

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON  
Department of History

HISTORY OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF  
CHINA, 1949 TO THE PRESENT

Meisner  
263-1848  
Office: 5117 Humanities  
Office Hours: 3:45-5:00 TR

History 342  
Spring 1987  
Tuesday and  
Thursday  
5:00-6:15

In the late 1930s and 1940s, Mao Tse-tung and other Chinese Communists organized tens of millions of peasants into what was certainly the most massive, and perhaps the greatest, revolution in world history. The Chinese revolution took the historically unique form of harnessing the forces of peasant revolt in the rural areas to surround and overwhelm the cities. The political result was the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949. This course is an inquiry into the post-revolutionary history of Chinese Communism, from the formal establishment of the Communist state in 1949 to the current post-Maoist era of the "Four Modernizations." The inquiry will focus on the successes and failures of Chinese Communists in power, particularly with respect to their proclaimed aim of building a socialist society in the world's most populous land. In a broader sense, the course is concerned with the nature and social results of 20th-century socialist revolutions in general, addressing the question of whether it is possible to carry out a genuine socialist reorganization of state and society under conditions of economic scarcity. The question is relevant to the history of the Soviet Union and to a variety of contemporary Third World societies and revolutionary movements. The examination of the Chinese Communist historical experience hopefully will prove helpful for understanding the dilemmas which confront other revolutionary movements and societies which today proceed under Marxist and socialist banners.

No prior knowledge of Chinese history is presupposed. The first three weeks of the semester will be devoted to a survey of the history of Marxism and Communism in China from the time of the May Fourth Movement in 1919 to the victory of the Maoist revolution in 1949. This will serve as a review for those who have some familiarity with modern Chinese history, and, for those who do not, as an introduction to the history of the People's Republic.

The course is divided into five parts. Part I, as noted above, will be a brief survey of the Chinese Communist Revolution (1919-1949). Part II will be concerned with the consolidation of Communist state power (1949-52) and the period of the First Five Year Plan (1953-57), focusing on the social and political consequences of Soviet-style industrialization. Part III will examine one of the great utopian episodes in world history, the Great Leap Forward campaign of 1958-60 and its aftermath. Part IV will reassess the Cultural Revolution and the end of the Maoist era (1966-1976). Part V will consider the deradicalization of the Chinese revolution in the years since the death of Mao Tse-tung in 1976 and the current economic reform experiments. In pursuing inquiries into these various eras, comparisons between Chinese history and the histories of other post-revolutionary societies (especially the Soviet Union) will be suggested in both lectures and readings.

Lectures usually will be confined to about 45 minutes, followed by a short period for questions and general discussion.

Lectures will be supplemented by weekly one-hour discussion sessions. A list of topics and reading for the latter will be distributed separately.

22. Post-Maoist Chinese Marxism

Su Shaozhi, Marxism in China  
Bill Brugger (ed.), Chinese Marxism in Flux, 1978-84  
William Joseph, The Critique of Ultra-Leftism in China

23. Rural China

Anita Chan, R. Madsen, and J. Unger, Chen Village  
Richard Madsen, Morality and Power in a Chinese Village  
Jan Myrdal, Report from a Chinese Village and Return to a Chinese Village  
William Hinton, Shenfan

24. Sino-U.S. Relations

'Tsou Tang, America's Failure in China  
M. Oksenberg & R. Oxnam (eds.), Dragon & Eagle: U.S.-China Relations, Past & Future

25. Economic Development in the People's Republic

Alexander Echstein, China's Economic Revolution  
Carl Riskin, China's Political Economy: The Quest for Development Since 1949  
Nicholas Lardy, Agriculture in China's Modern Economic Development

26. Post-Revolutionary Maoism

John Starr, Continuing the Revolution: The Political Thought of Mao  
Maurice Meisner, Marxism, Maoism & Utopianism  
Benjamin Schwartz, Communism & China: Ideology in Flux

27. Post-Mao Chinese Politics

Roger Garride, Coming Alive: China After Mao  
Tsou Tang,  
Bill Brugger (ed.), China Since The "Gang of Four"

28. Literature in Communist China

Merle Goldman, Literary Dissent in Communist China  
Peny Link, Rose and Thorns: The Second Blooming of The Hundred Flowers in Chinese Fiction, 1979-80

## 15. The Cultural Revolution: Leaders and Masses

Hung Yung Lee, The Politics of the Chinese Cultural Revolution  
 Byung-joon Ahn, Chinese Politics and the Cultural Revolution  
 Neale Hunter, Shanghai Journal

## 16. Results of the Cultural Revolution

Charles Bettelheim, Cultural Revolution and Industrial Organization in China  
 Bill Brugger (ed.), China: The Impact of the Cultural Revolution

## 17. The Red Guards: Social Composition and Political Aims

Klaus Mehnert, Peking and the New Left: At Home and Abroad  
 Hong Yung Lee, The Politics of the Chinese Cultural Revolution  
 Stanley Rosen, Red Guard Factionalism and the Cultural Revolution in Guangzhou (Canton)

## 18. The Sino-Soviet Dispute

John Gittings, The World and China, 1922-1972  
 Klaus Mehnert, Peking and Moscow  
 Donald Zagoria, The Sino-Soviet Conflict, 1956-61  
 Mark Mancall, China at the Center

## 19. "Sent-Down" Youth

Thomas P. Bernstein, Up to the Mountains and Down to the Villages: The Transfer of Youth from Urban to Rural China  
 Stanley Rosen, The Role of Sent-Down Youth in the Chinese Cultural Revl.

## 20. Education in the Maoist and Post-Maoist Eras

Jonathan Unger, Education Under Mao: Class and Competition in Canton Schools, 1960-1980  
 Suzanne Pepper, "Chinese Education After Mao: Two Steps Forward, Two Steps Back and Begin Again?" China Quarterly, pp. 1-65.

## 21. The Democracy Movement of 1978-81

James D. Seymour (ed.), The Fifth Modernization: China's Human Rights Movement, 1978-79  
 Chen Erjin, China: Crossroads Socialism  
 Roger Garside, Coming Alive, chs. 10-13.  
 Gregor Benton (ed.), Wild Lilies, Poisonous Weeds: Dissident Voices from People's China  
 Andrew Nathan, Chinese Democracy

8. Women in China: Chinese Communism and Sexual Inequality
  - Delia Davin, Woman-Work: Women and the Party in Revolutionary China
  - Elisabeth Croll, Feminism and Socialism in China
  - Marilyn Young (ed.), Women in China
  - Kay Ann Johnson, Woman, The Family and Peasant Revolution in China
  - Judith Stacey, Patriarchy and Socialist Revolution in China
  - Phylliss Andors, Unfinished Liberation of Chinese Women, 1949-80
  
9. The Land Reform Campaigns
  - William Hinton, Fanshen: A Documentary of Revolution in a Chinese Village
  - C. K. Yang, A Chinese Village in Early Communist Transition
  - John Wong, Land Reform in China: Institutional Transformation of Agriculture
  
10. Agricultural Collectivization
  - Vivienne Shue, Peasant China in Transition
  - William Hinton, Shenfan (1983), parts 1 and 2 (pp. 5-166)
  
11. Intellectuals in Communist China
  - Jerome Grieder, Intellectuals and the State in Modern China
  - Merle Goldman, China's Intellectuals: Advise and Dissent
  - James McGough (ed.), Fei Hsiao-tung: The Dilemma of a Chinese Intellectual
  
12. The Hundred Flowers Campaign
  - Roderick MacFarquhar, The Origins of the Cultural Revolution, Vol. I: Contradictions Among the People, 1956-57
  - Roderick MacFarquhar (ed.), The Hundred Flowers Campaign and the Chinese Intellectuals
  
13. The Chinese Communist Bureaucracy
  - Harry Harding, Organizing China: The Problem of Bureaucracy
  - Richard Kraus, Class Conflict in Chinese Socialism
  
14. The Chinese Army (PLA)
  - John Gittings, The Role of the Chinese Army
  - Ellis Joffe, Party and Army: Professionalism and Political Control in the Chinese Officer Corps
  - Livio Maitan, Party, Army and Masses in China

SUGGESTED PAPERS TOPICS AND SOURCES

Essays should be reasonably concise (about 10-15 typewritten pages), well-argued, and based on the critical reading of two of the listed books. Most of the books are on reserve in Helen C. White Library; others should be available in Memorial Library.

1. The Nature of the Chinese Communist Revolution; a nationalist or a social revolution?

Chalmers Johnson, Peasant Nationalism and Communist Power  
Mark Selden, The Yanan Way in Revolutionary China

2. The Character of the Kuomintang Regime -- and why it collapsed.

Sterling Seagrave, The Soong Dynasty  
Lloyd Eastman, The Abortive Revolution  
Suzanne Pepper, Civil War in China: The Political Struggle, 1945-49

3. Maoism as a Variant of Marxism-Leninism.

Benjamin Schwartz, Chinese Communism and the Rise of Mao  
Stuart Schram, The Political Thought of Mao Tse-tung  
Maurice Meisner, Marxism, Maoism, and Utopianism

4. China and the Korean War.

Bruce Cummings, The Origins of the Korean War  
Allen Whiting, China Crosses the Yalu: The Decision to Enter the Korean War

5. The Nature of the Chinese Communist State.

Theda Skocpol, States and Social Revolution  
V. Nee and D. Mozingo (eds.), State and Society in Contemporary China

6. Industrialization during the Maoist Era.

Stephen Andors, China's Industrial Revolution  
Barry Richman, Industrial Society in Communist China  
Thomas Rawski, China's Transition to Industrialism

7. Industry in the Country Side.

Dwight Perkins (ed.), Rural Small-Scale Industry in the People's Republic of China  
Jon Sigurdson, Rural Industrialization in China

Hist. 342: Lectures and Readings (2)

Part III: The Great Leap Forward Campaign and Its Aftermath, 1958-65

Mar. 10: Maoism and the Theory of Permanent Revolution

Mar. 12: The Great Leap and Its Results

Spring Recess, March 14-22

Mar. 24: The Prelude to the Cultural Revolution: Politics and Ideology in the Early 1960s

Mar. 26: Maoism and Culture: Theories of Art and Literature (Kung)

Readings:

Rosenberg and Young, Transforming Russia and China, ch. 8

Meisner, Mao's China and After, chapters 12-17

Part IV: The Cultural Revolution and the Close of the Maoist Era, 1966-1976

Mar. 31: The Concept of "Cultural Revolution"

Apr. 2: Class and Political Struggles, 1966-69

Apr. 7: Results and Consequences of the Cultural Revolution

Apr. 9: The Rise and Fall of the "Gang of Four," 1970-76

Apr. 14: Successes and Failures of the Maoist Era

Readings:

Meisner, Mao's China and After, chapters 18-21

David and Nancy Milton, The Wind Will Not Subside (Pantheon paperback)

Part V: Post-Mao China

Apr. 16: The Ascendancy of Deng Xiaoping

Apr. 21: Politics and Social Policy in the Post-Mao Era

Apr. 23: Economic Reform: Theory and Ideology (Stanton)

Apr. 28: Agricultural Decollectivization and Industrial Reorganization

Apr. 30: Chinese Marxism in the Post-Mao Period

May 5: Student Protest Movements: the Rise, Fall and Revival of the Democracy Movement

May 7: Socialism, Capitalism, and Modernization

Readings:

Meisner, Mao's China and After, chapters 22-23

Orville Schell, To Get Rich is Glorious (Pantheon paperback)

Term papers are due on or before April 30

Final Exam Questions will be distributed on Thursday May 7 and your essays will be due on Tuesday May 12.

Hist. 342: Lectures and Readings (Spring 1987)

Part I: The Chinese Revolution, 1919-1949

- Jan. 20: Problems in the Study of Contemporary Chinese History
- Jan. 22: The Making of a Revolutionary Situation: China, 1839-1919
- Jan. 27: The Introduction of Marxism and the Origins of the Chinese Communist Party
- Jan. 29: The Failure of the Revolution of 1925-27
- Feb. 3: The Origins of Maoism and the Yanan Era of Chinese Communism (1935-45)
- Feb. 5: A Comparison of the Chinese and Russian Revolutions

Readings:

Stuart Schram, Mao Tse-tung (Penguin paperback), chapters 1-8.  
or Lucien Bianco, The Origins of the Chinese Revolution, 1915-1949 (Stanford paperback)

William Rosenberg and Marilyn Young, Transforming Russia and China (Oxford paperback), chapters 1-6.

Maurice Meisner, Mao's China and After: A History of the People's Republic (Free Press paperback), chapters 1-4.

Part II: The Establishment of Communist Political Power and the Era of the First Five Year Plan, 1949-1957

- Feb. 10: The New State and the Theory of "New Democracy"
- Feb. 12: Repression, Terror, and the Korean War
- Feb. 17: Urban China: The Era of "National Capitalism"
- Feb. 19: Rural China: Land Reform and the Bourgeois Revolution in the Countryside
- Feb. 24: The First Five Year Plan (1953-57): Economic Results and Social Consequences
- Feb. 26: "Socialist Transformation": the Collectivization of Agriculture
- Mar. 3: Chinese Communism and Intellectual Freedom: The Case of Hu Feng (Kuskowski-Pieronni)
- Mar. 5: The "Hundred Flowers" and the Anti-Rightist Campaign

Readings:

Rosenberg and Young, Transforming Russia and China, ch. 7.

Meisner, Mao's China and After, chs. 5-11.

REQUIREMENTS

1. A final take-home examination based on the lectures and readings outlined below.
2. A term paper (about 10-15 double-spaced typewritten pages) selected from one of the topics listed below under "Suggested Papers Topics and Sources" Other topics may be chosen in consultation with the instructor or the TA.

GRADING

Final Exam: 50%  
Paper: 35%  
Contribution to discussion group: 15%

Paperback editions of the following books can be purchased at People's Books, University Bookstore and elsewhere:

Stuart Schram, Mao Tse-tung (Penguin) OR Lucien Bianco, The Origins of the Chinese Revolution, 1915-1949 (Stanford University Press).

William Rosenberg and Marilyn Young, Transforming Russia and China (Oxford University Press)

Maurice Meisner, Mao's China and After: A History of the People's Republic (The Free Press, 1986 edition)

David and Nancy Milton, The Wind Will Not Subside: Years in Revolutionary China, 1964-69 (Pantheon)

Orville Schell, To Get Rich Is Glorious (Pantheon)