

# Emergence of Authoritarian States - Mao's China (Methods)

## General Information

- Timeframe: 1921 to OCTOBER 1949, when the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) won the Chinese Civil War (CCW).

# Propaganda

## Topic Sentence

Propaganda was effective in portraying the CCP as essentially different from the GMD. (Sun's three principles). Furthermore, propaganda portrayed them as virtuous, and developed Mao's cult of personality

## Support of Chinese Peasants

- See Peasants in [Ideology](#)
- Village rallies
  - Landlords were denounced and subjected to humiliation and violence

## Propaganda of Long March

- Used as propaganda to give leaders of the CCP cult status
- Concept of martyrdom became enshrined in Communist lore
  - Became integrated into the Yanan spirit
- Cult of Mao born out of the harsh experiences of Long March
  - Mao became surrounded by certain mystique

## Second Sino-Japanese War

- CCP was able to frame their cooperation with the GMD despite the GMD's aggression toward them as a selfless act
- Ultimately challenging the NATIONALISM of the GMD - one of Sun's three principles
  - Jiang's policy of "trading land for time" was attacked, portrayed as unpatriotic
  - As it was part of his policy to ignore the Japanese and attack the Communists, CCP framed the GMD as
    - Unpatriotic - did not address the Japanese
      - Framed American aid as an overdependence of
    - Aggressive to CCP
      - CCP were thus "selfless" for agreeing to Second United Front

## Impact of Nationalistic Propaganda

- Johnson argues that this nationalistic sentiments were significant in mobilising peasant support during Sino-Japanese war as CCP showed the greatest military and organisational ability to resist Japanese

## Limitations of Nationalistic Propaganda

- However, as Bianco suggests, peasants were fickle and often stopped fighting once CCP left the area
- Thus, the effect of nationalism may be overstated, could instead be just a product of survival, appealing to them during the crisis of war

## Use of Force

### Topic Sentence

Use of force was the most significant factor in the

### Armed insurrection

- Aug 1 1927 - Nanchang Uprising
  - Led by Zhou Enlai
  - Managed to take control of Nanchang
  - 3 Aug - Driven out by the Nationalist Counterattack
- Sep 7 1927 Autumn Harvest Uprising
  - Led by Mao
  - Was able to establish Soviet government in Hunan
  - Two months later - forced to retreat to Jinggang Mountains

## Impact of Armed Insurrection

- Communist response to the Shanghai Massacre
  - Marked the breakdown of the First United Front alliance
- Forced Communist leaders to reconsider their strategy
  - Mao and Zhu De would use the experience from the uprising a rural-based guerilla strategy
- Spence suggested that the failed uprising impressed upon Mao the importance of military might
  - “Political power blooms from the barrel of a gun”

## Limitations of Armed Insurrection

- Was largely unsuccessful in overthrowing the Nationalist Government in those regions
  - Resulted in Communist troops being forced out
- Violent insurrection actually worked against them
  - Lefist Wuhan Nationalist faction called for liquidation (ideological abandonment) of Communists
  - Consolidated after Jiang’s leadership

### Use of Purges

- Futian incident (1930s)
  - Futian battalion leaders mutinied against Mao’s purge of Jiangxi Action Committee
  - Mao
  - June 1931 - Mao called troops and their officers to a meeting
  - Disarmed and executed 200 troops
- Yan’an Rectification Campaign (1942-1945)
  - Took care of two main sources of internal opposition
    - Dogmatists
      - Those that were not fond of Mao’s departure from Soviet ideology
      - Included the 28 Bolsheviks, led by Wang Ming
    - Empiricists
      - Supporters of the dogmatists
      - Zhou Enlai, Peng Dehuai
  - Mao forced these two groups to self-criticise as well as criticise others
  - In particular, Wang Ming was publicly humiliated and forced to apologise, leading to his political decline
- Second phase of rectification saw a mass purge of the party
  - Torture of over 1000 cadres
  - Dismissal of 40,000
  - Over 20% of Politburo Secretariat removed

## Impact of Use of Purges

- Futian Incident
  - Important in helping Mao consolidate control as leader of the Red Army
  - Zhu De and Peng Dehuai gave unequivocal support of Mao's actions
- Yan'an Rectification
  - Removed key oppositions to Maoism
  - Strengthened Mao's political power within party

## Use of Military Force to Seize Power

- Guerilla Warfare (1945-1947)
  - CCP adopted mobile defence as its primary strategy
  - Involved the weakening of enemy through ambush and sabotage
- Conventional Warfare (1948-1949)
  - Huai Huai Campaign
    - Used artillery support to

## Impact of Use of Military Force

- Eroded faith of US in Nationalist Government
  - America refused to take direct military action, with General Marshall deeming it not useful

## Limitations of Use of Military Force

- CCP had attempted to combat the GMD with military force in 1930s - Failed miserably (Agrarian Revolutionary War)
  - First Three Encirclements
    - Mao's strategy of guerilla warfare was used
    - While successful in repelling GMD forces, resulted in heavy losses for CCP
  - Fifth Encirclement
    - Jiang managed to encircle Communists and cut off their supplies using blockhouses
    - Resulted in the Collapse of the Jiangxi Soviet and the eventual Long March
- Jiang had enjoyed military success for the first half of the civil war
  - June 1947 - Communists had lost 191,000 square kilometres of territory and 18 million population
- Dreyer suggests it was morale rather than materials that led to their defeat
  - Defection was common among GMD affiliated warlords due to inflationary pressures in urban areas
    - Fu Zuoyi - warlord in charge of Beijing defected (?)
  - Corroborated by the high rates of defection in wartime
    - Example - During Huai Huai Campaign, two Nationalist Divisions defected a month after fighting began

## Link

Thus, while the use of force was significant, it was largely inconsequential up till the CCW, and even then the GMD still outclassed the CCP. It was only through Mao's careful methods and the weaknesses of the GMD that the CCP gained the morale and strategic advantage, ultimately seizing victory.

## Ideology

### Topic Sentence

The CCP portrayed themselves as faithful to Sun Yat-Sen's three people's principles of nationalism, democracy and People's Livelihood, endearing them to a rural population that felt betrayed by the corrupt GMD. Furthermore, their communist and democratic ideologies were able to sway foreign Soviet and US powers. Hsu suggests that while the GMD were lacking in democracy and People's Livelihood (cite repression and failure of economic policies), and CCP capitalised upon these weaknesses.

## Maoism

- Borrowed many Marxist ideas
  - Egalitarianism
  - Land reform
- Focused on peasants as the backbone of the revolution
  - Restructured society in accordance with Marxist principles
  - Eliminated the bourgeois class
    - Landlords, middle class
    - Support base of GMD
- Proper enforcement of military discipline
  - Prohibited the army from extorting the peasants
  - Red army instructed to be honest in all transactions with the peasants
  - Contrast with GMD - took land from peasants after Japanese Occupation
- Pro-peasant policies
  - Through their policy, CCP was able to fulfill the concept of People's Livelihood
    - Reduced rent
    - Land redistribution
    - All things that GMD had promised to do but did not

### Impact of Maoism

- Helped Mao gain the support of the peasants, who felt betrayed by GMD
  - Policies played a huge role in growth of the CCP from 40,000 to 1 million
  - Helped the Red Army to grow and enable the CCP come to power
- Helped align Mao with the ideals of Stalin, who offered the CCP aid by preventing GMD from taking territories in Manchuria after end of WWII

### Limitations of Maoism

- Bianco suggests peasants were more concerned with their immediate survival than long term policies
  - Were not swayed by ideology, but sided with Mao simply due to the material gain from land reform
  - Demonstrated by how peasants were quick to desert CCP once the CCP left their territory during Civil War

## Political Policy

- Gave impression of being democratic agrarian reformers
  - Three-thirds system
    - Ensured that all border governments were one-third peasant, one-third landlord, and one-third party
  - Organised village assemblies and elections

- “Struggle meetings” allowed the poorest of peasants to voice grievances
- Made sure everybody’s voice was heard

## Impact of Political Policy

- Hsu suggested that the US viewed the CCP as agrarian reformers separate from the Soviets, while viewing the GMD as fascist and feudal
- Gave the facade of representative democracy
  - Made Hurley, US diplomat, have a more sympathetic view of CCP
  - Led to growing prestige internationally
    - Edgar Snow’s book *Red Star Over China*
- US thus desired a coalition rather than extermination of CCP
  - However, this idea did not account for the revolutionary nature of the two parties
  - Ultimately led to the failure of US mediation - start of civil war
  - US disillusionment with the subsequent conflict resulted in reduced support for Nationalists
    - Marshall refused to commit troops to the Manchurian front, ultimately resulting in the GMD defeat there

## Role of Mao

### Topic Sentence

The role of leaders was largely responsible for the emergence of an authoritarian state. Mao's shrewd transition between different uses of force, careful crafting of the CCP ideology, and pioneering of guerilla warfare.

### Opportunism

- Was able to use the chaos of Long March to effectively gain power
  - Jan 1935 - Discredited the 28 Bolsheviks faction at the Zunyi Conference
  - Understood that his distance from power meant that he was not associated with the failure at Jiangxi
    - Was able to receive Zhou's support throughout his rise to power
  - Attacked the leaders of the party who decided to use positional warfare
  - Regained his position in the Central Committee
  - Joined the Military Affairs Commission

### Ruthlessness

- Resorted to ruthless means to consolidate power of party
  - Anti-Bolshevik League incident in Jiangxi Soviet
  - Yunnan Rectification Campaign
- 1943 - Elected as Chairman of Central Committee

### Military Genius

- 1937 - Wrote "On Guerilla Warfare"
- Mao's military strategy of first using large-scale mobile warfare and withdrawing to the countryside during the early stages of the civil war showed that he understood the nature of the civil war.
- Subsequently, when Mao felt that the timing was right, he pushed the PLA to adopt an offensive strategy when some of his commanders wanted a longer transition period between mobile defence and attack.

## Impact of Mao's Leadership

- Ruthlessness and opportunism allowed him to rise to leader of the party, and great prominence
  - 1945 - Mao was acknowledged as overall leader of the CCP
  - Maoism became official party ideology
  - Mao's portraits painted everywhere, and he was seen as "the great helmsman"
- Military and ideological ability allowed for victory at the civil war (Ideology/Use of force)
  - Effectively developed ideology to appeal to underlooked peasants
  - Effectively developed a guerilla strategy to exploit the stubbornness of Nationalists (Manchuria)

## Persuasion and Coercion