

China 1900 - 2000

[Politics](#), [Communism](#)



China 1900 — 2000 The Fall of the Qing Dynasty (1900-1912) Most of the enemies of the Manchu Empire after the nineteenth century, were led by Sun Yatsen, a good-looking 34 year old doctor. Doctor Sun Yatsen had been educated in an American school in Hawaii and therefore he was Christian. He had spent many years of his life traveling the world. He saw how advanced technologically other countries were and realized how weak China was. He found that the only way for China to come out of its stall was for it to become a republic on European lines and getting rid of the Manchu's who opposed any change at all costs. By 1911 he had tried to start a revolution ten times but had not succeeded. In 1908 the 73-year-old empress Dowager Cixi died. Her successor as ruler of China was her nephew, a 2-year-old boy named P'u Yi, who was given the title of Emperor. The Manchu dynasty was clearly in trouble. A regent ruled in his place, Prince Chun. Chun sided with the conservatives in the court, giving the most conservative of the Manchu prince's high positions, and he dismissed many powerful and able officials including Yuan Shikai, a very important general. In 1911 China entered a period of economic difficulty and discontent. The harvests failed in all the central areas of the country and this caused most of the distress among the peasants. The wealthier classes were not happy either; the government was taxing them heavily to get money for the new army. On September 1911 a rebellion against the government began in Sichuan Province after police fired on a crowd of demonstrators, killing many of them. Sun Yatsen and his followers immediately went to Sichuan to help spread the rebellion. On the 10th October soldiers from the new army left their base in Wuchang and joined the rising. From there the rebellion spread throughout central and

southern China. The Manchu's tried to deal with the rebellion by recalling Yuan Shikai from retirement. This didn't help because he sided with the rebels who elected him president. In exchange he convinced the emperor and the regent to form a republic. Finally on 12th February 1912 Emperor P'u Yi stepped down from the Dragon throne of the Manchu's. The edict of abdication that was issued said: " Today the people of the whole empire have their minds bent on a republic, the southern Provinces having begun the movement, and the northern generals having subsequently supported it. The will of providence is clear and the people's wishes are plain. How could I, for the glory and honor of one family, oppose the wishes of teeming millions? Wherefore I, with the Emperor, decide that the form of government in China shall be a Constitutional Republic." Early Years of the Republic (1912-1928)

The New Revolutionaries During the years of warlord rule after 1916, many young Chinese joined revolutionary groups and parties, hoping this way to improve their country. Over the years, these movements include: The May Fourth Movement, Communism, and the Northern Campaign.

The May Fourth movement The first was a protest movement against the peace treaties, which ended the Great War of 1914-18. It began on 4 May 1919 and is therefore known as the May Fourth movement. China had joined the Great War in 1917 on the side of the Western allies. Nine hundred thousand Chinese labourers were taken to France, Turkey and Africa to work for the allied armies in " labour battalions". All German ships in Chinese ports were seized and all German enterprises were shut down. After the war Chinese representatives took place in the Paris peace conference. One of the issues was whether the Germans should continue having control of the port of

Kiaochow that the Japanese had seized before the start of the war. The Japanese had also imposed the "21 demands"* to increase their influence over China. The Chinese expected to be given back Kiaochow, and for Japan to withdraw its 21 demands. They obtained neither of these. When the news got to China on the 4th May 1919, students started huge demonstrations in the streets. This spread to the labourers and workers who started boycotting their jobs and soon the country was on its knees. The May 4th movement added strength to a new party called the New Tide, which had already begun in 1916. It aimed to get rid of old ideas and concepts. It wanted to have a more simple and universal writing so that everybody in China could read and write. It also wanted to do away with foreign powers in China, although it did not mind using foreign ideas for doing so. Communists and the Goumindang

One set of foreign ideas that had reached China was communism. A movement that had been started by Karl Marx in the 19th century and aimed to create a classless society where there is no private-property and everyone is equal. In 1918 an assistant librarian at the Beijing University named Mao Zedong started a society for the study of Marxism, which quickly became very popular, and lots of people came to the meetings. In 1921 the members started the Chinese Communist Party. Meanwhile Sun Yatsen was reorganising his party, the Goumindang (People's National Party). Sun's three principles for a new society were National freedom; Democratic government; and the people's livelihood. He planned on taking over the country and liberating it from foreign power. But to do this he had to use foreign support. However the Western powers such as Britain refused to support him. Demoralised he turned to the USSR where a communist

government had taken power. Russia helped Sun by sending him Abram Joffe, one of their best diplomats, to help him reorganise the Goumindang. With Abram Joffe's help, Sun Yatsen reorganized the Goumindang on Russian communist lines. It became a mass party, run with strict discipline, with party members having to show total obedience to the party's decision. Sun invited members of the communist party to join them. Because although their motives were not the same, they had one common goal: revolution. In 1923 the Russian government sent two more agents, Michael Borodin and General Galen. The general's job was to improve the Goumindang army so it could conquer the rest of China. He sold Sun Russian rifles and he set up an officer-training academy in Haungpu. In charge of the academy was Sun's Brother in law, Chiang Kaishek. The Northern Campaign On March 1925 Sun Yatsen died of Cancer. While other Goumindang leaders fought over who would take his place, Chiang Kaishek became Commanding General of the Army. By this time his military academy had turned out about 500 officers and was ready to take over China. In July 1926 Chiang Kaishek began the march towards the north. He sent forwards political agents to obtain support in the Warlord-Sick people. The going was very easy; most of the smaller warlord's armies mutinied and joined the Goumindang. One of the Goumindang armies led by Communists conquered Hankow and set up a government there in September 1926. Another Goumindang army conquered Nanjing early in 1927 and set up a Nationalist government. The peasants in the poor communities welcomed the armies, believing that they would bring better times ahead, but where they were not welcomed warmly Chang Kaishek did not hesitate to use cash to win support. Now that the

Communists and the Goumindang had conquered most of China the alliance between them broke down. As the Goumindang prepared to enter Shanghai there was a Communist rebellion inside the city, and the workers took over the city under Zhou Enlai. When the Goumindang entered Shanghai they rounded up all the Communists and killed them in the streets. Later on in the year, Chang's men also massacred the Communists in Guangzhou, killing hundreds in the streets and forcing even more to flee for their lives. After being expelled from the cities, the communists escaped to Jiangxi in the Hunan province. Chiang Kaishek in control of the cities and head of the government in Nainjing now got ready to conquer the rest of China.

Kuomintang and Communist (1928-1937) Kuomintang In October 1928 the Kuomintang formally established the Nanjing government. Chiang Kai-shek became chairman of Kuomintang, also known as the National Party. At first many people were against dictatorship by Chiang Kai-shek. However, Chiang maintained his power thanks to giant military power and support by bourgeoisie. He tried to construct a modern state against the background of property. It was the CCP that survived with a display of " liberation of the people" which Kuomintang abandoned. Communist Although the force of the CCP was swept away by Kuomintang, Mao reconstructed the rest of his unit, aiming to establish an " army for the people." This is the model for the Red army. The units that survived the guerilla wars laid the groundwork for a revolution, a strategy to " dominate over city by farm village"-to use the farmlands to win the cities. **The Establishment of Manchkuo** In September 1931 Japan initiated the seizure of Manchuria. Japan established the puppet regime of " Manchukuo" under the Qing's last emperor, P'u Yi. That caused

an anti-Japanese campaign everywhere in China, but the Kuomintang considered it more important to exterminate the CCP than resist Japanese invaders. That made the people gradually doubt the Kuomintang. Long March When Chiang's fifth extermination campaign began in October 1933, the Communists suddenly changed their strategy. Other members of the party who advocated meeting Chiang's troops in pitched battle were undermining Mao's authority. But this strategy proved disastrous. By October 1934 the Communist had suffered heavy losses and were driven into a small area in Jiangxi. On the brink of defeat, the Communists decided to retreat from Jiangxi and march north to Shanxi. There was not one 'Long March' but several, as various Communist armies in the south made their way to Shaanxi. The most famous was the march from Jiangxi Province which began in October 1934, took a year to complete and covered 8000 km over some of the most inhospitable terrain. On the way the Communists confiscated the property of officials, landlords and tax collectors, redistributed the land to peasants, armed thousands of peasants with weapons captured from the Kuomintang and left soldiers behind to organize guerrilla groups to harass the enemy. Of the 90, 000 people who started out in Jiangxi only 20, 000 made it to Shangxi because of fatigue, sickness, exposure, enemy attacks and desertion all took their toll. The march proved, however, that the Chinese peasants could fight if they were given a method, organization, leadership, hope and weapons. It brought together many people who later held top positions after 1949m including Mao Zedong, Zhou Enlai, Zhu De, Lin Biao, Deng Xiaoping and Liu Shiqi. It also established Mao as the paramount leader of the Chinese Communist movement. During the march a

meeting of the CCP hierarchy recognized Mao's overall leadership, and he assumed supreme responsibility for strategy. War Against Japan and World War II (1937-1945) Japanese Invasion In July 1937, a discharge occurred at Marco Polo Bridge outside Beijing . Who discharged is not clear to this day, but the Japanese said it was the Chinese who fired first. Japan tried to gain control of northern China by invasion. Japan asked Chinese troops for an apology, but China wouldn't give it. By this time Chinese resistance had grown strong. Japanese troop began to deliver an all-out attack against China for the complaint of such an attitude. Japan occupied a capital, Nanjing in December. In Nanjing a great deal of Chinese who resisted Japan were massacred. In such a situation Chiang called all the people to fight against Japan. The biggest operation of Japanese troops was almost completed by the end of 1938, where Japan controlled the major cities and railroads in China. Japan imagined that by making a puppet regime everywhere and encouraging the regime they had they could plunge the Chiang government into small and rural towns. Japanese power had grown strong, and with that the CCP's influence was expanded. In rural regions there was no one to subdue government officials after the Kuomintang army retreated from the region. The rest of peasants made an army against Japan under the leadership of the CCP's guerilla group. The army started to fight against Japanese troops, by which Japanese troops suffered severely. Such an increase in the CCP's influence made the Kuomintang guard against the CCP even more. An accident occurred where the Kuomintang attacked the CCP, a supposed mishap that triggered a breakdown in the CCP-Kuomintang treaty. Despite that, a front against Japan was not collapsed. The center of the front

became CCP controlled rather than Kuomintang controlled. In the region of liberation made under the leadership of the CCP, democracy prevailed. The government was constructed by election, and the people were guaranteed their freedom of speech, publication, assembly, and association. They escaped from the Japanese subjection or the Kuomintang's blockade through production and unity of thought among CCP. Soldiers, CCP's leaders, and also students worked together and did their best to multiply production. The CCP said, " Communists must always contribute to the people." The CCP tried to unite the people by making each person rely on their own person responsibility. This united the CCP and create a great sense of patriotism in China. Waorld War II In 1940, The World War II started, and Kuomintang government became one of the Union. But the government was negative and against the Japanese War. The government prepared for a decisive battle against the CCP. In Chongqing the original positive move by the people was almost lost by the dictatorship by Chiang and anti-CCP policy. Under such, Chiang's dictatorship and the corruption of Kuomintang were getting terrible. Both public servants and officers were absorbed in gaining money by making use of the war. Some smuggled strategic materials out of Japan and some had materials given imported from the United States. This monopolizing of funds by the privileged class brought about severe inflation and stagnation of commerce and industry. Chiang's ideal China was a society connected by families and neighbors based on Confucianism. He thought that it is only the Kuomintang that is able to construct this society. At the end of the war however, a move looking for democracy and freedom occurred also in the region of the Kuomintang. A sect desiring anti-Japanese, democracy, and

unity cried for the powers that be to " Stop dictatorship, promoting democracy by connection with each party and each section". In 1945 World War II was counting down its final stages. In May the Soviet Union captured Berlin, and in June American troops overwhelmed Okinawa, Japan. In China nineteen regions of liberation were established, the population there reached one hundred million. Following this, both the Kuomintang and the CCP held congressional hearings. At the CCP's congress the authority of Mao Zedong was established, a course after war was plotted under " Maoism". Mao said not to give up fighting against Japan until the war was over, and a " New Democratic system" based on the majority of the people was constructed. He also suggested that a dictatorship and anti-CCP policy against the Kuomintang be abandoned. Kuomintang, on the other hand, didn't change their anti-CCP policy. End of War In October a nuclear bomb was released at Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan. The Soviet Union army began to advance on Manchuria. On 10 Oct, Japan accepted the Potsdam Declaration, by which World War II, and the China-Japan War was over. Chinese people were all excited over winning the war. Firecrackers exploded and excited voices were heard everywhere in China. In the end however, 10 million Chinese died.

Civil War (1945-1949) From 1937 to this day, the number of the dead in Chinese troop reached over one million, and over 10 million in civilian casualties. In Japan, only about 400 thousand troops died. After the end of the War, Chang and Mao discussed national plans in Chongqing. The negotiations were slow. Especially the matters about unification of national troop, a local autonomy and establishment of constitution have not resolved. What was agreed was merely to avoid a civil war and establish new China of

independent, liberated, and powerful. By that the CCP reduced the number of military hands, and made way toward its goal of avoiding a civil war. In January 1946, a military truce was arranged. An atmosphere for peace and unification was getting near. However, the Kuomintang didn't keep this truce, and started killing the opposition. Start of Civil War In the region of liberation under CCP, on the other hand, the people themselves blamed landowners who killed or oppressed the people during the past war and also put them on trial, sometimes executing them. Energy of the people was put to Land Reform. The progress of Land Reform made the people's eagerness for the revolution higher. It also made the conflict with the Kuomintang, supported by landowners, even more critical. In danger of entering a civil war, the United States made an effort to intervene. But the intervention couldn't change Chiang's will against crushing the CCP. At last a civil war started in July 1946. Land Reform was promoted in countryside, while the confusion had already begun in cities. At the end of the war, soldiers and government officials came back to the cities. At first the people welcomed them enthusiastically. But the people were disappointed soon. The officials monopolized factories or stores Japanese people owned in the past. Besides the government issued banknotes the moment the civil war started, so by the end of the war, inflation was getting out of control. Prices in 1947 were up to a hundred and fifty thousands times as much as that before civil war started. The productivity decline more and more, and the number of people starving to death was over ten million just for one year in 1946. China was in more chaos than in a time controlled by Japan and puppet regime. Disturbance and student movements occurred everywhere. Then the

Kuomintang cracked down on the confusion, but at that time the people's trust for Kuomintang had been all but lost with their bad credibility. Taiwan was made controlled under Japan for about fifty years from the Japanese victory in 1895. When the control of Japan was over with the end of the war, the people were all the more delighted. But Kuomintang act like a conqueror and had been oppressed the people. The people determined to fight against Kuomintang. They fought for human rights, but the Kuomintang arrested the leader and executed him. After that, Taiwan went under the control of the Kuomintang. Victory of Communist For the early one years of a civil war, the Kuomintang was dominant over the CCP. And Kuomintang occupied Yan'an, " capital" of CCP in March 1947. But it was just the consequence CCP predicted. The CCP had been prepared for a waiting game by getting the people's support. CCP had been able to find the people's favor by promoting Land Reform. The people supported the CCP. At last the People's Red Army began to counterattack Kuomintang scattered in various cities. In January 1949 Chang resigned. In the negotiation for peace between the Kuomintang and CCP, CCP required Kuomintang to surrender unconditionally. But the Kuomintang refused to accept it. Taking this refusal, the People's Red Army started an all-out attack. They occupied big cities such as Nanjing or Shanghai, cornering Kuomintang in the south. And in December the People's Red Army occupied all main land except Taiwan. Chang fled into Taiwan with followed by five hundred thousand soldiers. Finally CCP won a victory in the civil war by gaining the people's enthusiastic support. " Without a doubt it is one of the most remarkable example that the more small but devoted and well-organized troop beat the troop which was

the more larger but decline morale and not popular." ----Stewart Suram Early Years of People's Republic of China (1949-1966) Establishment of People's Republic of China In 1949, the People's Republic of China was established. Mao declared that China is against imperialism, feudalism, bureaucracy, and struggle for independence, democracy, peace and unity. The new government started reconstruction to fix such problems as the Inflation and low production. The Government first enforced land reform, improving the past feudal system. As a result, agriculture and industry became increased over the level to what it was before the war in 1950. But on the Korean war which break out just after republic was established, a lot of Chinese sacrificed and suffered serious damage in their life. The relationship between USA got worse, China attained needed support from the Soviet Union. Under the Korean War people's patriotism became strong, and the war effort took precedent over other affairs. In some cases however, many people plotted to return China back to the old system. Tension mounted to remove such people. During this time, strength grew among the Three, Five Anti Campaign's and the bourgeois, and as a result the Communist party enforced programs to increase their power. Mao made various policies one after another to turn China into an ideal socialist nation. In 1955, Mao promoted collective farming and nationalized commerce and industry, which had been private up until that point. Mao tried to make China communism society complete by every means. In 1956, Mao called on the people in the CCP to state freely at Hundred Flowers (another program). But after one year he started Anti-Rightist Campaign, at which he oppressed men who had criticize him under Hundred Flowers program. Around this time his policy

became to go on into a wrong direction. He wouldn't accept the opinion of other people, and his dogma became conspicuous. This Anti-Rightist Campaign left deep scars on those who had believed Mao. Mao attempted to level up commerce and industry in China to the level of advanced nations with promoting Great Leap Forward in 1958. Indeed he believed that China could accomplish it. Then he said this; " We will get ahead of Great Britain in fifteen years." He speed up production of iron and used peasants to do the work. The peasants dissolved farming, and implement iron. The People's communes (another program) was also put into effect during this time-founded by Mao Zedong. Several thousand peasants abandoned their land and entered People's Commune. All peasants lived in cooperative environment and ate meals at common cafeteria. They had few personal belongings. Production in the People's Commune was far from that before. Besides old men and children, no one was farming the countryside, and as a result, China found itself in an economic crisis-starvation. A great deal of peasants starved to death. The Great Leap Forward ended in failure, and Mao and the CCP were questioned for their mistakes. Mao regarded any man who said the Great Leap Forward was bad, as a Capitalist, and labeled them a rightist. Thus conflict inside the ranks of the CCP was beginning to take place. Mao tried fighting off capitalism and feudalism through encouragement of socialism. He criticized literature and academics the most. This trend toward tyranny soon led to a terrible time in Chinese history-the Cultural Revolution (CR). Reform of Economy (1976-1997) Revival of Deng Xiaoping After the fall of the " Gang of Four", Hua Guofeng placed himself in a position to succeed Mao as chairman by affirming Mao's belief in the "

continuance revolution under the dictatorship of proletariat," wholly. He suggested that the people should protest the direction towards socialism, keeping the revolutionary spirit and proceed with modernization on the basis of this theory. Hua continued to criticize such leaders as Deng, as he made light of the revolutionary spirit. Among the movement to "criticize Gang of Four", the criticism against the CR rose as well, and revival of Deng and reconsideration for Tiananmen flared up. Although Hua resisted this, Deng was restored to the Party and state position as vice chairman and vice premier of the state council again in July, 1977. In regards to the economy, Hua determined the production target as "Four Modernization", that is "modernization of agriculture, industry, national defense, and science and technology". Hua planned to implement these goals to reach the front lines of the world. He began to embark on the import of goods from other countries, and planned for construction and modernization on a large scale as well. At the Eleventh National Congress, Hua declared "the end of the first Cultural Revolution" in his political report, and appealed that China be a "great socialist country" within the 20th century. But in this time, Hua concluded with Mao's evaluation for the Cultural Revolution as "70% is result, 30% is mistake" and said that something like the Cultural Revolution may be needed again in the future. On the other side of things, Deng took an opposing attitude toward Hua's vision. Deng felt that China should focus on progression rather than regression; and regression would be anything similar to the Cultural Revolution. He wanted reevalutate Maoist thought inside the party, and called for the CCP to look toward modernizing china for the 20th century. Deng would remain the most significant leader in the party until his

death in 1997. Deng eventually got his way. In the Third Plenum of the Party's Eleventh Central Committee, the past political line was changed and it was decided to put emphasis of policy on "the construction of socialism modernization". Finally the theory of "continuance revolution under the dictatorship of proletariat" was denied, and in essence, Maoist thought was laid to rest. Deng rehabilitated many officers and intellectuals who had been imprisoned or confined during the Cultural Revolution. Many leaders felt that the Red Guards had been too hard on them, and that many of Mao's practices were unfair and served only to hurt China. Deng carried out reform and liberation rapidly. Reform was started in the field of agriculture first. In a rural district, peasant autonomy was honored, and a responsibility system was introduced. Peasants were allowed to farm the lands freely, and given government contracts. This gave many peasants an incentive to produce, and consequently the output in 1984 exceeded four hundred tons.

Eventually, the Mao's "People's Commune" was dissolved, and a more capitalist attitude took place in the countryside. New companies were encouraged to form, and many of them accepted the peasant class into their employment. In October 1984, "the decision about the reform of economic line" was adopted. In Deng's program, those who had condition for wealth could be rich rapidly. In fact, household annual income grew, and households making ten thousand yuan or above, became commonplace. Through his programs, domestic economy began to improve, but capital from foreign countries was still needed for modernizing the economy. Economic liberalization in the fourteen regions including Shanghai began to open in 1984; a program that opened up China to outsiders. With that, companies

from Hong-Kong and Taiwan began to advance to these regions. The South in particular was developed rapidly because of the advance of foreign-affiliated companies. Foreign Relations In addition, foreign relations also became important to the Chinese government. The CCP reconsidered the policy that aimed at establishing an anti-Soviet Union line. But rather than create hostility, China developed a policy that improved relations between all countries, based on the five principles of peace. With this decision, China proceeded to improve the relation with the Soviets, as well as keeping ties to the United States and Europe. In May 1989, Gorbachev visited China and in a summit conference the relation between China and the Soviet Union was formalized. It was after an interval of twenty years that each premiere finally met. After this, China made an effort to improve its relations with surrounding countries, which had deteriorated in the past. In September 1990, relations with Vietnam were formalized and in October 1992, diplomatic relations with Korea was established. The People's Desire for Democratization In the early half of 1980's, the CCP coordinated the basic strategy that proceeded economic reform and the open door policy. However, the CCP had become divided into radical wing members and conservative wing members. They argued over the tempo and pace of the open-door policy, as well as many other issues. At the end of 1986, movements demanding democratization occurred all over the China, and arguments over the evaluation for the movement happened within the ranks of the CCP. The conservative wing demanded the responsibility fall on to Hu Yaobang, who had been administering the projects, and whom they felt was responsible for public sentiment. Hu was removed, and Zhao Ziyang was

made secretary-general. Tiananmen Massacre In April 1989 Hu Yaobang died, and with that came national mourning. During this time, people began to express their upset with the Chinese governmental system. The most famous incidents in recent history took place at Tiananmen Square. Massive demonstrations were held everyday in Beijing, and advancement for democratization was called for. Although martial law was proclaimed in Beijing, massive demonstrations including those who worked in government posts, were carried out openly on May 23. This demonstration reflected that not only was dissention occurring in the minds of the student protesters, but within the CCP as well. The CCP had already divided into the Liberal and Conservative wings, and as a result, the fustration had been long built. The masses of students and citizens wouldn't withdraw from Tiananmen Square. And finally on June 4, martial force occupied Tiananmen Square and opened fire on the crowd. During the progression more than two hundred people died; the figure was published by the CCP. The Tiananmen Incident was broadcasted throughout the world through satellite broadcasting. Consequently, China's reputation rapidly deteriorated. Today In February 1997, Deng Xiaoping leading the second Chinese revolution died. After Mao died, Deng made an effort to modernize China as much as possible. Even though he took measures Mao would have never approved of. With Deng and the people's effort, reform and liberalization was proceeding in China. However, problems such as the economic gap between the rich and the poor continued to plague the country. The efforts made in the 80's and 90's can be seen as the effort for the survival towards 21st century. Throughout the 20th century, the Chinese people have endured wars, famines, different

forms of Government, and colonization. A relic of one such affair, the Opium War, was brought to an end in 1997, when Hong Kong was restored to China after decades of British rule. In 1999, Macau will be returned to China as well. Indeed, this century has been a tempestuous period for the Chinese, and as it comes to a close, one can only wonder what is store for a people whose future has always seemed uncertain. They have never experienced a democratic government, but have always been more than willing to fight for their rights to freedom. In October of 1999, the 50th anniversary of the founding the People's Republic of China will be celebrated; at least by those who appreciate it.