese War, the civil war, Russian confiscation of industrial equipment in Manchuria, and the collapse of KMT governmental authority had left a shattered and inflation-ridden economy. For the first few years, therefore, the Communists concentrated on restoring plants, production, and transportation facilities and on bringing inflation and governmental revenues under control. By the end of 1952, economic reconstruction was basically completed, with production levels restored in the main to prewar levels. While it was in progress, however, the CCP had little choice but to postpone its plans for the socialization of the economy.

A second major problem was that the CCP was simply not prepared in 1949 to establish direct control throughout the political system. Although its national leadership was visible and unquestioned, it did not possess the resources to staff all posts necessary for carrying out its objectives. Extensive experience in rural administration, much of it under wartime conditions, was inadequate training for the varied and complicated tasks faced in reconstruction of the entire country; many party members were illiterate and unaccustomed to urban life, let alone its administration. Yet, even if the quality of party membership had been better suited to its new responsibilities, its numbers were insufficient. KMT resistance had collapsed so quickly from late 1948 on that Communist forces had acquired large areas that were politically unassimilated. Despite rapid recruitment, the CCP could not consolidate its political control immediately. To deal with this situation, it adopted a dual strategy of institutional temporizing and popular mobilization.15

In the case of government institutions, the new leaders accepted temporary solutions, permitting many existing arrangements and officials to stand, albeit without any guarantee of permanence. Thus the central government functioned under the nominal authority of the CPPCC, with many nonparty members within the United Front assigned to high positions. Six large administrative regions were established for the country, each coinciding with a military region so that the pattern of military conquest flowed naturally into a decentralized system of regional governments based on a combination of civil and military authority. At lower levels, many former officials remained in office, with local party organs playing a relatively discreet role. In short, the CCP simply postponed the creation of a permanent governmental structure until its political control was consolidated. It used the interim period to build its organizational strength, while trying to weed out unreliable officials and party members. Much of this basic political work was accomplished in the 1949–1952 period, although the new state structure was not established until 1954.

Political Mobilization. While economic reconstruction and political consolidation delayed the establishment of a socialist system, encouraging many nonparty intellectuals, businessmen, overseas Chinese, and former officials to commit themselves to the People's Republic, there was no delay in efforts to mobilize the population. During the earlier course of the revolution under both Communist and non-Communist leadership, many groups in Chinese society had experienced political mobilization, a term that denotes the process by which resources—in this case, human resources—are made available for use by political authorities. Yet, this mobilization had been partial and sporadic in terms of Chinese society as a whole and was based on a level of socioeconomic development that made it difficult to sustain. The population in 1949 was overwhelmingly rural, illiterate,

and poorly served by modern transportation and communications. Traditional avoidance of external concerns and demands remained strong in the villages. In areas under their control, the Communists had proven their ability to combat these difficulties by promoting their programs through intensive face-to-face contact, but prior to 1949 only a minority of the population was so affected. Identification with the nationalist mobilization against Japan had given the CCP substantial legitimacy beyond its own areas, which assisted greatly the establishment of its authority, but there was no guarantee that popular energies could be similarly employed in socialist construction. Accordingly, the new leaders decided that a thoroughgoing mobilization to support political consolidation and preliminary social reforms must precede institutionalization of the new system.

The primary vehicle for this task was a series of mass movements, each aimed at the twin goals of attacking a particular political or social issue and mobilizing popular resources under CCP leadership. The land reform movement, begun earlier in “liberated” areas but carried out throughout China in 1950–1952, established peasants’ associations to redistribute the land and to smash the power and status of the landlord class. A campaign for “implementation of the marriage law” began in 1950, aiming at reform of the traditional marriage system and the prevailing inequality of women in all spheres of social life. “Resist America—Aid Korea,” a movement in progress throughout the Korean War of 1950–1953, worked to support the Chinese war effort and arouse anti-American sentiments. In 1951, the CCP carried out a “suppression of counterrevolutionaries” campaign to eradicate remnants of armed resistance and other enemies of the regime. A “three anti” movement (against “corruption, waste, and bureaucracy” in government offices) in the winter of 1951–1952 reviewed and disciplined officials, both party and nonparty, who failed to meet CCP standards. A subsequent “five anti” movement (against businessmen allegedly engaged in “bribery, tax evasion, theft of state property, cheating on government contracts, and stealing state economic secrets”) drastically reduced the economic resources and political status of the urban middle class. In the “thought reform of intellectuals” campaign, all higher intellectuals underwent challenge, criticism, and self-examination in which their basic beliefs were tested for loyalty to the new order.

These new campaigns followed in rapid succession, involving almost every citizen in some way. None of the specific issues was permanently resolved (each campaign was to be renewed or modified in later ones), and the impact on the people was mixed. For some, the movements brought upward mobility and a new sense of involvement in political action; for others, they brought personal losses, uncertainty, and fear, for there were excesses and an element of calculated and spontaneous terror, particularly in the movements for land reform and suppression of counterrevolutionaries. These early mass movements nonetheless contributed heavily to Communist political consolidation through the expansion of mass organizations, the establishment of propaganda networks, the recruitment of new activists and party members, the elimination of opponents, and the initiation of new social relationships. Later events cast doubt on the thoroughness of the mobilization achieved; but in this area, too, the CCP achieved something of fundamental importance by surpassing previous levels of mobilization and redirecting it from predominantly nationalist goals to those of radical social and economic change. From the CCP’s viewpoint, the way was prepared for socialist construction.

THE FIRST FIVE-YEAR PLAN, 1953–1957

The First Five-Year Plan (FFYP), officially in effect from 1955 through 1957, was not made public until 1956 and was to undergo a profound reappraisal before its conclusion. Despite this evidence of irresoluteness, which is vital to an appreciation of later events, it is important to emphasize that the FFYP years constitute a distinctive phase in the history of the People’s Republic. Generally, the mid-1950s was a period of rapid economic development along the lines of the Soviet model, accompanied by a trend toward moderation and institutionalization in political life relative to the reconstruction era.

The FFYP’s concentration on industrial development, especially heavy industry, was its most pronounced characteristic. To achieve the control of economic resources necessary for

For an official description of the Plan, and its first published exposition, see Li Fuchun (Li Fu-chun), “Report on the First Five-Year Plan” (July 2–6, 1955), in Harvard University, Center for International Affairs and East Asian
massive industrial investment, the leaders moved quickly to establish centralized and planned direction of the entire economy. Private industrial and commercial operations were eliminated, except for the smallest entrepreneurs, by transforming them into cooperatives or joint state-private enterprises in which state control was paramount and by setting up state enterprises in key sectors. Rationing and quotas for state purchase and supply of major agricultural products controlled consumption and guaranteed extraction of resources from the agricultural sector to support state investment. The CCP also had plans for agricultural collectivization, which moved slowly from 1952 to 1955. From late 1955 on, however, following an important statement by Mao in July of that year,13 the pace of collectivization accelerated.

By the end of 1956, virtually all agricultural households were in collectives, and the socialization of the economy was essentially complete (see Table III.1). The economic results of FFYP efforts, which were assisted by Soviet aid in the most critical construction projects, were impressive. Estimates of average annual growth in the national product for 1952–1957 range from a low of 5.6 percent to an official Communist report high of 9 percent; even the lower estimates place China high in international rankings of economic growth for this period.14 The weak point in the Plan was agriculture, where production increases were probably only slightly ahead of population growth.15 Since agriculture was a major drag on average growth rates, industrial gains were obviously much greater than suggested by the preceding figures.

A number of significant political and social trends accompanied rapid industrialization. The state apparatus established in

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TABLE III: Development of Collectivized Agriculture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year(s)</th>
<th>Small village or village section (20-40 households)</th>
<th>Large village or village cluster (100-300 households)</th>
<th>Rural marketing area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1959-1962</td>
<td>Land reform ends large holdings &amp; tenancy, destroys old rural elite.</td>
<td>Mutual aid teams of 4-10 households lead into lower agricultural producers' cooperatives, which become BAU.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td></td>
<td>Higher agricultural producers' cooperatives emerge, become BAU; full collectivization begins.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955-1957</td>
<td>Households retain small private plots.</td>
<td>Early co-ops become production teams within higher co-ops.</td>
<td>People's communes formed &amp; become BAU; early total of 25,000 large-scale communes, many exceeding marketing area in extent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Become production brigades within commune.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Experimentation with highly collectivized communities; large-scale rural labor mobilization for water conservation and other construction projects.

1960-1978 Private plots returned to household with limited free markets for household production. Production team becomes BAU. Production brigade runs primary schools, small rural industries; a few serve as BAU. Communes reduced in size & increased in number (about 50,000 after 1970); roughly commensurate with marketing area.

"Agriculture as the Foundation" policy prevails: Increased attention to rural areas with push for agricultural modernization (mechanization, use of chemical fertilizers, growth of small-scale rural industry) and, after the Cultural Revolution, improved social services; rural institutions basically stable despite Cultural Revolution pressures to abolish private plots and raise BAU to a higher level.

1979-1985 Private plots & free marketing expanded; household becomes de facto BAU. Production team contracts most production to smaller groups, households, or even individuals. Production brigades & communes manage a few large-scale rural economic activities, but xiang replaces commune as the basic-level governmental unit.

"Responsibility System" appears: To increase agricultural production and raise peasant standards of living, production teams transfer use of land, draft animals, and tools to groups or households, which are then responsible for most decisions on production and earn profits when they exceed quotas contracted with the team. Collective ownership principle (of land and other major means of production) remains, but reforms greatly expand the scope and profit incentives of household farming, in effect ending the commune system.

"BAU = basic accounting unit. This is the unit responsible for making work assignments, organizing agricultural production, and collecting and distributing the agricultural product. It handles its own accounting and is responsible for its own profits and losses; hence, it is an important indicator of the level of collectivization."
The Political Framework


tivized economy. Radical opinion favored a more forward policy, pushing ahead with collectivization and relying on the forces generated by it to bring about rapid social and economic change in the countryside. The struggle between these positions, beginning with Mao’s promotion of accelerated collectivization in late 1955, led to several fluctuations in agricultural policy during 1955–1957.

A second acknowledged defect of the FFYP was its encouragement of excessive centralization and bureaucratization, leading to general agreement that the central ministries should transfer some powers to lower units and that criticism of bureaucratic behavior was in order. The radicals wanted simplification and staff reductions in the bureaucracy—in 1956 Mao proposed a two-thirds cut in party and governmental organs—and wanted expanding committee or popular supervision over leading cadres. This position had considerable support, since state ministerial power was a growing challenge to party authority and a symbol of Soviet influence. In one of its earliest retreats from Soviet-style arrangements, the CCP had already rejected the “one-man management” system in enterprises in favor of greater control by party committees; by the Eighth Congress in September 1956, the idea of strengthening leadership by party committees in all lines of work was established policy. However, conservatives had little enthusiasm for any general dilution of the authority structure, nor were they ready to renounce the value of bureaucratic and technical specialization. It remained to be seen how far the radicals could go in pushing the mass line (not simply strengthened party committees) as a counterweight to bureaucratism.

Finally, the FFYP period raised fundamental questions about the CCP’s relations with other groups in Chinese society—questions underscored by the sobering impact of Khrushchev’s denunciation of Stalin in early 1956 and subsequent upheavals in Poland and Hungary. Here, too, there was at least a partial consensus within the CCP elite that political consolidation and the establishment of a socialist economic system had basically unified China, so that the danger of counterrevolution was no

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22For intraparty conflict is treated at greater length in Chapter 6 of this book. The “conservative” and “radical” labels are admittedly vague but seem preferable to alternatives (Latinists and Maoists, pragmatists and idealists, revisionists and revolutionaries) that imply a degree of personal or ideological cleavage not clearly evident at the time. The 1956–1957 debate was not one in which rigid, unchanging positions were taken; differences were real, but compromises, shifts of circumstance, and a strong desire to maintain unity blurred their lines. Most of the key documents relevant to the discussion in the text are available in Communist China, 1945–1959 and Eighth National Congress of the Communist Party of China, vols. 1-2 (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1956). One important document not included is Mao Zedong, “On the Ten Great Relationships” (April 1956), translated in Jerome Ch’en, ed., Mao (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1960), pp. 65–85; also in Selected Works, vol. 3, pp. 284–297. For detailed analysis of policy shifts in this period, see Parry H. Chang, Power and Policy in China (University Park: Pennsylvania State Press, 1975); and Franz Schurmann, Ideology and Organization in Communist China, 2nd ed. eml. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968).

longer great and so that the party could be less authoritarian in its relations with nonparty elements. These were the convictions that encouraged the liberalization of 1956–1957; but the leaders were by no means of one mind concerning their implications. A more conservative viewpoint saw economic and political consolidation as marking the end of the revolutionary period; henceforth, the CCP could exercise leadership through its new institutions rather than through mass movements, now deemed necessary in their time but prone to error, excess, and inefficiency. In place of continued political mobilization and struggle, this viewpoint suggested codification of laws, stricter observance of institutional procedures, and the granting of some material concessions to the people, particularly to intellectuals and technicians whose skills were necessary but still underutilized. Essentially, the conservatives leaned toward placating or co-opting nonparty groups without emphasizing or expanding their political role. Mao’s famous speech, “On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People,” was the best expression of a more radical position. Its central thesis was that “nonantagonistic” contradictions exist even in socialist society and must be debated openly to achieve resolution. While affirming basic party leadership and rectitude, Mao assigned nonparty groups a crucial, dialectical role in the political process—a role that not only would transform the groups but also would prod the socialist system to strengthen itself. It was this push from Mao, against the reservations of some of his colleagues, that enabled liberalization to become briefly the “hundred flowers.”

The CCP soon criticized the intellectuals too severely and the dangers of its spreading too great to permit the “hundred flowers” experiment to continue. Critics were silenced and in some cases punished, while the party moved to resolve its debate by establishing a new approach. The result was the Great Leap Forward, which began to take shape in late 1957 and was to dominate Chinese politics for the next three years. The Leap also marked a shift away from the Soviet model that had guided policy making in 1949–1957 and toward the Maoist model that would prevail for much of the next twenty years. Significantly, when the CCP arrived at its second major watershed around 1978, moving from Maoist to socialist modernization models, it resurrected many of the 1956–1957 conservative arguments described previously.

THE GREAT LEAP FORWARD, 1957–1960

The Great Leap Forward was not a concrete plan with consistent guidelines or objectives, but rather a set of policies held together by a political mood or frame of mind. (The beginning of the Leap coincided roughly with the Second Five-Year Plan for 1958–1962, but that Plan soon fell by the wayside.) This mood was expressed in highly rhetorical terms full of overpowering claims and exhortations. The rhetoric implied that all of China was moving together, whereas in fact there were numerous variations or deviations of time and place. It implied unified and permanent commitment, but Leap policies were not fully formed until the fall of 1958 and were undergoing partial revision almost immediately, indicating that commitment to the movement was not as firm as claimed. In other words, there was a good deal of uncertainty about the Leap’s objectives, performance, and even duration; yet its impact on Chinese politics was immense.

Great Leap Themes. Four interlocking themes that permeated the rhetoric of the Great Leap Forward convey a general impression of the movement’s quality. One was a fervent optimism that proclaimed China’s ability to accomplish monumental tasks in a short period of time and insisted that earlier problems had been identified and corrected. Another was the glorification of the mass line principle that human effort and will are the

25 Text in Communist China, 1955–1959, pp. 273–94. The original speech, given at an enlarged meeting of the Supreme State Conference on February 27, 1957, was never made public. The official version ultimately released in June 1957, after the hundred flowers outburst had been cut off, contained admissions of deviations.
The Political Framework

The apparent unanimity with which these themes were articulated from late 1957 on obscures the

Emergence and Origins. The apparent unanimity with which these themes were articulated from late 1957 on obscures the

decisive factors and hence that popular mobilization is an effective method for resolving problems in all spheres of action. This elevation of the mass line placed a great emphasis on the quantity of manpower mobilized, exalted the virtues of sacrifice and manual labor, and devalued the specialized skills and professional knowledge of the intellectual elite. One specific result was the practice of xiaofang (xia fang) ("downward transfer"), in which office workers and intellectuals were sent down to lower levels to engage in more menial lines of work.

A third theme was "politics takes command," which asserts that correct political consciousness is the best and indeed the only proper base for social action. This principle demanded the widest possible propagation of official ideology in an effort to ensure that mass mobilization be motivated and guided by political considerations. It also had great implications for the CCP, which as the sole judge of political rectitude was the only organization capable of defining which politics would be in command. The result was a sharp increase in the power of party committees as they moved to implement central policies.

Finally, the Great Leap rested on the belief that simultaneous advances in all economic, political, and cultural spheres were possible and on the refusal to admit that there were insurmountable limitations or mutually exclusive possibilities in development. The idea of an all-around advance was expressed in what was perhaps the most representative slogan of the period: "Build socialism by exerting our utmost efforts and pressing ahead consistently to achieve greater, faster, better, and more economical results." As the slogan and Liu Shaoqi's discussion of it suggest, the Great Leap philosophy insisted that speed could be combined with efficiency, quantity could be combined with quality, and agricultural and local development could be combined with industrial and national development. The key to such development was to be a loosening of institutional restraints—to be implemented through decentralization and mass movements—that would encourage each social unit to develop its own capacities to the fullest extent.

Leay's gradual and controversial emergence. Many of its features actually appeared in late 1955 and early 1956, following Mao's July 1955 speech on agricultural collectivization. In his report to the second session of the Eighth Party Congress in May 1958, Liu referred to this earlier "leap" of 1955–1956 as setting the proper pattern for China's socialist development. Mao's conservative opposition persisted, however, halting the 1956–1956 "leap" and bringing on the 1956–1957 debate. Even after the "antirightist" campaign in the summer of 1957 had silenced the "hundred flowers" critics, conservative economic policies were still in evidence. The critical decisions that initiated the Great Leap Forward came only at the Central Committee's Third Plenum in September–October 1957. Two actions of this plenum are of particular interest. One was a decision to expand the antirightist struggle—until that point largely concerned with the "hundred flowers" experience—into a thorough, nationwide rectification campaign that would provide socialist education for the masses of workers and peasants and eradicate "rightist" and various erroneous tendencies within the party and other elite groups. The other action of the plenum was approval of a program of decentralization in which control over many enterprises and financial resources would be transferred from the central ministries to provincial authorities. These decisions provided the basis for a general intensification of ideological indoctrination, for purging or eclipsing conservative party officials, and for raising the authority of party committees (particularly at the provincial level) at the expense of central state organs.

During the winter of 1957–1958, a massive labor mobilization was undertaken in the countryside for work on irrigation and flood control projects. The expanded scale of rural organization provided incentive for merging some existing cooperatives into large units. With the spring planting of 1958, the mobilization extended to agricultural production itself, stressing a variety of labor-intensive techniques. The nonagricultural population was also pressed into productive service by organizing units for labor in the countryside, in street factories, or in various sideline and

Ibid., pp. 424–27.

See the discussion in Schurmann, Ideology and Organization, pp. 156–210.

spare-time enterprises. This massive outpouring of human effort, which was essentially an effort to raise production dramatically without major reallocation of capital resources, stimulated optimistic economic forecasts that steadily raised output targets. The first experimental rural people's communes appeared in the summer of 1958, carrying further the merging of rural organization into larger units that had begun in the winter; in August the Central Committee formally approved them and called for their nationwide establishment.\footnote{"Resolution of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party on the Establishment of People's Communes in Rural Areas." (August 25, 1958), in Communist China, 1955-1959, pp. 454-56.} Within a few weeks, communes had become the primary production and administrative units for the rural population, essentially completing the framework of the Great Leap Forward.

How can one explain the CCP's adopting of the Great Leap approach when it was contrary to many more conservative tendencies in the party and was to lead to such damaging results? The decisive factor was probably the authority and persuasive powers of Mao Zedong, who initiated Leap policies and campaigned vigorously for their realization. The question remains, however, as to why Mao's arguments carried the day. For one thing, the Leap had a powerful, inherent attraction for CCP elites. It affirmed their desire for rapid socioeconomic change, for "catching up" with the advanced countries; it reassured familiar revolutionary themes, such as heroic struggle, mass mobilization, self-reliance; and the like; and it drew on the consensus that had developed in 1956-1957 about the need for decentralization, stronger party leadership, and more rapid agricultural development. It had sturdy roots, therefore, in both historical experience and recent policy positions.

Moreover, much of Mao's fire was directed at conservatives who praised the efficacy of socialist institutions and the expertise of intellectuals and technicians; whereas, the results of the "hundred flowers" seemed to show that bourgeois ideology still thrived among educated elites and that socialist institutions had not yet made China a secure socialist society. In such circumstances, it seemed necessary to keep the revolution going and seemed a mistake to institutionalize it too soon. Thus, even though Mao had promoted the liberalization of 1956-1957, its outcome supported his call for a new revolutionary push based on ideological militancy and popular mobilization.

Finally, the Leap's damaging effects came not so much from its logical rationale—labor mobilization and ideological incentives made sense for a country rich in manpower and weak in capital and technology—but from the fanaticism with which it was pursued. There were a number of factors in 1957-1958 that combined to make CCP elites unduly optimistic about how far they could leap in a short time.\footnote{All the following points are expressed in Liu Shaoqi, "Report to the Second Session," pp. 416-83; and Zhou Enlai, "The Present International Situation and China's Foreign Policy" (February 10, 1958), in Communist China, 1953-1959, pp. 301-10.} Domestically, the economy was on the upswing after a disappointing lag in 1956-1957, the antirightist and rectification campaigns seemed to have consolidated the party's leadership; and the 1958 harvest was to be excellent, the early signs of which prompted the progressive raising of economic targets that took place that year. In the troubled field of Communist bloc relations, where "dark clouds" were acknowledged in 1956, the defeat of counterrevolution in Poland and Hungary, the consolidation of Khrushchev's power in the Soviet Union, and the management of a compromise statement at the Moscow Conference of Communist Parties in November 1957 all contributed to a belief that the solidarity and strength of the camp was growing. Perhaps most significant of all was the Chinese belief that the cold war balance of power had shifted to its side, expressed in Mao's statement that "the east wind prevails over the west wind." The Soviet Union's growing technological prowess—revealed most dramatically in the October 1957 Sputnik launching—and a moderate recession in the West were other primary elements in this favorable estimate of the international situation. It is easy in retrospect to note how fragile these trends were, but they nonetheless led CCP leaders to act with confidence bordering on recklessness.
has been said; however, there are others that demand special attention. The people’s communes, for example, had a profound impact on rural society because they concentrated economic and political powers in a basic-level unit significantly larger than any that preceded it (see Table III.1). Before communization, the basic rural administrative unit was the xiang, of which there were about 220,000 in 1952–1955; however, a policy of amalgamation after 1955 increased their size so that by the summer of 1958 there were only some 80,000 xiang. The basic agricultural production unit was originally the peasant household, numbering over 100 million in the early 1950s, but collectivization gave the Agricultural Producers’ Cooperative (APC) primary responsibility for managing and distributing the agricultural product. Therefore about 750,000 APCs in 1958, most of them based on natural villages. After communization, both administrative and production responsibilities were combined in the management committees of some 25,000 communes. This concentration of power in a larger and unfamiliar political-economic unit caused great disruption and uncertainty, due to boundary changes, shifts of personnel, and conflict with established production and marketing relationships.

The impact of the communes went far beyond the disruption of institutional patterns, however. As seen by the leadership, they were to be large, self-sufficient communities that would lead their members rapidly toward modernization and a communist way of life. They were to establish their own factories, schools, nurseries, mess halls, and militia units to provide for maximal development and deployment of manpower under collective management. Most “private plots,” the small lots of land retained for individual household use in the APCs, were absorbed into collective production, and there were experiments with a “free supply” system of payment according to need rather than according to work. These changes were far too abrupt for easy management and acceptance.


Economically, the Leap had some positive accomplishments; however, it ended in a severe crisis in 1959–1961.44 Bad weather had an adverse effect on the 1959 harvest, but the all-around deterioration that followed reflected basic faults in the approach itself. Agricultural decline continued in 1960, leading to shortages of investment funds and raw materials that forced a slowdown in industry. Food shortages lowered both physical and psychological work capacity, reinforcing downward production trends. Personnel transfers at the basic level brought inexperienced men to new posts and disrupted the cohesion of work groups. Disregard of specialists led to errors in attempted technological innovations. Ideological indoctrination produced diminishing returns as it cut into the scant leisure time of an overworked labor force. Planning and accurate statistical reporting languished, and overly ambitious or enthusiastic cadres pushed the commune policy to radical extremes. The deepening rift with the Soviet Union and the departure of Soviet technicians in 1960 added to the bleakness of the picture.

The severity of the 1959–1961 economic crisis had major political consequences. The overworked and hungry population became resentful and began to turn against the party cadres who were so totally identified with implementation of the Leap policy. Apathy, disobedience, and even instances of insurrection spread in rural areas. The position of basic-level cadres was particularly acute, for they were caught between popular discontent and directives from higher levels. Their response ranged from illicit concessions to the people to authoritarianism and brutality, or simply to an abdication of official responsibility and integrity. In short, the crisis involved political authority as well as the economy.55 Inevitably, it produced great tension within the political elite, which faced the task of changing a policy to which it had, at least publicly, committed itself so heavily. The change took place in a period of retrenchment, but it also raised many new and old controversies about the wisdom of the Great Leap Forward.

45Evidence of these difficulties is found in Gongzuo Tong xun (Kung 1961 Tung hsìn), (“Bulletin of Activities”), a secret journal of the PLA General
RETRENCHMENT AND RECOVERY, 1961–1965

The years from 1961 to 1965 form a less distinct period than those discussed previously. What cohesion they have stems largely from an economic retrenchment policy that emerged in 1961 and continued in force through 1965. Many of its basic features remained even through the Cultural Revolution. On the political side, however, there was a significant break in this period, coming at the Tenth Plenum of the Central Committee in September 1962. Before that date, a climate of political retrenchment, moderation, and uncertainty prevailed; following it, a complex struggle between mobilization and institutionalization took place, leading to the open conflict of the Cultural Revolution.

The preceding discussion has indicated the conditions that made some kind of retreat from the Great Leap virtually inescapable. Indeed, the first signs of retreat came as early as December 1959 at the Central Committee’s Sixth Plenum,\(^{35}\) when it was noted that full communism was still a long way off, that the “free supply” system should be limited, that commune members must be guaranteed adequate hours for rest, and that tighter planning and organization was necessary. It was this meeting that announced Mao’s decision to retire from the chairmanship of the government—a move which was not forced upon him but which certainly was recognized by senior elites as reducing his political responsibilities. Leap policies came under direct attack at the Eighth Plenum in July–August 1959, with Defense Minister and Politburo member Peng Dehuai (Peng Teh-huai) serving as spokesman for the critics. The Plenum dismissed Peng from his position in the Defense Military (but not from the Politburo), launched an intensive campaign against “right opportunism” and “conservatism,” and reassessed the structure of the communes and the Great Leap Forward. This was done, however, only by a great investment of Mao’s personal prestige, indicating that support for the Leap was wavering.\(^{35}\) During 1959 and 1960, the communes were quietly modified to lessen their disruptive impact.

Retrenchment Policies. Economic retrenchment became official at the Ninth Plenum in January 1961, which conceded that Leap policies had created errors and opposition.\(^{38}\) A new slogan of “taking agriculture as the foundation of the national economy” acknowledged the need for new measures to support agricultural development. Private plots were restored to households, rural markets were expanded, and rural mechanization was promoted to stimulate agricultural production and distribution. The Plenum also emphasized economic planning, consumer goods, and quality and diversity in industrial products. Experts and central ministries regained some powers lost to party committees.

Perhaps the greatest changes came in the structure of communes, which had settled into a system of “three-level management” by 1958–1959 (see Table III.1). Each commune was divided into production brigades, generally the same as the previous village-based advanced APCs, and each brigade was divided into production teams of twenty to forty households each. Initially, the commune was the “basic accounting unit” (BAU) that managed agricultural production and distribution; however, during 1959 the brigade became the BAU. By 1962, after retrenchment, the production team was the BAU, returning primary agricultural responsibility to about the same level of collective organization as existed in 1955. Communes and brigades remained important organizations that managed larger-scale economic and governmental tasks, but the original communes, which had been large rural units often covering several rural marketing areas, were divided into a larger number of smaller ones closer in size to marketing areas.

\(^{35}\) The official published documents of the Eighth Plenum are in Communist China, 1953–1959, pp. 533–40. Much additional documentation on the Peng affair became available during the Cultural Revolution and has been translated in The Case of Peng Teh-huai (Hong Kong: Union Research Institute, 1988), esp. pp. 1–47.

\(^{38}\) See China Quarterly, no. 6 (April–June 1961): 183–90.
The Leap's disruption of both economic and statistical systems ushered in two decades of uncertainty and controversy in estimates of Chinese economic performance. Nonetheless, it seems recovery was underway by 1962, with most 1957 output levels regained or surpassed by 1965 (see Appendix B). As in earlier years, gains in industry were stronger than in agriculture, which remained the critical economic problem area. The retention of the major retrenchment policies through the 1970s indicates at least minimal satisfaction of the elite with their results.

Retrenchment initially penetrated politics as well as economics. During most of 1961–1962, there was a noticeable slackening of ideological indoctrination and mass movements coupled with an inward-looking party rectification campaign. The primacy of politics receded as agricultural, industrial, and educational units were encouraged to devote more time to their nonpolitical functions. For nonparty intellectuals, there was a revived "blooming and contending" that encouraged resumption of academic research and debate, although not the outspoken political criticism of 1957. Party officials were not so restrained, however, and some of them began to publicize views that were critical of the Leap, Peng Dehuai's dismissal, Mao's policy leadership, and even Mao's abilities and personality. Much of this criticism came in subtle form through the medium of drama and literary essays, but Maoists later charged that in 1962 Peng actively sought reinstatement and vindication with the support of Liu Shaoqi by circulating a lengthy defense of his position among party leaders.

New Political Offensive. The Tenth Plenum in September 1962 marked the end of political retrenchment and the beginning of a new political offensive. Although its official communiqué referred only briefly to the existence of "opportunism" and "revisionism" elements within the CCP, subsequent developments made clear that the Plenum had launched a new effort to counter the anti-Maoist tendency of 1961–1962. The next three years brought a number of campaigns aimed at stimulating class struggle and ideological education in the name of Maoist orthodoxy. Two of the most important of these were a socialist education movement and the drive for "cultivation of revolutionary successors." The former was actually a series of campaigns that sought to remedy persistent defects in lower-level cadre work by intraparty rectification combined with mass criticism and education; it insisted on continuing class struggle to defeat bourgeois and revisionist influences both within and outside the CCP. The latter addressed itself to young people who were in line for political leadership but who lacked the actual revolutionary experience of their seniors; they were to immerse themselves in physical labor, ideological study, and class struggle to acquire the experience and attitudes necessary to "carry the revolution through to the end."

These movements, combined with the polemics of the new open Sino-Soviet conflict and a number of related campaigns, fostered an intense political rhetoric reminiscent of the Great Leap Forward. In fact, political tension seemed in some ways higher than in 1957–1960, since struggle was said to be against class enemies and anti-Maoist ideology, whereas the Leap had fought mainly against nature and institutional limitations on productive capacities. Yet, somehow the 1962–1965 rhetoric was not translated fully into practice. The socialist education movement dragged on ineffectively, and the peasant associations that were to be revived to help implement it never acquired much prom...
nence. Experts and youth participated in campaigns to revolutionize themselves, but in a regularized way that permitted continuation of their professional work or study. Revolution, in short, was becoming an institution of the regime, a routinized procedure for education and training that would support rather than alter the system. In that tendency lay some of the basic controversies that brought on the Cultural Revolution. Before discussing that topic, however, we should examine briefly one structure in which the Maoist revival did have a dramatic impact—the People's Liberation Army (PLA).

As noted earlier, military organization was very prominent during the reconstruction period. Following the end of the Korean War and the establishment of the new state system, the PLA's political power declined. Its budget and size were reduced, and it began to assume a more standardized professional role. However, Lin Biao's replacement of Peng as defense minister in 1959 initiated a process of politicization that was to make the PLA Mao's ultimate power base in the Cultural Revolution. Mao's determination to maintain a politicized army is understandable given the CCP's historically intimate identification with its military arm, and his reliance on military models for political action was demonstrated in the Great Leap's heavy use of military metaphors. Still, the forcefulness of the PLA's rise was surprising particularly in view of the resistance Mao's ideas were meeting elsewhere. Under Lin's direction, the PLA's General Political Department and party organization within the army were greatly strengthened, while the study of Mao Zedong thought was promoted vigorously. By 1963–1964, as these efforts bore fruit, the PLA and individual soldier-heroes became the foremost Maoist models for emulation by the rest of society. The army's political department system began to spread to party and government structures, with new political departments appearing under the Central Committee and most of the economic ministries. Army cadres were prominent in the staffing and organizing of these new organs. On the eve of the Cultural Revolution, the PLA was publicly identified as the most successful organizational practitioner of Maoism, and it had acquired, through the preferential placement of demobilized soldiers as well as the new political departments, a network of political influence throughout the system.

THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION DECADE, 1966–1976

The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution was one of the most significant events in modern Chinese history. It was also one of the most confusing because it had a dual character and has been interpreted quite differently by Chinese leaders themselves. Although the Cultural Revolution refers to a specific political struggle campaign that lasted from 1966–1969, it also refers to the decade of 1966–1976, when policies and factions produced by the campaign continued to agitate Chinese politics. In this latter sense, the Cultural Revolution refers to a broader period, process, or set of policies. When Maoist forces were ascendant during 1966–1976, Chinese statements lavishly praised the Cultural Revolution's accomplishments and goals. After 1976, especially after 1978, Chinese leaders began to condemn it as an unmitigated disaster. We analyze these complex issues more carefully in other chapters, presenting here an introductory description of the Cultural Revolution's dual character and its two major stages, the first from 1965–1969 and the second from 1969–1976.45


The Political Framework

Dual Character of the Cultural Revolution. The Cultural Revolution often refers to a national political movement organized and directed by a group of political elites under the leadership of Mao to rectify the CCP in accordance with Maoist policies. As a rectification campaign, the Cultural Revolution sought to test the quality of all officials, particularly those at high levels, reforming or purging those who were not following Mao's prescriptions for Chinese society. The Maoists regularly described the Cultural Revolution as an organized political campaign with centrally defined leadership, guidelines, and stages, although they did not define it exclusively in these terms and did not in fact maintain central control throughout its course. The Cultural Revolution was, therefore, comparable to other political movements in the history of the CCP and was directly related to some of them, particularly the rectification of 1957–1958, the drive against Peng Dehuai's so-called right opportunism in 1959, and the socialist education movement. It stands apart from other campaigns, however, because of its duration and impact (although land reform was a competitor on this score) and because the central leadership was so deeply divided by it.

In a second sense, the Cultural Revolution refers to the whole period of 1966–1976, when Maoists tried to transform the thought and behavior—that is, the culture—of the Chinese people. As a process of attempted cultural transformation, the Cultural Revolution period involved all Chinese (not just active participants in the campaign), raised issues long debated by Chinese leaders and intellectuals (not just Maoists or even Communists), and had its roots deep in modern Chinese history (not just in CCP squabbles of the 1960s). In fact, the phrase cultural revolution was an old Communist term, used partly because of its links to non-Communist cultural reform efforts such as May Fourth and the "new culture" movements of the early twentieth century.

The Cultural Revolution as a movement was inseparable from the broader period or process because so much of its debate centered on cultural issues. The movement began with attacks on writers and party officials responsible for cultural expression. It addressed directly the content of art and literature, insisting it celebrate the nationalistic and proletarian values of socialist society, rejecting the values of traditional China and of foreign or domestic class enemies. It emphasized from the first a thorough reform of the educational system to make it more accessible to workers, peasants, and soldiers and to place it wholly in the service of Maoist goals. Generally, it upheld idealism of populism, political activism, and self-sacrifice for collective interests, while inveighing against aspects of Chinese lifestyle that seemed opposed to these Maoist virtues: the "four olds" (old ideas, culture, customs, and habits); "selfish" desires for material gains; personal ties that diluted political obligations; bureaucratic or elitist behavior; and the special honor or status accorded purely intellectual pursuits. Such cultural concerns were obviously political, but that is precisely the point. For the Maoists, a revolutionary campaign was necessary to establish leaders who would promote cultural transformation; yet only cultural transformation would ensure that "correct" leadership would prevail and endure. The two Cultural Revolutions were inseparable in Maoist ideology and therefore became inseparable for all those affected by or interested in the campaign.

Stages of the 1966–1969 Campaign: Mobilization, Red Guards, Power Seizures, and Consolidation. The Cultural Revolution became an official, open campaign in mid-1966, but its first phase of mobilization lasted from the fall of 1965 through July 1966. In this period, the central leadership engaged in a largely hidden struggle over how to respond to Mao's call (at a September 1965 meeting of the Central Committee) for a major assault on revisionist influences. Open criticism was directed at a small number of intellectuals and party propagandists who had published anti-Maoist pieces in 1961–1962, but the top antagonists were not initially identified. Much of this inner struggle centered around the work of a Central Committee Cultural Revolution Group set up to direct the campaign. The conflict exploded in May–June 1966 when the Central Committee repudiated its first
Cultural Revolution Group (subsequently establishing a more radical one), purged several high-ranking leaders, and reconstituted the Peking Municipal Party Committee.\(^4\) The most prominent victim was Peng Zhen (Peng Chen)—mayor of Peking, first secretary of the Peking Party Committee, and a member of the Politburo and the first Cultural Revolution Group—who was identified as the main culprit in the Cultural Revolution Group and the patron of revisionist intellectuals in Peking. During June and July, the Cultural Revolution broadened into an open mass movement to uncover all bourgeois authorities, particularly in educational and propagandist institutions. However, many party leaders continued to restrain its most radical tendencies.

A second stage of public attack, dominated by Red Guard activities, lasted from August through November. It was initiated at the Eleventh Plenum (August 1–12, 1966), which adopted a crucial “Sixteen Point Decision” on the Cultural Revolution marking the ascendancy of Maoist forces at the party center.\(^5\) This decision aimed at the movement at “persons in authority who are taking the capitalist road”—gradually revealed to be Liu Shaoqi, Deng Xiaoping, and a host of other senior elites—and named the mass movement, especially “large numbers of revolutionary young people”—the Red Guards—as the main force for implementing it. With this official sanction, facilitated by a later closure of the schools, Red Guard organizations mushroomed, bringing millions of young people into the streets to demonstrate support for Chairman Mao, to denounce and ter-

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\(^4\) See, in particular, the “May Sixteenth Circular” of the Central Committee, as in CCP Documents, pp. 20–29.

\(^5\) Text in CCP Documents, pp. 52–54. Use of the word “Maoist” throughout this discussion seems necessary for simple reference to the promoters of the Cultural Revolution as distinguished from those who resisted or tried to defuse it in some way. It does not imply they all held precisely the same views or supported the movement for the same reason. In fact, there was great controversy about who was really a Maoist and who was not, and many participants were doubtfully surprised by the labels ultimately attached to them. Nor is it certain that the Maoists, even in this qualified sense, had a majority on the Central Committee at the Eleventh Plenum, due to the presence of some members and the possibility of intimidation at that meeting. From August 1966 on, Maoist controlled communications issued in the name of the Central Committee, but the course of the Cultural Revolution suggests that they did not have a formal majority on the Committee until after the purges of 1966.

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"three-way alliance" as the appropriate organs for replacing the old state and party committees. The "three-way alliance" meant that revolutionary committees were to be composed of "leaders of revolutionary mass organizations, PLA representatives, and revolutionary leading cadres." In practice, this permitted many former cadres to remain in office, significantly reduced the influence of mass organizations on the committees, and gave the PLA a decisive voice in negotiating the establishment and membership of the committees.

The twenty-one months required to set up revolutionary committees in all provincial-level units were full of conflict and policy shifts; however, when the last was formed in September 1968, it was clear that a trend toward restoration of order and authority was under way. Army commanders and former cadres held most leading positions on the new committees; mass organizations were being broken up and repressed; and students were under orders to go back to school or to work in the countryside. Party organization was still a shambles, however, and the provincial revolutionary committees had barely begun to straighten out the reorganization of power in their subordinate units. Accordingly, a fourth and final stage of consolidation ensued in which the leadership claimed overall victory in the Cultural Revolution but acknowledged that substantial tasks of party building and general economic and political stabilization remained.

Although the Twelfth Plenum in October 1968 had claimed that "ample conditions had been prepared" for a Ninth Party Congress, that Congress—marking the conclusion of the Cultural Revolution as a rectification campaign—did not meet until April 1969.

**Maosist Reform and Factional Conflict, 1969–1976.** The Ninth Party Congress formally committed the CCP to reform the Chinese system in accordance with Mao's prescriptions. For a variety of reasons, however, the effort fell short of the ideals articulated early in the Cultural Revolution. For one thing, the post-1969 leadership was not united in its interpretation of the Cultural Revolution's legacy and soon succumbed to renewed factional conflict. Second, the institutional uncertainty and disarray produced by the campaign complicated efforts to advance new policies. Finally, the PRC now faced new issues—most importantly, Mao's approaching death and how to deal with the Soviet threat—that would transform the stakes and substance of Chinese politics. As a result, the practice of Maoism in 1969–1976 was different from the rhetoric of 1965–1967. Nonetheless, reforms after the Cultural Revolution had a great impact on Chinese society and came to represent—both in China and abroad—at least a modified application of the Maoist model. We will note some of the most important reforms and then review the problems that altered or obstructed their progress.

One striking feature of the immediate post-1969 period was an effort to maintain the spirit of the Cultural Revolution by infusing public life with its symbolism. Mao's personal authority continued to serve as the legitimatior of policy, and Maoist themes—self-reliance, mass line, continuing the revolution, the primacy of politics—permeated all areas of Chinese life. Official statements held that the Cultural Revolution was still in progress, that Chinese society was still engaged in a fierce struggle between the Maoist and revisionist lines that would require militant action, as well as more cultural revolutions, against those who would compromise the goals of the revolution. This radical rhetoric discouraged specification of national policies and plans, encouraging instead an experimental approach that permitted much local diversity and aimed more at reform of thought and behavior than at attainment of quantifiable targets.

More concretely, the idea of continuing the revolution was translated into measures designed to foster a more egalitarian society by shifting resources and status to less privileged sectors.
of Chinese society—that is, from elites to masses and from city to countryside. Bureaucratic organizations were simplified, their personnel reduced. All cadres spent several months in May Seven Cadre Schools, where they engaged in a mixture of manual labor and ideological study. Technical and professional specialists were urged to integrate with the masses and renounce their bourgeois dreams of individual recognition and advancement. There were reports of salary reductions at the upper end of the pay scales, coupled with the pressure on all citizens to renounce privileged lifestyles. Revolutionary committees, which had become the administrative organs of government, were extended into other units, thereby providing some mass representation in the management of factories, enterprises, schools, and other institutions.

Maoist reforms had their greatest impact in the areas of education, culture, and public health. As schools reopened after the closures of the late 1960s, several changes became evident (see Chapter 5 for fuller discussion). Primary school attendance swelled, becoming nearly universal as resources were concentrated on this effort; middle school (secondary level) enrollment also grew rapidly, but university enrollment remained far below the pre-1966 years. Courses of study were shortened; grades, examinations, and theoretical study were downplayed; political education, applied and practical studies, and experience in manual labor held priority. Virtually all middle school students received rural work assignments on graduation. Cultural policy promoted simple revolutionary themes in a populist style, limiting cultural expression to a few officially approved forms, while criticizing anything resembling feudal or bourgeois influences; foreign influences were also objects of suspicion. In public health, as in education, there was a major effort to serve rural areas. Large numbers of doctors and medical teams moved to the countryside. The general thrust of reforms was to provide minimal health care for the population as a whole, rather than specialized care for the few who had access to advanced medical centers in the cities. Medical training emphasized training of generalists and armies of paramedics (the so-called barefoot doctors) who could extend simple treatment or referral services into the villages.

Despite the Cultural Revolution's attacks on Liu Shaoqi's revisionist economic policies, the broad outlines of the economic policies of the early 1960s remained in place. "Agriculture as the foundation," the three-level commune system with the production team as the basic accounting unit, and household retention of private plots persisted, although there was some discussion of reviving more collectivist measures. The Cultural Revolution spirit did, however, encourage an "antieconomist" stance that was critical of emphasis on material incentives or production goals. Local initiative, development of rural, small-scale industry, and worker participation in management received greater attention than in the past.

These reforms had heavy rhetorical support and considerable impact, but they soon ran into difficulties. Sino-Soviet border clashes in 1969 and the beginning of American retreat from Vietnam led to the limited Sino-American rapprochement signaled in the Shanghai Communiqué of February 1972. The PRC began to reorient its foreign relations toward greater contact with capitalist countries to build a united front against the USSR; the Soviet threat also raised serious questions about China's economic and technical development that put Cultural Revolution assumptions about the primacy of politics in a different light (see Chapters 4 and 7 for further discussion). Moreover, Mao's failing health and declining role in governmental affairs compelled other leaders to face the political and strategic implications of the post-Mao era, even though they were reluctant to depart from the leader's prescriptions while he was alive.

Institutional uncertainties also obstructed the reforms. State and party organs were slow to recover from the shattering events of 1966–1969. Many experienced cadres were purged or temporarily relieved of their original work assignments. The 1954 state constitution was discredited, but a new one was not adopted until January 1975. The CCP was taking in many new members, even though the fate of old cadres was not yet clear. The role of mass organizations and the PLA was in flux, the former beginning to revive and the latter retreating from its political prominence of the late 1960s. The resolution of these institutional issues was in itself a matter of dispute, but as long as they remained unresolved, they weakened administrative effectiveness.

Most importantly, these problems combined with the residue of Cultural Revolution factionalism to produce serious splits.
within the leadership (see Chapter 6 for further discussion of elite conflicts). The initial post-1969 leadership was a coalition of three groups: the most ardent Maoists or radicals who drew strength from their close association with the Chairman and their manipulation of his directives—Jiang Qing (Chiang Ch'ing), Mao's wife, was the key figure in this group; the military elite who, although not united, benefited from Defense Minister Lin Biao's designation as second-in-command and Mao's chosen successor; the veteran administrators, led by Zhou Enlai, who represented what was left of the moderate position in Chinese politics.

This coalition proved unstable. A major rupture occurred in 1971 with the purge of Lin Biao for allegedly plotting a coup against Mao. Lin's downfall—apparently due mainly to his ambitious drive for power but also involving more obscure differences with Mao, particularly on policies toward the Soviet Union and the United States—was accompanied by the purge of several other high-ranking military leaders and was followed by a reduction of PLA influence, leaving the radicals and moderates in uneasy balance. The former tried to protect the more radical version of Cultural Revolution reforms, whereas the latter tried to moderate their effects and concentrate more on economic development. There was backsliding on some of the reforms as Zhou Enlai sponsored the restoration of many old cadres whom he had purged in the Cultural Revolution. The most prominent example was the return of Deng Xiaoping, who had been linked to Lin Shaoqi as a leading capitalist-roader in the Cultural Revolution but who had, by 1975, moved into virtual leadership of the government as Zhou’s health failed. The 1972–1976 period, then, was marked by increasing tension within the leadership, with discordant interpretations of key campaigns (particularly the “criticize Lin Biao and Confucius” movement), by increasing labor disputes and social unrest, and by a pronounced economic slowdown in 1974–1976. When Zhou Enlai died in January 1976, the radicals—apparently with Mao’s support—

**Note:**

economy with their factional activity, and generally following a rightist line under the guise of radicalism. Hua became Chairman of the CCP and of the CCC's Military Affairs Commission, while continuing to hold the premiership. For the next several months, the new leadership concentrated on consolidating its position and charging the Gang with responsibility for nearly all of China's problems over the preceding decade. This was done in the name of Mao, who was said to have picked Hua as successor and to have recognized the Gang's disruptive and deviant character well before his death. Hua and his colleagues clearly wanted to retain Maodist legitimacy and avoid explicit departures from the Maodist legacy. At the same time, criticism of the Gang inevitably suggested criticism of the Cultural Revolution and pointed toward changes in Cultural Revolution policies.

These changes began to take form after the Eleventh National Congress of the CCP in August 1977, which produced a new party constitution and confirmed Hua's leading position. Equally important was the reinstatement of Deng Xiaoping (as CCP vice-chairman and later vice-premier of the government), who quickly became a spokesperson for new policies. In March 1978, the Fifth NPC, with its adoption of a new state constitution, gave further impetus to the emergence of a new line. These two meetings, plus a number of national conferences on particular policy areas, elaborated Hua's "four modernizations" theme: to attain the modernization of agriculture, industry, national defense, and science and technology by the year 2000, placing the Chinese economy in the forefront of the world and approaching or even overtaking some of the most developed capitalist countries. A Ten-Year Plan for 1976–1985 advanced equally ambitious short-run goals for accomplishing this monumental task. Hua argued that Zhou Enlai had called for a modernization drive several years earlier only to see the Gang sabotage it; removal of the Gang brought a new period of socialist unity and order that would proper China toward modernization. He also called for new policies to strengthen education, workplace discipline and social order, foreign trade, and economic planning and management; however, it was difficult for a leader so dependent on

Mao's legacy to advocate fundamental change in the Maodist system. Hua's Ten-Year Plan bore a strong similarity to the Great Leap Forward—an all-out development push that set high targets across the board without acknowledging the unwelcome trade-offs that might accompany it.

Hua's moderate Maodism came under increasing fire in 1978 from Deng Xiaoping and his supporters. By the latter part of the year, this so-called practice faction (named because of their pragmatic slogans, such as "seek truth from facts" and "practice is the sole criterion of truth") was pushing for full repudiation of the Cultural Revolution and more comprehensive reforms. In policy addresses, academic journals, and a new burst of popular debate around posters at "Democracy Wall" in Peking and other places, they pressed their case against Hua. Many issues came together in demands for a "reversal of verdict" on the Tienamen Incident of 1976, because that protest against radical policies had been labelled "counterrevolutionary" to justify police action against the critics, the second purge of Deng, and the confirmation of Hua as premier. Official announcements in November that the affair was "completely revolutionary" indicated that the victims of the 1976 event—Deng and other opponents of the Cultural Revolution—had won the day and that the primary beneficiary of the Incident, Hua Guofeng, was no longer in charge.

"Shift of Focus to Socialist Modernization": The Third Plenum and Deng's Reforms, 1978–1980. The Third Plenum (of the Eleventh CC) in December 1978 proclaimed a "shift of focus to socialist modernization" that marked a decisive departure from Hua's transitional leadership and indeed from China's revolutionary era. The "shift" replaced Hua's grandiose development goals and claims to Maodist legitimacy with a readiness to do whatever was necessary, within the bounds of socialism, for China's modernization. It brought changes in party leadership as Deng's forces assumed command; in interpretation of party history and doctrine, with a critical view of Mao, Maodism, and the whole Cultural Revolution episode; and in many domestic

58 See Text of the Plenum's Communiqué in PR, no. 52 (December 29, 1978): 6–16.
and foreign policies, including basic organizational principles of the existing system, to make them more effective servants of modernization. Some of these changes were underway before December 1978 (although none was completed at that time), but the Third Plenum symbolized the break with Maoism and set the CCP on the course of reform.

Leadership changes at the Third Plenum brought demotion of Hua's highest-ranking supporters and promotion of many of Deng's group. Struggle among these and other factions continued, but the die was cast. The crucial remaining members of Hua's group were purged in early 1980, with Hua yielding the premiership to Zhao Ziyang in September 1980 and his party leadership post to Hu Yaobang in June 1981. Zhao and Hu were proteges of Deng, who was the dominant political figure in China throughout the 1978–1985 period, even though he held formal leadership of neither state nor party. Deng faced continual opposition and was not uniformly successful in his initiatives, but the Third Plenum had shifted the balance of power at the top toward those eager to leave the Cultural Revolution behind and establish a new long-term development strategy.

Reinterpretation of party history and doctrine was a central issue in debates leading to the Third Plenum. Deng's victory at that meeting signaled a shift in emphasis on three major doctrinal points: material goals and incentives, especially the primacy of national economic development and the appropriateness of material rewards to motivate producers, replaced Cultural Revolution emphasis on ideological goals and incentives; images of social harmony, of a society united by its socialist system and hence no longer in need of mass struggle campaigns, replaced Maoist insistence that sharp class struggle persisted in China and required a "continuing revolution"; institutional procedures of socialist law and democracy replaced the personal word and authority of the leader in legitimating policy and doctrine. This obvious reformulation of Maoism left open the question of how to assess Mao's individual role in party history. The answer to such a delicate question could only be worked out gradually; however, the Third Plenum's mandate required that it be faced.

Open criticism of Mao and the Cultural Revolution appeared first in public posters, without formal approval by party elites, during the "democratic movement" of 1978–1979. Then, in September 1979, Ye Jianying—a top military and political figure placed between Hua and Deng on the CCP political spectrum—delivered a major address acknowledging that many post-1957 Mao policies were wrong, calling the entire Cultural Revolution an "appalling catastrophe," and announcing that the CCP intended to hold a meeting to sum up its assessment of these difficult issues. Thereafter, official criticism of the Maoist period became common, although the promised resolution on party history did not appear until June 1981. Both the delay and substance of the document attested to the issue's controversiality. The CCP retained Mao Zedong Thought as a guiding principle, insisting that Mao's contributions to the Chinese revolution far outweighed his failings. At the same time, he was reduced to the level of an ordinary mortal who made gross mistakes during the Cultural Revolution, with these mistakes and the Cultural Revolution's flaws spelled out in detail. Although less than a full-scale "de-Maoification," the resolution drew a sharp doctrinal distinction between so-called correct pre-1957 and post-1978 lines and the errors of the Maoist period.

Reform policies unfolded rapidly after the Third Plenum, touching almost every area of Chinese life. Efforts to restore and raise academic standards were undertaken, with a sharp increase in university enrollments based on admission by competitive examination. Party leaders emphasized the importance of science and technology, and of intellectual contributions in general, to the success of modernization. A limited academic and cultural liberalization permitted experimentation with previously taboo subjects or forms of expression. Liberalization had political dimensions as well, leading to some open political dissent in 1979 along with the officially approved reconsideration of Maoism. The strengthening of socialist law and democracy became a common theme, with promulgation of a new criminal code, expansion of legal and judicial organs, and new laws in local government and elections that gave greater scope to popular political participation. CCP leaders insisted that cadres must also observe the new standards of legalism, discipline, and efficiency as "no one is above the law."

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59Text in BR, no. 40 (October 5, 1979): 7–32.
Economic reforms included increased benefits for consumers and experiments with market socialism. The Third Plenum raised state prices for agricultural products while lowering prices paid for key farming inputs, thereby giving rural areas their first substantial increase in disposable income in decades. There were also wage increases for salaried workers, bonuses for the most productive workers, and a new concern for raising the quantity and quality of consumer goods.

"Market socialism" is an imprecise term for diverse efforts to raise economic production and efficiency. Decentralization of some decisions to lower levels, greater reliance on experts and technology, improved management systems, and insistence that enterprises account for their profits or losses did not necessarily challenge the structure of China's command economy. On the other hand, the expansion of private plots and free markets in the countryside, and experiments allowing some rural and urban production units to retain their product and prices to the market and dispose of their profits as they wished (so long as state quotas were met) were reforms that departed significantly from the established system. For example, the launching of the responsibility system in agriculture, which returned most farming decisions to the household and allowed it to buy and sell on the market after meeting a contractual obligation to the state (see Table III.1), effectively dismantled the system of agricultural collectivization that had emerged in the mid-1950s.

In external affairs, the Third Plenum brought a decisive commitment to an "open door foreign policy" that would accelerate modernization through expansion of China's international contacts. Some aspects of this opening simply continued the growth of PRC trade with capitalist countries and the general widening of diplomatic contacts associated with the strategic shift of the early 1970s, symbolized by the Sino-American Shanghai Communiqué of 1972. But Deng's foreign policy was more ambitious than the limited anti-Soviet united front pursued through most of the 1970s. Full normalization of relations between the United States and the People's Republic of China in December 1978, followed by China's invasion of Vietnam in February 1979—immediately after Deng's return from a historic visit to the United States—fueled speculation that China and the United States were moving toward an actual alliance against the Soviet Union. Sharp increases in foreign trade accompanied new policies approving borrowing on the international market and some direct foreign investment in China. To pay the bill for greater commodity and capital imports, the PRC began crash programs to develop exports and attract tourists. Initiation of large-scale cultural and academic exchanges—primarily with capitalist countries—was another part of the "open door" package that seemed to have reversed Maoist self-reliance. However, in both domestic and foreign policy, the initial thrust of reform gave way to a "readjustment" phase that modified some reform policies while strengthening others.

Readjustment and the Sixth Five-Year Plan, 1981-1985. "Readjustment" of the Chinese economy was one of the slogans of the late 1970s, so its emergence as a central theme in 1980-1981 was neither surprising nor a repudiation of reform. Rather, it indicated the desire of CCP leaders to carefully examine their reforms, reattuning those that seemed most problematic. This second look had a conservative bias, yet its effect was only to apply, not stop or even deflect, the reform program. The primary rationale for readjustment was continuing evidence of inefficiency and low productivity in the Chinese economy, coupled with growing deficits in the state budget due to increased imports, investments, and subsidies. Concern about China's economic capacity to sustain rapid development while satisfying long-suppressed consumer demands merged with fears of the political and cultural consequences of "liberalization" and the "open door." Internationally, the continuing irritant of American relations with and military support for Taiwan showed that normalization of diplomatic relations had not cleared the way for a U.S.-PRC alliance. Issues such as these enabled Deng's opponents to challenge his reform package, which resulted in three main areas of readjustment.

Economic readjustment was the centerpiece of the Sixth Five-Year Plan for 1981-1985. This Plan aimed at steady but modest growth for the period, and indeed for the subsequent 1966-1990 period as well, with high growth rates scheduled to resume only
in the 1990s. Its core was restraint in new state investments, increased efficiency in existing enterprises, and reliance on careful planning and technological inputs for production increases. The goal was to concentrate on raising productivity as a foundation for more rapid future growth.

A second area of readjustment was foreign policy, with a cooling of Sino-American relations and some signs of thaw—principally increased trade and diplomatic contacts—in Sino-Soviet relations. The PRC returned to relatively evenhanded criticism of both superpowers, asserting its closeness to Third World countries and its self-reliant, independent stance in world affairs. In fact, China's differences with the USSR over Afghanistan, the northern border, and Soviet support for Vietnam, coupled with its increasingly important economic and cultural ties with capitalist countries, kept it oriented much more toward the West (including key Asian members of the world market) than toward either the East or the South. Nonetheless, the shift reaffirmed China's determination to play an independent international role and ended speculation about early emergence of anything like a Sino-American alliance.

Finally, readjustment curtailed some of the liberalizing tendencies of the late 1970s. Open dissent was silenced; intellectuals were reminded of the political limits to cultural expression and academic debate; and Chinese citizens were cautioned about the danger of ideological pollution in contacts with foreigners. As noted earlier, the party resolution on Mao's historical role stopped far short of repudiation. Mao Zedong Thought held its place with Marxism-Leninism, socialism, party leadership, and proletarian dictatorship as guiding principles of the system that could not be compromised. In short, the CCP reassessed its dominant place in Chinese society and the correctness of its ideology. How to enforce its role and principles—whether by campaigns, purges, ideological education, police controls, or the like—remained controversial among party elites, but there was no doubt that they were determined to counter any serious political or ideological opposition that might develop from reform policies.

Within the confines of readjustment as described, many reform policies continued to thrive. In fact, economic readjustment itself extended some reforms precisely because it emphasized fiscal sobriety, economic efficiency, and technological development. This approach put a premium on motivating enterprises to reform themselves and on attracting more foreign trade, capital, and technology. For example, the responsibility system in agriculture spread to almost all rural households, many of them branching out into freewheeling contracting and subcontracting for specialized production and services. Legal ownership of land remained with the collective; however, household contracts for land were extended to fifteen years to encourage peasant investment in land improvements. Success of the rural responsibility system in increasing production encouraged extension of the contract system to urban enterprises and entrepreneurs as well. A major CC decision in October 1984 loosened price controls and strengthened enterprise autonomy in the urban/industrial sector. In effect, market socialism forged ahead in response to some readjustment considerations, even though it seemed to confirm the ideological fears of the readjusters.

Another striking example of broadening reform was in policy toward foreign investment. Initially, the CCP limited such investment mainly to development loans or credit, participation in joint ventures in which China retained a controlling interest, and special undertakings in four small special economic zones along the Guangdong-Fujian coast. However, readjustment put borrowing and expensive purchases of foreign goods (especially complete plants) in disfavor, while expanding opportunities for direct foreign investments that entailed little cost for the Chinese. A variety of options, including full foreign ownership and operation, were offered; fourteen major cities and ports along the whole eastern seacoast were designated for intense economic development through encouragement of foreign trade and investment; and the concessionary terms offered to foreign investors were liberalized. There was no rollback in tourism or cultural

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and academic exchange, despite explicit warnings about the ideological and even criminal dangers associated with these foreign contacts. In general, therefore, readjustment represented an effort to rationalize and refine the reform program (and to guard against dangers associated with it) but not to change its basic mission of accelerating the socialist modernization of China. Dramatic evidence of the reform movement's continuing vitality came at a September 1985 CC plenum, where Deng secured the retirement of over 100 senior officials, including 10 Politburo members and 64 CC members, and brought in many younger cadres with professional experience more suited to the modernization program.43

It is too early to discuss the success or failure of the modernization effort or to predict its future course. Although the basic program remained in place through the mid-1980s, with mixed but generally satisfactory economic results (see Appendix 8), there are formidable obstacles ahead. These obstacles include questions about economic management and distribution and the nature of political leadership, that is, about the basic character of the socialist system. During the first sustained reform period (1978–1985), experiments with market socialism gained ground at the expense of the command economy, and consumer interests seemed at times to challenge the primacy of state interests. But central planners and the state still hold decisive power, so reforms in these crucial economic areas remain controversial and vulnerable to reversal.

Also controversial are political reforms that tried to increase the popular or representative role in politics, to regularize intraparty procedures, and to institutionalize separation of state and party functions. All had some effect but, like the economic reforms, they pushed against the entrenched interests and habits of party bureaucrats long accustomed to a near monopoly of power. Reform in socialist China requires a bureaucratic establishment to share a significant portion of its power with other claimants. Initial reforms brought some diffusion of power to lower-level units, to nonparty units, and to technical and professional elites whose qualifications differed markedly from old-line bureaucrats, but the issue is far from settled. Subsequent chapters will analyze in more detail the political dimensions of this problem.

Despite uncertainty about prospects for China's modernization and even the form that Chinese socialism may assume, there is no doubt about the significance of the PRC's transition to a postrevolutionary era. The CCP has recognized this shift in its doctrine and disassociated itself from many prescriptions of revolutionary Maoism. It has established new policies that support economic transformation, with particular emphasis on technology and material incentives. It has moved from a relatively self-reliant international posture to a degree of interdependence not unlike that of many other developing countries. Changes such as these have altered fundamentally the context of Chinese politics.