CHAPTER IV

The Communist System: Ideology and Change

COMMUNIST SYSTEMS RAISE MAJOR CONCEPTUAL PROBLEMS IN THE STUDY OF COMPARATIVE POLITICS. WE TOUCHED ON THIS IN CHAPTER 1, PARTICULARLY IN REFERENCE TO THE INADEQUACIES OF THE TOTALITARIAN MODEL, AND NOW WE MUST EXPLORE IT MORE CAREFULLY IN GENERALIZING ABOUT THE CHINESE SYSTEM. WHAT MAKES CONCEPTUALIZATION DIFFICULT, AS ONE STUDENT OF COMPARATIVE COMMUNISM HAS POINTED OUT, IS THAT COMMUNIST SYSTEMS TEND TO BE IDENTIFIED IN GENERAL TYPLOGIES AS STABLE AND INSTITUTIONALIZED; WHEREAS STUDIES OF SPECIFIC COMMUNIST COUNTRIES REVEAL ACUTE PROBLEMS IN COPING WITH CHANGE AND INSTITUTIONALIZATION. 1

Indeed, tensions between stability and change seem to be inherent in such systems, which seek to stabilize and concentrate power in the political system in order to transform the social system. In practice, the political system cannot attempt to alter society without serious repercussions. As demonstrated in the preceding chapter, China is a prime example of the way in which efforts to transform society threaten the stability of the regime promoting that transformation.

Ideology appears to provide more coherence to the study of Communist systems than do institutions or policies. Richard


society based on the new socialist man does not reveal how this effort will relate to division of labor and differentiation demanded by rapid economic modernization; global opposition to capitalism and imperialism leaves open the degree to which considerations of national interest, security, and resources will govern foreign relations. Moreover, institutional and policy formulations inevitably reflect the social, political, economic, cultural, and geographic conditions of the society in question and the changes that occur in these conditions over time. In short, the basic ideological credo establishes long-range goals and a rough framework for achieving them but does not provide solutions for the crucial policy choices that the leaders of Communist countries face. At the same time, it requires that all decisions be justified in terms of its basic tenets in order to retain the legitimacy and identity of the system.

As the discussion of pre-1949 politics in Chapter 2 makes clear, the roots of Chinese Communist ideology are complex. The initial interest in Marxism was part of a general attraction to progressive Western ideas, strengthened by the anti-imperialism of Chinese intellectuals, the impressive victory of the October Revolution, and Bolshevik efforts to proselytize and to organize an international communist movement. However, the CCP could not remain a mere copy of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU). Forced to the countryside in 1927, the CCP's struggle to survive led to the development of a specifically Chinese revolutionary strategy, political style, and leadership cohort. The primary author and leader of China's adaptation of Marxism was Mao Zedong,¹ and his very influential but problematic ideological legacy is known as "Mao Zedong Thought."


Mao is not credited with originating a new world view, but with creatively and successfully applying Marxism to Chinese conditions. The practical ideology identified with Mao has been the operating value system of the CCP since the 1940s. Although Mao's leftism and authoritarianism from 1957 until his death weakened his personal credibility, Mao Zedong Thought remains one of the basic pillars of Chinese orthodoxy. Beyond the official acceptance of Mao Zedong Thought, the influence of Mao's four decades of leadership have become part of the self-image of Chinese Communism.

In this Chapter, we will first consider the emergence of Mao Zedong Thought and some of its structural features. Since ideology is viewed as a guide to understanding reality in order to change it, we then consider patterns of change in the PRC.

IDEOLOGY AND MAO ZEDONG THOUGHT

Development of Mao Zedong Thought. Mao Zedong was primarily a leader engaged in revolutionary politics, not a theoretician. As a result, his thinking and writings were tied to practical political problems. Very few of his essays deal with exclusively theoretical questions. Because Mao's views and values are enmeshed in practical concerns, the question of what general doctrines constitute Mao Zedong Thought is one of interpretation. The Gang of Four, Hua Guofeng, and Deng Xiaoping all hold very different views of Mao Zedong Thought, and all are based on Mao's writings. Moreover, it is clear that Mao's thought continued to develop throughout his career. Although the Cultural Revolution gave the impression that Mao was an isolated, idealistic, and idiosyncratic thinker, he had a very different reputation earlier in his career. It is necessary to retrace Mao's political career in order to understand Mao's thought and the interpretations to which it has been subject.

Early twentieth-century China, the environment of Mao's youth, was in great turmoil. Feuding warlords roamed through his home province of Hunan; China's traditional culture appeared outdated; and new ideas from the West were being introduced with dizzying rapidity. Young scholars still felt the mission to rule, but there was no longer a legitimate, bureaucratic path to power. The most idealistic and revolutionary Western doctrines had great appeal. Mao was an active local leader of the
May Fourth Movement of 1919, the anti-imperialist popular movement described in Chapter 2. At that time, Mao preferred Kropotkin's anarchism to Marxism because he thought that the latter's class struggle would taint the future society with the violence of the old. In his major pre-Marxist work, "The Great Union of the Popular Masses," Mao makes the suggestion that people with common problems form groups, and that alliances of such groups demand a new society. Such a "Great Union" would prevail over the small handful of actual exploiters without violence and usher in a new world era of enlightened, nonoppressive society.

The waning of the May Fourth Movement did not make Mao any less revolutionary, but it did convince him that mass enthusiasm by itself was insufficient. An organization of dedicated revolutionaries was necessary in order to create favorable conditions and to lead the masses to victory. The success of the Russian revolution made Marxism-Leninism especially attractive to frustrated May Fourth radicals such as Mao. He attended the founding congress of the CCP in Shanghai in 1921 and organized its Hunan branch. Mao was expelled from Hunan at the time that the first KMT-CCP United Front was forming, and he became involved as a CCP representative in various KMT activities. In 1925, Mao's interest in the revolutionary potential of the peasantry was rekindled by a visit to Hunan, and he became an impassioned advocate for active peasant participation in the anti-imperialist, antilord revolution. The peasant activities against landlords that Mao encouraged hastened the split between the KMT and the CCP in 1927. The KMT and its warlord allies were very much stronger militarily than the CCP, and soon the remaining members of the CCP were escaping to distant rural areas. With a few hundred followers and bands for allies, Mao settled in the Jinggang Mountains (Chingshangshan) on the Hunan-Jiangxi border and struggled to survive.

The combination of the necessity of surviving in rural areas surrounded by more powerful enemies and Mao's rev-

olutionary-populist predisposition led Mao to develop a rural strategy for the Chinese revolution. The rural strategy involved much more than to "surround the cities from the countryside." Mao was venturing in untired directions, and Marxism-Leninism and the Bolshevik experience were of little help to him. Considerable trial and error were involved in its evolution, and ultimately the rural strategy was a complex and interdependent synthesis of military, political, and economic elements. Techniques of guerrilla warfare were an important element. Flexible maneuvers in friendly territory, surprise, and utilization of informal military assets helped Mao's isolated base area cope with its deficiency in material resources. Later, these techniques were useful against the invading Japanese. However, guerrilla warfare was only the military element of Mao's rural strategy, and it could not have succeeded without political and economic elements.

The political prerequisite of the rural strategy was to attract and sustain broad peasant support for CCP policies. Seizing the land of landlords and rich peasants and distributing it to poor peasants was an important first step, but it was not sufficient for effective political mobilization. The CCP had to develop its claims to allegiance by pursuing tasks that benefited the peasants and by becoming intimate enough with each village to recruit new activists and to isolate its enemies. The cardinal sin of a bad cadre was "estrangement from the masses." A cadre that was not in touch with the masses would be more likely to pursue unpopular or unsuccessful policies and, in any case, would be ineffective in transforming peasant appreciation for CCP policies into recruitment and mobilization. Therefore, Mao strongly criticized bureaucratic and domineering habits and insisted that cadres investigate the concrete conditions of their locality and be flexible in their policies. The strategy of staying close to the masses in order to mobilize them through effective leadership was later formulated as the "mass line."

Mao had more difficulty in arriving at a viable economic policy for his rural base areas. These were naturally poor areas; many of the old base areas were still receiving special economic assistance in 1984. The task of taking over a subsistence agrarian economy from its indigenous elite, recruiting an army from its best labor power, and then supporting both the population and the army would have been challenging for anyone. In addition,
the base areas sustained the damage of blockades and invasions. Besides the general resource problems of the base areas, politically necessary policies, such as land redistribution, further reduced productivity. Land reform satisfied the land hunger of the peasants, but many did not have sufficient labor power or tools to work their share. Agricultural production in the Jiangxi Soviet usually dropped for the first few years after land reform, adding to the deprivations caused by war and forcing the CCP to rely on wealth seized from landlords for the major part of its budget. Although Mao began to stress cooperation and self-sufficiency in 1933, it was not until the 1940s that the encouragement of mutual-aid teams, mobilization of the army for production, and more moderate land reform policies began to resolve the economic bottleneck of rural revolution.

The development of Mao’s personal political power during the 1930s was as slow and painful as the development of his policies. Although Mao was in charge of his first base area in 1927–1929, he was subject to continual meddling by emissaries from the Central Committee. When he moved to his larger base area in southern Jiangxi, he seemed to be in greater control initially, but within a year the Central Committee decided to move from its underground headquarters in Shanghai to his base area. After 1931, Mao lost political and then military control of the base area, although he remained in charge of government administration. The Central Committee was controlled by the “28 Bolsheviks,” a group of Moscow-trained Stalinists, and their policies were virtually the opposite of those Mao was developing. Policies became dogmatic and Russian-derived; an extreme policy of class struggle was implemented; and military policy became more formal. Ultimately, the base area in Jiangxi was destroyed by Chiang Kai-shek, and in 1934 the CCP began the Long March, a legendary long and difficult escape from Jiangxi to China’s northwest.

Mao began his leadership role on the Long March. He was in a good position to criticize the 28 Bolsheviks because of his own military and political successes before they assumed command of his base area, and he became chairman of the military commission at the Zunyi Conference in January 1935. Mao’s role had expanded to general political leadership by 1936; however, he continued to face challenges from the Moscow faction until the early 1940s. The responsibilities of general leadership that Mao faced after 1936 required him to formulate his techniques for rural revolution into guidelines for CCP activities. Moreover, the war with Japan that began in 1937 required a rethinking and reorientation of policy toward a patriotic united front. From 1936 to 1949, Mao wrote a number of works concerning military strategy, united front work, and the rectification of CCP political style; these became the official formulation of Mao Zedong Thought. From 1942 on, CCP members were required to study Mao’s writings and master his approach to politics.

The consolidation of Mao’s leadership in the 1940s depended on the continued success and development of his rural revolutionary strategy. Guerrilla warfare provided an effective form of resistance in areas under Japanese occupation, and by the end of the war, the CCP’s base areas had a total population of 100 million. The political technique of the mass line encouraged the replacement of traditional village leadership by activists committed to the CCP. By 1945, CCP membership had grown to 1.2 million. Economic policy was successful enough to permit the CCP to survive KMT blockades and the burdens of war mobilization. When the postwar struggle between the CCP and the KMT for the control of China began, the solidity of CCP leadership and policies led to a sweeping victory by 1949, years earlier than Mao had anticipated.

The founding of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) elevated Mao to head of state as well as Chairman of the CCP. In both the Leninist-Stalinist tradition and the Chinese imperial tradition, Mao now occupied the position of infallible leader. As the guardian of orthodoxy, Mao was now in a position to command rather than to persuade in ideological matters. Consequently, his public writings became much less frequent and were replaced by private, authoritative comments. An official four-volume edition of Mao’s Selected Works was issued. Although the process of establishing Mao as China’s Stalin had begun in the early 1940s, the success of the revolution and his

position as an impeccable leading figure of state raised Mao far beyond his colleagues.

The task of ruling China induced Mao to write two important works in the 1950s. The first, "On the Ten Major Relationships" (1956), argues against the assumption that in order to do one thing well other tasks must be neglected. Mao makes the dialectical argument that tasks are interdependent. For instance, one should not neglect agriculture and light industry in order to concentrate on heavy industry, because the development of heavy industry depends on the development of agriculture and light industry. Similarly, the relationships of center and localities, coastal and inland areas, the Hans and minority peoples, and other apparent dichotomies should be viewed as interdependent. Mao is not arguing for a static balance of resources, but he is against seeing options as trade-offs. Apparently, Mao would prefer a general effort that would attempt to tackle all related aspects of a problem at once.

Another important work of the 1950s was "On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People" (1957). Influenced by the criticism of Stalin and unrest in Poland and Hungary, Mao admitted that incorrect leadership could lead to strife even after exploiting classes had been eliminated. Although "contradictions among the people" were essentially nonantagonistic, they could become antagonistic if they were mishandled. At the time this was used as an argument for tolerance, but the implication that political leadership could determine the character of socialist society paved the way for the Cultural Revolution's criticism of the party.

In the Great Leap Forward of 1958, Mao implemented the "general effort" approach to modernization that he recommended in his "On the Ten Major Relationships." Investment and industry were decentralized; bold new social reforms were introduced; and production was expected to mushroom on all fronts. China was expected to "grasp revolution and promote production" at the same time, because in Mao's view they could not be done separately. However, the Leap turned into a full-scale disaster despite some initial successes, and Mao had to permit the effort to restore production to take precedence. Meanwhile, Mao's forcing of Leap policies on the party and his subsequent attempt to control criticism of its failure created a fatal rift between Mao and the institutionalized party leadership under Liu Shaoqi. In 1962, Mao himself criticized his leadership in the Leap and proclaimed the need for democratic centralism within the party. However, Mao had already begun to play an imperial revolutionary role. Concerned about the emergence of a bureaucratic class of party cadres and frustrated by its passive resistance to his radical initiatives, Mao opened the Cultural Revolution by calling on the masses to "bombard the headquarters." Although Mao did not anticipate that the criticism would be as widespread and violent as it became, he was sufficiently alienated from the party organization and concerned about the future of the revolution to permit the chaos and to identify with its radical direction.

Mao was not as dogmatic or as antiestablishment as the leftist ideologues whom he patronized (now known as the Gang of Four). The restoration of social order and the rebuilding of the party would have been impossible without Mao's active endorsement. Zhou Enlai and later the reinstated Deng Xiaoping remained symbols within the top leadership of Mao's lingering commitment to production as well as revolution. Mao's reluctance to choose between economic needs and revolutionary ideals led to policy oscillations in 1967–1976, as he shifted from one to the other. His inability to admit that there could be a conflict between the two aims gave the high ground of propaganda to the leftists, because their assumption that production would follow from revolution could not be contested openly. Thus Mao ended his political career, which had been based on the pragmatic evolution of a successful rural revolutionary strategy, publicly identified with a dogmatic leftist that threatened the material foundation of his regime.

Within a month of Mao's death on September 9, 1976, the leftists were easily swept aside by a broad coalition of more moderate leaders. The first concern of the new leadership was to establish the legitimacy of its rule. Hua Guofeng was presented

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*Mao elaborated his views on democratic centralism in a very interesting speech with the title, "Talk at an Enlarged Working Conference Convened by the Central Committee of the CGP," PR, no. 27 (July 7, 1978); 6–22.

*Mao's major writings for 1949 to 1957 are in Selected Works, vol. 5.
as Mao's faithful and hand-picked successor, and the Gang of Four was exposed as corrupt and hypocritical manipulators. Hua took the lead in homage in Mao. He had a mausoleum built in Tiananmen in record time, he edited the fifth volume of Mao's Selected Works, and he began to shape his personal image after Mao's. Nevertheless, the content of Mao Zedong Thought had already begun a major shift. The works highlighted by Hua were from the 1950s and underscored Mao's interest in production. Hua retained Mao's dictum about taking class struggle as the "key link," but he also declared the end of the Cultural Revolution and the need for "great order across the land." China had entered a new era of modernization, and it was unclear how much relevance was retained by Mao's directives.

Transition from Hua Guofeng's efforts to reorient Maoism to Deng Xiaoping's rejection of the Cultural Revolution and criticism of Mao occurred in 1978. Using Mao's saying "Seek truth from facts," Deng's supporters said that policy should be based on current realities rather than on Mao's directives. Deng argued that Mao himself had opposed blind dogmatism in politics; and, in a new era, China should follow Mao's example rather than his words. After a factional struggle fought around the slogan of "Practice is the only criterion for determining truth," Deng consolidated his control over the party at the third Plenum of the eleventh CC in December 1978.

The new official interpretation of Mao Zedong Thought was provided by the "Resolution on Certain Questions in the History of Our Party Since the Founding of the P.R.C." This complicated document passed by the Sixth Plenum of the Eleventh CC criticized the excesses of the 1957 anti-rightist campaign and the Great Leap forward, while condemning totally the Cultural Revolution. Mao is said to have "initiated and led" the Cultural Revolution, although he is given some credit for preventing a total degeneration of the party and state. On the other hand, Mao's leading role in the success of the revolution is recognized, as is his contribution during the 1950s to socialist construction. Mao is viewed as the principal author of Mao Zedong Thought, but not as its proprietor. According to the document, the "erroneous 'left' theses, upon which Mao Zedong based himself in initiating the 'cultural revolution,' were obviously inconsistent with the system of Mao Zedong Thought, which is the integration of the universal principles of Marxism-Leninism with the concrete practice of the Chinese revolution." Thus Mao Zedong thought has become separated from Mao Zedong not only by death but by official interpretation.

**STRUCTURAL FEATURES OF MAO ZEDONG THOUGHT**

Despite the development and changes in Mao's thinking, there are certain elements that may be called structural features of Mao Zedong Thought. The first two, revolutionary populism and practicality, are the most fundamental. The remaining three features are dialectics, the importance of process, and unity through struggle.

**Revolutionary Populism.** Even before he became a Marxist, the premise of Mao's politics was that the organized masses would ultimately prevail. In suggesting a "Great Union of the Popular Masses" in 1919, Mao expected China and the world to be transformed from below by a broad organization of society's lower classes. Mao thought that mass participation was the only way to bring about a real revolution in society and politics and that organized mass support would be invincible. Elite regimes were not only illegitimate, they were weakened by their small popular base.

Marxism-Leninism shaped Mao's view of revolutionary populism in two respects. First, as Jerome Ch'en has shown, class struggle became the framework of Mao's view of society. From the early 1920s, Mao's social investigations were formulated in terms of economic classes related by exploitation. Second, a certain type of elitism was justified, namely the revolutionary leadership of the party, that is, the "vanguard of the proletariat." But broad mass participation remained the touchstone of Mao's...
politics.\textsuperscript{11} Mao always tried to achieve a maximum alliance of forces against an isolated handful of enemies.

The Cultural Revolution demonstrated that Mao was more committed to revolutionary populism than he was to Marxist-Leninist orthodoxy. When he felt that the CCP itself was becoming an elite isolated from the masses, Mao exposed the party to mass criticism. To be sure, Mao couched his attacks in terms of "party persons in power going the capitalist road," but the Marxist economic definition of classes is stretched beyond recognition by such a usage. The same example of the Cultural Revolution shows that populism did not imply a democracy in which the wishes of the masses determined government policy. The content of populism was assumed to be revolution against exploitation, and popular support was gauged by success in mobilization, not by ballots.

Practicality. Despite the revolutionary romanticism of his later years, one of the strongest characteristics of Mao's writings was his concern for effectiveness. Mao's practicality had a definite empirical dimension. Mao insisted on personal, concrete investigation and once raised the slogan of "no investigation, no right to speak." He often criticized higher authorities for relying solely on reading reports in their offices or for substituting dogma for reality, and his own lengthy investigations of rural conditions were models of fact-finding. Clearly, Mao's empiricism had dwindled by the time of the Great Leap Forward, but he still adjusted his leftist interventions in the light of unwelcome facts about their effects.

The most important dimension of Mao's practicality, and one which distinguishes him from Marx and Lenin, is his attention to the problems of political leadership. From Mao's point of view, leaders at all levels were involved in a constant effort to combine their experience, investigation among the masses, ideology, and commands from superiors into decision making that would best fit their opportunities. The complex and shifting nature of the world meant that some mistakes were inevitable.

but they could be minimized by experience and prompt correction of misunderstandings. Leaders who were too dogmatic or who allowed themselves to become separated from the masses by bureaucratic habits were courting disaster. Correct leadership for Mao was situationally appropriate leadership. By contrast, leadership quality is only an incidental concern for Marx, and Lenin tended to focus on the ideological correctness of leadership.

Even Mao's most theoretical contributions were inspired by the practical concerns of leadership. Mao's essay "On Practice,"\textsuperscript{12} analyses the problematic relationship between theory and practice that makes necessary constant alertness and flexibility. The main thesis of his essay "On Contradiction," is that "the particularity of contradiction is universal," which means that each problem must be analysed on its own terms and on the basis of concrete investigation. In his theoretical works, Mao never questions his Marxist-Leninist framework but instead concentrates on the theoretical dimensions of the problems of political leadership.

Dialectics. A third structural feature of Mao's thought is dialectics. Mao's dialectics has roots in both Marxist and traditional Chinese philosophy. In contrast to ordinary logic, which stresses the identity of things and therefore their autonomy, dialectics stresses the essential interrelationship of things and therefore the possibility of one thing transforming into another thing or even into its opposite. Dialectics sees a changing world driven by internal contradictions, rather than a static world of separate objects. Dialectics is especially important to Marxism, because the contradiction of class struggle is expected to be transformed by revolution into a new socialist society.

For Mao, dialectics was primarily a very flexible method of political analysis that allowed him to concentrate his attention on one problem while affirming the interrelationship of that problem with other problems. In his essay "On Contradiction," Mao claims that situations have a principal contradiction and a principal aspect of the contradiction. This justifies the concentration of effort on only one aspect of a complex situation, with

\textsuperscript{11} Maurier Meimer has shown that Mao's populism diverged from Leninism in the direction of the Russian populists. See Meimer, Marxism, Maoism and Utopianism (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1982).

\textsuperscript{12} "On Practice" and "On Contradiction" are both included in Selected Works, vol. 1.
the expectation that the focus will shift as the situation develops. Such an approach encourages a dynamic imbalance in policy.

Another set of dialectical categories important to Mao's thought is that of antagonistic and nonantagonistic contradictions. Antagonistic contradictions are those "between the enemy and ourselves," in which the victory of one side means the defeat of the other. Class struggle is the chief example of an antagonistic contradiction. A nonantagonistic contradiction is a conflict between individuals or groups with basically harmonious interests. Because of the underlying common interests, nonantagonistic contradictions can be handled by education or persuasion. Within socialist society, most contradictions are "among the people," and therefore nonantagonistic. However, such contradictions can develop into antagonistic ones if they are mishandled by the leadership.

**Importance of Process.** Perhaps because of his dialectical outlook, Mao more highly valued political processes and movements than he did institutions and professionalism. Revolution, the ultimate process, was not viewed by Mao as a stepping stone to a perfect, unchanging society, but rather as a transition to a different kind of process. As he put it in "On Practice": "The epoch of world communism will be reached when all mankind voluntarily and consciously changes itself and the world." 13 Later, Mao formulated this idea as "uninterrupted revolution," and during the Cultural Revolution he called for more cultural revolutions in the future. Underlying Mao's preference for process was a conviction that only massive collective efforts could raise society to a new level. Problems that, taken individually, were tedious or difficult to solve were removed with little effort when part of a general campaign. For example, political education of the peasants was not easy, given their limited horizons and suspicion of outsiders; however, if there was class struggle in the village, then convincing analogies to warlords and imperialism could be drawn.

The mass campaign is a political process that was developed in the base areas and is still influential in PRC politics. In 1933, Mao developed a comprehensive campaign technique in which cadres were carefully prepared and an enthusiastic mass campaign was launched that integrated political, economic, and military tasks. 14 Such campaigns worked very well in the base areas because their goals of survival and fighting Japan were easily understood, and because they made use of mass enthusiasm in place of scarce material and professional resources. The technique of mass campaigns was more problematic after 1949 because they disrupted normal operations and often led to excesses, factionalism, and feigned enthusiasm.

The corollaries of Mao's faith in political process were a low opinion of routine political institutions and a suspicion of professionals. Mao thought that neither the internal disciplinary procedures of the party nor elected institutions such as the people's congresses could ensure a closeness between leaders and masses. Government by a Communist party was, in the last analysis, still government by officials, and in time they would take on bureaucratic aim and interests. Many analysts view the Cultural Revolution as an attempt to negate the routinizing of Chinese politics.

Professionalism is somewhat analogous to organizational routine because it assumes that problems are best handled by experts. Although Mao was not crudely anti-intellectual, he was deeply suspicious of the effectiveness and motivation of professionalism. By claiming that expert knowledge is necessary in order to handle certain problems properly, professionalism poses subtle limits to both mass activism and to party power. The challenge to party power was answered by the demand that cadres be "both red and expert." Mao also encouraged the opening up of professional spheres to mass activity. Probably the most successful case was the "barefoot doctor" program, which created a vast corps of peasant medical workers who brought basic medical care to the villages. During the Cultural Revolution, Mao's populist responses to the implicit stratification and privileges of professionalism devastated China's intellectual and technical institutions. Experts were transferred to low-level jobs;

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higher education was closed down; entrance examinations were abolished; and intellectuals were considered (in a vituperative radical slogan) the "sinking ninth category" of bad-class elements. The reversal of such policies was a major source of the popularity of the post-Mao regime.

Unity through Struggle. Coordination and targeting of effort is a major strategic question for a political party. Mao's basic response to this problem was to assume that the CCP led a broad coalition of basically compatible classes unified by a collective interest and arrayed against a small number of clear and irreconcilable enemies.

Who are our enemies? Who are our friends? This is a question of first importance for the revolution.... To ensure that we will definitely achieve success in our revolution and will not lead the masses astray, we must pay attention to uniting with our real friends in order to attack our real enemies.13

Throughout the history of the Chinese Communist movement, runs this attempt to identify the "people" (all those with whom the CCP can unite) and the "enemies" (all those who are targets of the people's struggle) in such a way as to maximize the coalition without compromising revolutionary objectives.

Three variant formulations of the coalition have been offered since Mao came to power in 1936. During the Yanan period, the formulation was relatively easy and nationalistic. The "people" were essentially all patriotic Chinese; the "enemies" the Japanese and their Chinese collaborators. Class issues were not forgotten but were made secondary to the national issue, permitting a highly inclusive united front. During the Civil War of 1946-1949 and the early years of the PRC, Mao returned to a class-based definition that excluded some Chinese who might earlier have belonged to the anti-Japanese "people."

Who are the people? At the present stage in China, they are the working class, the peasantry, the urban petty bourgeoisie and the national bourgeoisie.... They enforce their dictatorship over

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the running dogs of imperialism—the landlord class and bureaucrat-bourgeoisie, as well as the representatives of those classes, the Kuomintang reactionaries and their accomplices.16

This definition reduced the scope of "the people" and authorized sharp internal conflict within Chinese society, but it still portrayed a high degree of national unity. The Korean War, the program of national reconstruction, and the relative smallness and distinctness of the enemy classes permitted retention of much of the patriotic flavor of the wartime period. Moreover, the enemies were presumably doomed as class components, although not necessarily as individuals, within mainland society—the landlords and bureaucrat-bourgeoisie by land reform and socialism, the KMT forces by suppression of counterrevolutionaries. In effect, the definition forecast rapid progress toward total national unity simply by elimination of the enemy. By 1956-1957, the CCP was proclaiming unprecedented national unity, the effective defeat of the enemy classes, and the secure establishment of socialism.17

However, it was precisely at this juncture that Mao offered a third definition of the people, shifting the operative distinction from class status to ideological commitment. The shift is explained most forthrightly in Mao's 1957 speech, "On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People." Mao opened by asserting that "Never has our country been as united as it is today"—recognition, too, of progress toward eradication of class enemies. His real message in this regard was to observe that "the people" change in composition from one historical period to another. Noting the meaning of the term in the two earlier periods, as described above, he then said,

At this stage of building socialism, all classes, strata, and social groups which approve, support, and work for the cause of socialist construction belong to the category of the people, while those

social forces and groups which resist the socialist revolution and are hostile to and try to wreck socialist construction, are enemies of the people.\textsuperscript{18}

For the following twenty years class struggle was redefined in terms of ideological commitment as evidenced by attitudes and behavior. During the 1960s, relatively minor differences in ideology were often magnified into struggles between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. Of course, one's assigned class background was also important. Attacks on old enemy classes and tension between children of "good" and "bad" family background were prominent features of the Red Guard movement in the early Cultural Revolution.\textsuperscript{19} Generally, the Maoist period brought heightened insistence on ideological education and a tendency to interpret all political conflict as ideological conflict, with the enemy class designation attributed to those said to deviate from Mao.

From one perspective, the ideological distinction between people and enemies has symbolized a high degree of national integration because it has excluded relatively few Chinese from the ranks. "The people" invariably are said to be over 90 percent of the population, whereas the enemies are usually said to be a handful. Obviously, however, there is a forced and insecure quality to the constantly professed unity of the people, for it relies heavily on the threat of expulsion from community ranks of anyone in opposition. Those branded as enemies lose their right to participate in the political community to express and defend their position. In other words, they are not allowed to damage the unity of the people either conceptually or politically. Although few are actually assigned enemy status, virtually everyone is vulnerable to exclusion. The purges of Liu Shaoqi, Lin Biao, the Gang, and other top leaders are dramatic evidence of the uncertainties produced by this ideological definition of political community.

If political conflict within the system is tentatively legitimized but made hazardous by the possibility of being defined as anag-\textsuperscript{20}

\textsuperscript{18}Mao, Selected Works, vol. 5, p. 385.

\textsuperscript{19}For an overview of the political effects of class background, see Anita Chan, "Images of China's Social Structure: The Changing Perspectives of Canton Students," World Politics, vol. 34, no. 5 (April 1982): 295-323.

\textsuperscript{20}For a discussion of crisis periods, in which great pressures for change and adaptation in a political system produce heightened levels of system activity and significant developmental choices, see Gabriel Almond, "Political Development: Analytical and Normative Perspectives," Comparative Political Studies vol. 1, no. 4 (January 1968): 454-57.
owing to its repetition of previous phases. In its simplest form, this type of change may be oscillation between two poles, or it may involve progression through a more complicated cycle of several stages. Description of cycles in social history necessarily simplifies and distorts reality; there is always some evolutionary change in human affairs so that no cycle is exactly like its predecessors.

Mobilization-Consolidation. Recurring mass campaigns have been a distinctive feature of CCP politics since 1933 and have been a major pattern in the government of the PRC since its inception. Despite their bewildering diversity in scope, duration, goals, and intensity, these campaigns progress through mobilization and consolidation phases. The mobilization phase defines, tests, and attacks campaign goals, while the consolidation phase assesses, corrects, and consolidates the results. Campaigns tend to give Chinese political life a pulsating quality of advance and retreat, of political intensification and relaxation. The tone of politics in a particular locality or policy sector depends heavily on whether or not a campaign affecting that unit or sector is in progress and, if so, what phase it is in. The mobilization phase tends to drain energy and attention away from regular tasks, so rural campaigns (other than production campaigns) usually are not begun during seasons of peak agricultural production. When the 1984 party rectification campaign was in full swing in Beijing, leading cadres in central ministries were divided into two groups, one to manage the campaign within the ministry and one to handle regular duties. The enthusiasm of the mobilization phase encourages excesses, but victims usually must wait until the consolidation phase—or a future campaign that counters the thrust of the first one—to press their grievances.

It is tempting to extend campaign characteristics to larger cycles in the Chinese political process. The most elaborate and provocative effort has described a six-phase cycle in rural policy,


post-Mao period in terms of campaign cycles. Since Mao's death there has been a paradox of institutionalizing campaigns in which reforms meant to regularize life in China are pushed in a mobilizational style. There have also been long-term policy developments that promise to have no immediate effect on the mobilizational style. These caution concerns the applicability of the campaign model, it is worthwhile to examine two areas in which campaign mobilizations have had significant impact.

**Institutional Instability.** The political structure of the PRC has experienced periods of both institutionalization and institutional instability, with the most intense national campaigns serving as the primary source of instability. The distinction here is not simply institutional growth versus institutional destruction; obviously, some parts of the political structure have been more durable than others, so that the changes refer to have never been total reverses. Rather, it is one between development of institutions along prescribed or established lines in certain periods and open-ended experimentation with institutional forms in others. In periods of institutionalization, the elements and interrelationships of the structure have been fixed so that its development has followed predictable patterns; in periods of institutional fluidity, existing forms have been challenged or new ones introduced so that the outcome has been in doubt. Stability has been characterized by centralization and greater security for both the party and specialist elites, while instability is usually accompanied by decentralization and an expansion of active nonelite political participation.

Between 1949 and 1953, China experienced a period of institutional fluidity, since many institutional arrangements were temporary and a great deal of experimentation was occurring. By the end of 1953, the basic outlines of socialist political and economic structure had been established, bringing a period of institutionalization, generally coinciding with the First Five-Year Plan and formalized by the 1954 constitution. There were continued institutional changes during these years, particularly the acceleration of collectivization in 1955, but they were essentially changes in the pace or timing of existing plans. The Eighth Party Congress in 1956 still tended toward institutionalization. The Great Leap Forward was a period of pronounced institutional fluidity characterized by general rejection of the Soviet model and experimentation with new forms and relationships. Institutionalization resumed in 1960, building on a combination of pre-Leap patterns of organization and some of the policies initiated in the Leap—for example, the commune framework, at least verbal commitment to class struggle and revolutionary transformation, and repolitization of the PLA. This period continued until 1966, when the Cultural Revolution shattered the prevailing pattern of institutional development and opened the system to major structural innovations. After the Ninth Party Congress, prescriptive guidelines for renewed institutionalization on Maoist terms were established, however, in this case the intensifying elite controversy over Cultural Revolution reforms and succession paralyzed the process. After 1976, the post-Mao leadership explicitly encouraged an institutionalization that bore many similarities, in both tone and structural content, to the mid-1950s institutionalization that accompanied the FTVP and the 1954 state constitution. Some current areas of reform were introduced by the re-publication of policy speeches from the 1950s.

**Variations in Popular Political Life.** Grass roots political life in China is deeply affected by whether or not campaigns are based on class struggle, that is, the antagonistic contradiction between the state and groups of individuals considered "enemies of the people." Frequently occurring in mobilization phases, "antagonistic" struggle produces great political tension owing to the severe consequences—public denunciation and sanctions—that attend identification as an "enemy." Examples include mobilizations against landlords and counterrevolutionaries in 1950–1951, against rightists in the summer of 1957, against capitalist-leaners in 1966–1967, and against the Gang and their supporters in 1976–1977. Early class struggles led to the ostracism of the victims. However, they became so extensive during the Cultural Revolution that factionalism resulted as people banded together to protect themselves and to attack others. "Nonantagonistic" struggle is more likely to occur between campaigns or in consolidation phases, when coexistence among different classes in socialist society is being emphasized. Errors and deviations are criticized, but the object is education and
reform rather than punishment or expulsion from the ranks of the people. Nonantagonistic struggle attempts to "cure the illness to save the patient" in order to resolve "contradictions among the people," in Mao's terminology. Rectification campaigns within the CCP are primarily nonantagonistic struggles. Other examples include investigation of land reform results in 1951, the early "hundred flowers" criticism in 1957 (before the CCP initiated class struggle against the critics), and the criticism during 1961–1962 of cadre behavior during the Great Leap. Despite the Cultural Revolution and the campaign against the Gang, class struggle eventually focused on a few key enemies, promising reintegration for others who reformed. Alternation between these different forms of struggle is neither neat nor predictable, but it is an important campaign-related feature of Chinese politics.

Mobilization and consolidation have also produced variations in the degree of party control over popular political action. The mass line leads the CCP to mix its concern for organizational control with calls for mass spontaneity and initiative. As a result, mobilization phases have sometimes produced cases in which local initiative has carried the movement beyond its central guidelines; whereas consolidation phases have been vulnerable to popular reactions exceeding the leadership's view of appropriate correction of mistakes.

The reconstruction years and the Cultural Revolution stand out as periods in which the looseness of controls relative to the intensity of the campaign permitted considerable spontaneous mass activity. In some cases, the actions in question—primarily by peasants' associations in land reform and by Red Guard factions in the Cultural Revolution—had official approval but not direct leadership. In other cases, they usually attacked the center's targets but did so with excessive violence or zeal. In the most extreme cases, they rejected central authority and became a vehicle for localized interests hostile to central objectives. The early part of the Great Leap was another period of considerable latitude in local implementation of directives. Here, initiative led not so much to excessive or unauthorized political struggle as to overly ambitious efforts by local cadres to realize the Leap's more radical features. The peasants and basic-level leaders generally did not encourage this spontaneity (although some apparently pushed for the free supply system), but they were inevitably caught up in it through the mass meetings and discussions that the movement required.

While spontaneity in mobilization phases has tended toward unwanted violence and radicalism, its rare occurrences in consolidation phases have been in reaction to even rebellion against party authority. For example, most of the criticism by intellectuals during the hundred flowers campaign was within the guidelines of the CCP's call for rectification, but some of it did attack the party's leadership as such. More important, student critics engaged in physical assaults on cadres and efforts to organize interuniversity exchanges of experiences and ideas. Peasant and worker unrest during the same period was relatively high, with many reports of peasant withdrawals from cooperatives.21

Once again, the point is not to argue that there is a clear correlation between campaign phases and popular political spontaneity; both variables are too complex for that. For example, there was a good deal of spontaneous dissent activity throughout 1974–1979, including factory disruptions, dissident wall posters, the Tiananmen Incident of April 5, 1976, and underground publications, that was not linked clearly to particular phases of a campaign cycle. What is significant here is that popular political action has repeatedly exceeded officially prescribed limits at both ends of the political spectrum, suggesting that such swings are not aberrations but a regular part of the political process. Its limitations notwithstanding, cyclical analysis makes an important contribution in reminding us that there is no single version of "normal" politics in China.

SECULAR CHANGE

Purely cyclical interpretations of Chinese politics founder on the reality of secular change. That is, even if there is a tendency to follow an oscillating pattern of mobilization and consolidation, long-term evolutionary change alters the issues and context so that earlier cycles cannot be repeated. Even if the form of cyclical change remained unaffected, the content and outcome of each cycle would be different, and we have seen that the campaign

form itself has been affected by larger developments. This section identifies four particularly important areas of secular change—change in economic resources, socioeconomic change, changes in political culture and participation, and change in political leadership. The discussion will be quite general, drawing on the historical survey of Chapter 3 and anticipating some points to be developed more fully in later chapters.

Change in Economic Resources. The horizons of political decision-making are set by available resources. As resources change over time, the starting point, goals, and priorities of political decisions change. China's achievements in economic development since 1949 have transformed the resource context of Chinese politics in some areas and have affected it less in others. Data describing the changes are presented in Appendices A, B, and C. As a result of the inevitably uneven development, the issues of politics have shifted.

Paradoxically, some of China's most impressive accomplishments have been in slowing certain kinds of secular change, namely those of population growth and redistribution. Although China's population has almost doubled from 542 million in 1949 to 1.105 billion in 1982, the birth rate since 1971 has been very low compared to other developing countries. Nevertheless, population control is still a major area of policy emphasis, and current regulations are the most stringent in PRC history. China's population has remained overwhelmingly rural despite industrialization and the attractions of urban life. In 1982, the population was still 79 percent rural, only a 10 percent decline since 1949. Also, there has been little interprovincial shift in population. The rural economy has had to bear the brunt of population increases, and rural industry has made a considerable contribution to industrialization. By contrast, some developing countries

have more urbanization than industrialization, resulting in large urban slums. The population has become better educated: in comparison to 1952, enrollments in 1982 were six times higher at the college level, fifteen times higher at the high school level, and three times higher at the primary school level. Current investment in higher education is dictated by its slow growth relative to middle schools in the preceding decades. The population is now bound together by much higher levels of communication and commerce, although the road system remains one of the least developed in the world.

In general, the productivity of the Chinese economy has risen much faster than population growth. By 1983, the total output value was twenty times that of 1949, and industrial assets had grown seventeen times. In 1983, Chinese industry could produce the output value of 1949 in eight days. Compared to other developing countries, the output of China's industrial sector is large, the service sector is small, and agriculture is average. Energy production has tripled since 1965, and coal, oil, and hydroelectric reserves promise further development. Chinese industries make intensive albeit inefficient use of energy, while household energy consumption is still quite low. Increase in agricultural productivity has been less dramatic than that of industry, registering a threefold growth since 1952, an average of 2.7 percent per year. However, the conditions for agricultural growth were much less favorable. The amount of cultivated land actually declined due to new nonagricultural construction, and with population increase the amount of sown land for each agricultural worker has dwindled one-third. To put the agricultural situation in world perspective, in 1978 each agricultural worker in China had an average of three-quarters of an acre of arable land, compared to 1.5 acres in Japan, 4.8 acres in the Soviet Union, 39.4 acres in the United States, and 58.5 acres in Canada. Even though the productivity per acre is high—1,612 kilograms per acre compared to 1,417 in the United States and 759 in the Soviet Union—the productivity of each agricultural worker is limited by the land at his or her disposal. From 1960 to 1978 productivity per agricultural worker grew only 23 percent in China, compared to 215 percent in the United States, 247 percent in the Soviet Union, and 143 percent in Canada. Despite these disadvantages, Chinese agriculture has moved forward by
means of reorganization, irrigation, and fertilizer. Progress since 1977 has been exceptionally good, comparable to or better than that of agriculture in developed countries. The sector most often neglected in Communist countries is that of services, and China has been no exception. Socialization in the middle and late 1950s led to a withering of urban small-scale enterprises, and leftist pressure against rural sideline industries and fairs had the same effect in the countryside. In the past few years, the economy has again diversified to include more individual laborers and marketing enterprises.

Despite the continuing poverty in China, the economic advances sketched above have led to significant tangible benefits for the population. Per capita income (adjusted for inflation) increased almost seven times from 1949 to 1983, although it remains only one-tenth that of advanced countries. According to the World Bank, "China's most remarkable achievement during the past three decades has been to make low-income groups far better off in terms of basic needs than their counterparts in most other poor countries." Life expectancy has increased at twice the rate of other developing countries, rising from 36 years in 1950 to 59 years in 1980. This increase reflects Chinese accomplishments in the distribution of basic health care and nutrition. Meanwhile, inflation has been quite modest. The total retail price index was up only 57 percent between 1950 and 1983. In keeping with China's socialist orientation, many goods, services, and opportunities that would be allocated by price in capitalist countries are subsidized, rationed, or allocated by work unit.

China's long-term growth has been modulated by the Cultural Revolution, and especially by the Great Leap. In both cases, many economic indicators showed a year or two of sharp downturn followed by recovery. The period of 1958–1978 was generally one of somewhat slower growth. During this period, the total output value of society grew by 7 percent per year, compared to 8 percent per year in the 1978–1983 period. In general, the post-Mao era has been quite successful in economic growth, although at the cost of greater inflation and budget deficits. Previous economic success poses somewhat different economic tasks for the post-Mao regime. It must rectify the gross inefficiencies in earlier economic

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Socioeconomic Change. Socioeconomic change in post-1949 China has altered significantly the social basis of Chinese politics, creating new sources of influence and conflict within the system. This does not mean that Communist efforts at economic development have been uniformly successful or that Chinese social structure has undergone a total transformation since 1949. Nonetheless, Chinese society has experienced fundamental changes that have altered the relative weights of various political actors and issues. These changes are a result of rapid modernization and socialization of the system, either accelerated or initiated following the Communist victory in 1949.

One of the most pronounced changes has been the elimination or political neutralization of some social strata and the expansion of others. The landlords, merchants, and industrialists who held dominant political influence before 1949 have disappeared, while the ranks of industrial workers, state employees, and intellectuals (including middle school graduates as well as more highly trained technical and professional personnel) have increased sharply. Although the urban population remains only 20 percent of China's total, it has increased almost fourfold, from 58 million in 1949 to 212 million in 1982. Significant changes have also affected the countryside, for collectivization transformed the peasant from tenant or owner-cultivator to an agricultural laborer whose labor and rewards were largely determined by the local collective. Since 1979, another fundamental transformation has been occurring in which peasants contract on an individual or family basis with the collective for tasks and resources. Although current policies do not simply return peasants to their precollective situation, they do mark a major and long-term reversal of the trend toward larger rural units of production.

A fundamental alteration in the relationship between Chinese government and society occurred between 1949 and the late 1950s, centering on an unprecedented expansion of governmental
resources, personnel, operations, claims, and power. This alteration did not take place at one stroke in 1949–1950 with the shift from KMT to CCP political leadership; rather, it occurred as a consequence of that shift and the program of industrialization and socialism promoted by the new national leadership. It was only after the completion of the First Five-Year Plan that the new relationship of government to society was really established. The old indicators of economic and social status—wealth, land ownership, education, age, sex, and kinship ties—had declined rapidly as sources of political power, although they certainly continued to have political relevance, particularly at the basic level. Indeed, the scope of governmental programs and demands was such that the citizen's economic and social status had become largely a function of governmental policy or of an explicitly political definition of favored and disfavored classes. Political power in the new relationship fell exclusively to manifest political roles, that is, to authoritative positions in the party, state, or army hierarchies, recruitment to which was controlled by CCP policies. As of 1957, it appeared that the physical location of governmental power, and of those most likely to gain access to it, increasingly was located in the cities in the complex of government offices, state economic enterprises, and educational facilities that seemed to be the vanguard of China's socialist future.

The leftist phase that began in the late 1950s modified initial developments in two important respects. First, it limited urban growth, while promoting rural economic and social development. The limitation of urban growth was not a leftist policy but a necessary response to a resource bottleneck. By 1960, urban areas were overcrowded, and the Great Leap had created acute supply problems. The restriction of urban residency has been very effective. Ninety percent of the proportional growth of China's urban population occurred in the first eleven years, and only 10 percent occurred in 1961–1963. Recruitment of peasants to work in urban industries continued, but most were recruited as contract workers, hired and paid through their rural work units, with no claim to urban residency or to the benefits of regular state employment. Generally, the policies of residency control adopted after the Great Leap created a rural population with no geographic mobility and only such economic mobility as they could create for themselves. Since large-scale urbanization was out of the question, the egalitarian leadership of the 1960s and 1970s concentrated on encouraging rural industry, the mechanization of agriculture, and increasing crop yields through a variety of labor-intensive improvements. There was also a major shift of health, educational, and communications resources to rural areas. During this period, the socioeconomic revolution penetrated deeply into the countryside, distributing its gains much more broadly throughout Chinese society. However, rural living standards remain substantially lower than urban ones, as detailed in Appendix C.

The complex effects of the accentuation and broadening of class struggle constitute a second major area of change during the 1957–1977 era. Class struggle in the 1950s had been led by the party against fairly well-defined economic classes. The enemy classes were either engaged in exploitation made possible through the ownership of the means of production, or they were avowed enemies of Communism. The Anti-Rightist campaign of 1957 began a process of ideological redefinition of class enemies in which deviations perceived by the accuser became sufficient grounds for class struggle. The anxiety, violence, suffering, and arbitrariness of class struggle during the leftist phase caused widespread factionalization in society and latent alienation from the regime. The intelligentsia was especially hard hit, but even peasant villages felt its effects. The official commitment to egalitarianism led to compressed wage differentials and emphasis on political and class criteria for educational and occupational opportunities; while, at the same time, the weakening of central control led to growth of many local domains of individual or factional power, that is, "kingdoms," where almost feudal conditions of arbitrariness and corruption could exist. The unquestioned political hegemony of the party organization and the functional justification of power and privilege were in a shambles.

In other respects, however, the main trends established in the 1960s continued. Industrialization continued to progress faster...
than agricultural growth, with the Chinese economy interacting more with the world economy and moving into areas requiring more sophisticated technology. New industrial centers emerged, hastening national economic integration. Increased manufacturing potential and modest gains in per capita income brought growing consumer demands. As foreshadowed by the 1950s, the government's scope of responsibility expanded, its tasks becoming more complex and controversial. The revolution's leveling tendencies—pushed forward by Maoist egalitarianism—reduced the sharpest social cleavages of the past; however, abundant conflicts over development and distribution of the social product remained.

Just as the Chinese society of the 1960s was different from that of 1949, the society of the 1980s is different from that of the 1960s. The contrary pressures of the leftist attempt to prevent the institutionalization of a new urban-bureaucratic elite pitted against the social and organizational needs of a growing political economy has yielded decisively in favor of the latter. Modernization has been the party's primary goal since 1979, and it is acknowledged that modernization requires political stability and an unequal division of labor, power, and reward. There has been a general diversification of Chinese society, due in part to the ideological relaxation after Mao and in part to the continued success and growing credibility of post-Mao modernization. Rural areas have been, to a large extent, decollectivized, thereby increasing the gap between rural rich and poor but decreasing the rural-urban income gap. With the reestablishment of the traditional prestige of intellectuals, there is great pressure on the educational system to expand and improve and upon students to do well and serve themselves and the people. However, even if a smooth economic future is assumed, material wealth, diversification, and increasing self-confidence of various sectors of society will press new political demands. It may be anticipated that some of these pressures will be for a corresponding diversification of the political process.

Political Culture and Participation. The CCP's socialization and mobilization efforts have changed the mix of Chinese political culture, raising the general level of political awareness and increasing the proportion of politically involved citizens. The substance and degree of this change is controversial, since much of the evidence that relates to it is indirect or ambiguous. The proposition rests, however, on some solid foundations. One is that the CCP has undertaken a political education movement of great magnitude, backed by an organizational and communications network surpassing anything known in China's past. Another is that the CCP has mobilized the population for direct participation in political campaigns and basic-level affairs. Heavy party controls raise questions about the meaning of this participation, but it surely contributes to popular politicization. Finally, formal education has spread, increasing political skills, literacy, and knowledge.

Equally significant is the expansion and diffusion throughout Chinese society of those who constitute China's political elite and subelite, that is, people who have received a relatively intense kind of political education and, as either cause or effect, have assumed distinctive political roles. We should recall here an important aspect of China's political heritage: although traditional Chinese political culture was dominated by feelings of powerlessness and isolation with respect to political authority, there was always in Chinese society a small elite of scholar-officials marked by a highly developed sense of political obligation and participation. What the Chinese Communists have done is to reinforce this sense of elite political responsibility (although altering the determinants of elitehood), while greatly expanding the numbers of those who qualify for it. The size of the CCP—the simplest indicator of political elitehood in contemporary China—gives one, relatively conservative, measure of this expansion. The 40 million party members in 1982 may be contrasted with the 1-2 million gentry who were the actual and potential political elite of late Qing China.

The significance in this comparison is not simply the difference in absolute numbers, but the fact that the pool of potential political leadership in contemporary China is so readily expandable. Since political elite or subelite status depends initially on the acquisition of a political education or experience that is now almost automatic for young people, the pool of potential political recruits is truly enormous. This is in sharp contrast to the pool in imperial China, which was normally limited to those who could afford to pursue exacting and lifelong scholarly study.
Although for many of the old guard the necessary credentials came through a lifetime of revolutionary activity, since 1949 they have been attainable in rather ordinary ways. For example, any Chinese who has served in the PLA or received a middle school education—unless he or she has some specific political liability—is really part of the subelite. After three decades of Communist rule, this pool is so numerous and so widely dispersed throughout Chinese society that the leadership can no longer assume that only a small, easily identifiable stratum is politically relevant. Between officialdom and what may be a politically unsophisticated mass of citizens, there is now a broad intermediate stratum, relatively youthful, a political influence of some importance.

The expansion of political education, activity, and potential elite membership among the Chinese population does not necessarily produce a uniform political culture. There is ample evidence—particularly in the Cultural Revolution and the turmoil of 1974–1978—that mobilization of the Chinese citizenry has led to sharp conflicts at the popular level. In some cases, these mirror elite differences; in others, they reveal more distinctly local or popular issues. What the expansion signifies is, first, that the body of citizens mobilized for politics since 1949 now dwarfs the old guard of revolutionaries. Second, it signifies the intermediate political stratum is very diverse in its social background and interests. The result is to inject into the system new influences that necessarily alter the perceptions of key issues in Chinese politics.

Political Leadership. The structure of political leadership has also evolved since 1949, going through three major stages that correspond to major stages in party policy. The first stage lasted roughly from 1949 to 1957 and was characterized by a general growth and strengthening of public organs—party, state, army, and mass organizations. These organs had all existed in the base areas, but after 1949 they had to be developed into comprehensive, national institutions. Initially, the new regime's organizational power rested heavily on the PLA and a variety of rather loosely constructed local groups (e.g., the peasants' associations). From the early 1950s, tasks of national, regional, and local government increasingly were brought under the umbrella of the new state structure. As active military tasks receded and the PLA underwent modernization, its political administrative role was assumed by the state. Meanwhile, the mass organizations continued to grow in membership and organizational sophistication, although they remained primarily grass roots organs limited to designated areas of activity. The CCP and the Communist Youth League recruited at a rapid rate and consolidated the party's leading position throughout the public institutional structure. By 1956, the CCP had already doubled its 1949 membership. Recruitment had a much broader geographic base and stressed the admission of urban members who could help with the party's new tasks of socialist construction. As state power over economy and society was consolidated, the basis was laid for an effective political hegemony of the party at all levels and in all areas. Pressures for a degree of institutional autonomy and pluralism were generated by the strengthened state and mass organs, and these were expressed in the 1954 state constitution and in various proposals made during the hundred flowers campaign. But the anti-rightist campaign and the advancement of the "politics takes command" slogan in 1957 signaled the weakening of central state organs vis-a-vis the party; the CCP's unquestionable dominance of the system was clear.

The second stage, from 1957 to 1977, contains a more complex set of developments. The whole period is characterized by a rift between Mao and most of the other top party leaders over the basic direction of Chinese politics. The rift was first apparent in the hundred flowers campaign and widened considerably with the failure of many of Mao's initiatives in the Great Leap Forward. By the early 1960s, Mao and the party organization were pursuing distinctly different policy directions—the party toward the consolidation of a party-state on the Leninist-Stalinist model, and Mao, with an unclear agenda of his own, unsuccessfully intervening on behalf of ideological education, collective incentives, and mass political participation.

Before the Cultural Revolution, these differences did not seem to presage major change in the political system. Although the State Council played a significant policy role, the influence of the people's congresses, united front organs, and mass organizations continued to decline. The only exception from the general picture of party consolidation and institutional routinization
was the army. Since 1959, Lin Biao had turned the PLA's attention away from military professionalization and toward ideological renewal, using Mao Zedong Thought as his guide. When the Cultural Revolution escalated to general media and mass criticism of CCP personnel, the PLA became a model of successful ideological transformation. It was thus spared the destructive effects of mass criticism and was in position to take over political administrative leadership from the shattered and discredited party organization in 1967. But Lin Biao's attempt to consolidate his power against the reemerging party organization failed in 1970–1971, leaving the party left and party right as the major factions. Both sides contended for power by admitting adherents into the party and advancing (in the case of the right, rehabilitating) them to power. By 1977, nearly half of the party's membership had been admitted since the Cultural Revolution, most in the early 1970s. There was no secret of complete CCP control of political life. The people's congresses were not functioning; government at the provincial level and below was in the charge of revolutionary committees directly controlled by the corresponding party secretary; and in the absence of undisputed standards for appointments, admission to school, change of residence, and so on, power in society gravitated toward party leadership. But the party was not the ideologically and organizationally unified body that it had been. It was deeply factionalized, and many cadres had become used to a life of great power and little discipline in an organizational structure that preached mass involvement but did not contain effective checks from outside or below.

The death of Mao Zedong in late 1976 not only marked the end of the second phase of political leadership in the PRC, it marked the end of a revolutionary era that had culminated in a destructive impasse between ideology and practice—an impasse that had been sustained by Mao's personal prestige and his suspicion of institutionalization. Within a month of his death, the Gang of Four was removed from power and a post-Mao leadership emerged that proclaimed a "new era" in PRC history. The initial coalition included all those who were critical of the Gang, but by 1979 the power of remaining leftists and left-moderates had been broken at the center. Since then, there have been significant policy disputes at the center, but they have occurred within Deng Xiaoping's ruling coalition.

One of the most significant problems of political leadership in the 1980s has been that of discipline within the CCP. The continuing influence of leftist is one aspect of the problem. Although the new direction of central leadership was confirmed by late 1978, foot-dragging and unenlightened attitudes have been common at lower levels. Cadres who were promoted because of their leftist during the Cultural Revolution are reluctant to support policies that appear revisionist and are, in any case, poorly suited for leadership in modernization. The "Oppose Spiritual Pollution" campaign of 1983 was essentially a leftist campaign, and it was opposed and finally halted by leaders committed to modernization. At the other extreme, a number of cadres are disillusioned with the CCP's political hegemony and encourage more radically pluralizing reforms than the regime is willing to support. Quite aside from these ideological extremes of left and right, the new economic policies of the post-Mao era have opened lucrative opportunities for graft and corruption. Disciplinary problems have led to a number of campaigns since 1978, culminating in a major party rectification campaign of 1983–1986.

Current political leadership is similar to that of the 1950s in a number of respects. It has adopted popular policies and institutionalizing reforms that promise some autonomy for nonparty organizations, revamped united front policies, invited intellectuals to join the CCP, reformed the legal system, and strengthened the people's congress system. There are, however, several important differences between these reforms and their counterparts from the 1950s. First, current reforms are not a naïve imitation of the Soviet Union or a simple extension of base area policies, rather they are a determined effort to create stable societal institutions. The reforms of the 1950s are now criticized for being too weak to prevent the "feudal-fascist dictatorship" of the Cultural Revolution. Indeed, by enduring four or five years, the post-Mao reforms have already exceeded the lifespan of their predecessors. Second, the regime is more completely committed to economic modernization as the primary political task than was the leader-

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ship of the 1950s. It acknowledges that modernization requires a division of labor and unequal rewards, and its social and political reforms reflect this view of modernization. Third, leftist egalitarianism has been largely discredited as a political alternative by the experience of the Cultural Revolution and the Gang of Four. The writings of Mao Zedong will remain fertile ideological ground for leftist thoughts, but political extremism in the future would have to disassociate itself from the Gang, unless it appears as a primitive rural rejection of modernization or the current regime stumbles on its own mistakes. These differences, as well as the long-term changes in China's material conditions and socioeconomic circumstances, imply that political institutionalization in the 1980s cannot simply repeat political institutionalization in the 1950s.

How do patterns of cyclical change relate to this periodization, which rests on and emphasizes secular change in PRG history? The cyclical perspective reminds us that the periods are not sharply delineated, that their characteristics are not exclusively the property of a single period. Separation between periods is blurred by the fact that each is largely a response to its predecessor and hence continues some of the earlier debates and features. Indeed, one could borrow from cyclical analysis to portray the periods (adding one earlier period) as dialectical alternations of mobilization and consolidation: there is a first revolutionary mobilization that begins with the KMT-CCP civil war in 1946 and ends with completion of land reform in 1952; the FFYP is a consolidation period; the Maoist period is a prolonged second mobilization, synthesizing elements of the first two periods; the modernization period brings renewed consolidation, now synthesizing the second and third periods.

Cyclical analysis also calls our attention to contrary impulses within each period. The transitional period contained forerunners of the Maoist period in the peasants' associations, in the "little leap" of 1955–1956, and in a broad debate, beginning as early as 1954, on the wisdom of following the Soviet model. The Maoist period contained at least two more conservative interludes in the retrenchment of the early 1960s and, more erratically, in mixed retreats from the Cultural Revolution peak. The slogan of the "four modernizations" dates from the 1950s, and much of Hua's modernization program of 1977 was borrowed from plans made by Deng Xiaoping in 1975. The modernization period began with a struggle against the Gang of Four, and campaigns requiring ideological orthodoxy have recurred regularly. There has been a right and a left, with individuals scattered between the poles, on nearly all important issues in post-1949 politics. The policy stance of right and left changes as the issues change. At the same time, representatives of right and left will continue to define their positions with reference to the precedents of the Chinese past, keeping alive a sense of recurring conflicts and of known alternatives to the dominant policies of the moment.

CLASSIFYING THE CHINESE SYSTEM

The identification of three different periods in the post-1949 evolution of the Chinese Communist system recognizes important changes but stops short of arguing that it has changed from one type of system to another. The relationships between the periods, their elements of change and continuity, will emerge more clearly in the remaining chapters that probe Chinese political processes in more detail. However, the approach suggested here conflicts with other perspectives and does not resolve the classification issue. For example, the Almond and Powell classification of China (see Chapter 1) as a "penetrative-radical-authoritarian" system pursuing an "authoritarian-technocratic-mobilizational" strategy must be qualified to account for variations among the three periods. The classification is most appropriate for the Soviet period. It loses considerable force in the Maoist period when the system became more "radical," when its "authoritarian" character perhaps became truly "totalitarian" during the peak Cultural Revolution years, and when populism seriously eroded the "technocratic" elements of the strategy. The labels fit better in the modernization period—especially the technocratic strategy, which has finally come into its own—yet the system and strategy seem less "penetrative, radical, authoritarian, and mobilizational" than in the two earlier periods. The classification remains a suggestive characterization of Third World Communist systems, with China belonging to that group and exhibiting some degree of all the characteristics noted. Yet we must emphasize that the PRC has displayed some of these characteristics sequentially and in different mixes rather than as a single package.

A second problem concerns the looseness of boundaries implied by viewing all post-1949 changes as "within the Communist system." Is this an abdication of judgment, a definition so broad
that everything is included and all distinctions are lost. Our approach is to accept broad boundaries, so that only the most extreme Red Guards and the bourgeoise intellectuals are clearly outside the system. The former veered close to anarchism in their assault on party centralism, while the latter had hopes for a legitimate political opposition. Neither position fits within the normal horizons of a Communist system. The left and right are included, however, as the marginal extremities of the Chinese Communist political spectrum, as positions that have been occupied by important party elites and that often blend into the central mainstream, so that it is difficult to exclude them without excluding a healthy proportion of post-1949 political activity.

A closely related problem is how to deal with the substance of the charges that some Chinese leaders have violated the requirements of a Communist system. Of the many instances of such charges in post-1949 politics, four are of particular importance and interest: (1) the Maoist charge that Liu Shaoqi and others had forsaken socialism and were embarked in the early 1960s on a road leading to capitalist restoration; (2) the Soviet argument that the Cultural Revolution represented an anti-party movement smacking of idealism, petty bourgeois nationalism, and Trotskyism; (3) the assault by the post-Mao leadership on the Gang of Four for an ultra-left, subjective distortion of historical materialism, leading to the sabotage of the socialist economy and party discipline; and (4) the counterattack in defense of the Gang that charges the Deng leadership with betraying Maoism, class struggle, and Third World revolution, while following revisionist policies and forging an alliance with the capitalist world. The positions represented in these polemics are too complicated to analyse here, but the fact that each claims adherence to Marxism-Leninism indicates the difficulty of deciding when a nominally socialist system has lost its claim to purity.

The important points to glean from this exercise in relativism are these. First, none of the major groupings in Chinese politics has abandoned its formal commitment to the four principles of a socialist economy, party leadership, the dictatorship of the proletariat, or Marxism-Leninism Mao Zedong Thought. Despite

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opposition to capitalism. This is the litmus test of a Communist system for many people, and China's position seems to have fluctuated wildly since 1949. In the 1950s, China shared Stalin's view of a strengthened socialist camp pitted against a weakened capitalist one and felt a special bond with national liberation movements. As John Foster Dulles's refusal to shake Zhou Enlai's hand at the 1954 Geneva Conference graphically illustrates, the militant anti-Communism of the West contributed to the bipolar gulf. Internally, there was a peaceful transformation of the holdings of Chinese capitalists into state enterprises paying salaries and interest to former proprietors, although many were harassed in the Five-Anti and Anti-Rightist campaigns. China's ideological purism of the 1960s increased verbal opposition to capitalism and suspected all Communist states except Albania of revisionist tendencies. Meanwhile, U.S. involvement in Vietnam gave continuing evidence of the virulence of international capitalism. Internally, former capitalists suffered extremely during the Cultural Revolution, and they were joined by numerous capitalist-leaners. Attempts by individuals to provide a service or product for payment were denounced as capitalist. On the other hand, it must be remembered that Mao played a personal role in the dramatic breakthrough in U.S.-China relations formulated in the "Shanghai Communiqué" of 1972. It was also in this period that China entered the UN and began its rapid expansion of international diplomatic ties.

In the post-Mao period, the former capitalist-leaners are back in power, joint ventures of capitalist firms in China are encouraged, the tilt toward the Soviet Union of the 1950s is tentatively replaced by a tilt—at a smaller angle—toward the West, and many internal policies encourage market and entrepreneurial activities. Although not without precedents in China and in other Communist countries, these developments so exceed their precedents in momentum and degree that some see China as giving up on socialism and copying capitalism. However, these policies are better understood as innovative attempts within the Chinese socialist tradition to cope with the problem of modernization. Criticisms of international and internal capitalism continue, although they are greatly muted compared to the Cultural Revolution. The campaign against "spiritual pollution" of