
Communism In China since 1958

Great Leap Forward and Cultural
Revolution

Road To Communist Utopia

- Communist Utopia
 - Classless society
 - Property and wealth owned in common, not by individuals
 - Communist state to preserve the utopia
 - ONLY the Communist Party could lead to utopia and hence the only party to have power and govern the state

Road To Communist Utopia

- The road to Communist utopia is a constant struggle of never-ending change
- Revolution is key to change societal mindset, culture and also infrastructure, both tangible and intangible
- Change/revolution will always lead to progress of man towards a better level/state (renewal)

Rationalizing What Happened In PRC

- The points in the previous slides are important
 - To understand the rationale behind the policies initiated and implemented by Mao and the Communist Party of China
 - To understand the impact of ideas and policies thought about by Mao and CPC on the people of China

Reasons for Great Leap Forward (1957)

- We can better understand the reasons behind GLF if we look for the alignment between GLF and the Communist aims and objectives
 - Modernize and galvanize China's economy to rival the Western economies → *fast-track to Utopian prosperity*
 - To economic output so that Soviet debts could be paid off

How to reach GLF objectives

- Two prong development: Rapid industrialization and increased agricultural production
 - Increased agricultural production
 - To feed growing urban and industrial population
 - To pay of outstanding Soviet debts

How to reach GLF objectives

- Rapid industrialization to be achieved via
 - Increasing production targets and quotas
 - Commanding communes in rural areas to produce crops as well as steel
 - Backyard furnaces

How to reach GLF objectives

- Reliance on manpower, rather than technical expertise
 - Due to historical precedence of Chinese people overcoming odds to emerge triumphant eg, Long March, WW2, etc
 - Due to China-USSR spat, Soviet experts shredded their blueprints and returned to USSR

How to reach GLF objectives

- CPC to have the power to
 - Indoctrinate people on the noble aims of GLF
 - Mobilize large sections of society into action and achieve the GLF objectives

What Went Wrong With GLF

- Due to the two-prong approach, there was improper allocation of manpower resources and this led to decreasing agricultural output
- Lack of technical knowledge resulted in poor quality and disastrous industrial and agricultural production

What Went Wrong With GLF

- Adherence to false theories led to destruction of crops and poor quality products
- False reporting of industrial and agricultural output due to fear and/or ambitions of the party officials
- Non-tolerance of criticism as witnessed during the Anti-Rightist Movement

Impact of GLF on people (1959-1961)

- Great Famine

- Due to false reporting and the confiscation of crops meant for the rural people's consumption
- Due to failure of crops as a result of false theories and improper allocation of resources
- Due to natural disasters, eg. drought, flood, earthquake

Impact of GLF on Mao (1959-1960s)

- Criticism of Mao came in the form of Peng Dehuai
- As a result of Peng's criticism, Mao refused to moderate production targets, while Peng was being sidelined

Impact of GLF on Mao (1959-1960s)

- However, as GLF devastated PRC's economy, Mao stepped down from day-to-day running of the country in 1961
- Liu Shaoqi became President of PRC
- Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping was entrusted to revitalize and normalize PRC economy

Aims of Liu and Deng (1961-1965)

- Revitalize and normalize PRC economy so that the ideals of Communist utopia could still be realized
- Normalize agricultural production via
 - Relaxing collectivization and incentivize agricultural production eg:
 - Farmers would be allowed to make small profits from any excess crops

Aims of Liu and Deng (1961-1965)

- Normalize industrial production via
 - Allowing industrial production of consumer goods
 - To encourage spending and galvanizing the economy
 - With growing emphasis on consumer goods, this also allowed small-medium enterprises to make small profits

Results of Liu and Deng's Policies

- Economic recovery of China was achieved
- Growing number of farmers and entrepreneurs who were well-off due to the incentivization of economic production
- However from Mao's perspective, these policies and outcomes strayed away from the Communist/Socialist path

Precursor to Cultural Revolution

- Mao was separated from government apparatus since his resignation as Head Of State though he still retained a considerable influence as Party leader
- However, in order to reverse the policies of Liu and Deng, he needed to gain access to government apparatus

Precursor to Cultural Revolution

- In order to reclaim power and reverse the effects of Liu and Deng's policies, Mao launched the Cultural Revolution
- Polemic between CR
 - Ideological reasons to bring China back to Communist Path OR
 - Mao's own personal political agenda to regain power

Reclaiming Power During CR

- Since the bureaucracy was not accessible to Mao, Mao decided to do away with the bureaucracy
- Mao's weapon to achieve this aim:
 - The disgruntled and impressionable youths
 - These youths, indoctrinated since 1950s, would be empowered to bring about revolution as members of the Red Guards

Reclaiming Power During CR

- Turning the Red Guards against the government and Communist Party
- Mao Zedong was under attack by the “capitalist roaders”
- Red Guards to defend Mao and Communism by overthrowing the capitalist roaders
- “It’s Right To Rebel”

Revolution Of Cultural Values

- Mao impressed upon the youths that China would not move towards the next stage of Communism if old ideas and old cultural values still persisted within society
- Hence, by empowering the youths to rebel, not only did Mao remove obstacles to his power but also turned the centuries old traditional value system in China upside down

Red Guards

- As much as constant indoctrination caused many youths to join the Red Guards, there were also the following factors
 - Peer pressure
 - The feeling of sudden empowerment to rebel against figures of authority
 - Marginalization felt by youths who were not well-connected or well-to-do in society

Impact of Cultural Revolution

- Removal of Liu, Deng and other party officials aligned to them and the ascension of Jiang Qing's Gang Of Four to power
- Red Guards took control of cities but eventually there was near anarchy in the PRC due to battles for power among different factions of Red Guards

Impact of Cultural Revolution

- Since his objectives were met, and the need to restore normalcy in China, Mao disbanded the Red Guards by
 - Bringing in the army to discipline the Red Guards
 - Sending the Red Guards to the countryside so that they could learn how to make revolution from the peasants

Impact of Cultural Revolution

- Because schools and universities were closed during the early years of the Cultural Revolution in order to allow youths to make revolution, this created a “lost generation” which were deprived of education and whose value system were turned topsy-turvy