

Joshua Ong 6.11

‘Successful economic and social policies were essential for the party leader’s maintenance of power.’ With reference to Mao, to what extent do you agree with this statement?

Mao Zedong ruled China from 1949 to 1976. He sought to maintain his power through firstly, state repression, secondly, mass mobilisation, and thirdly, economic and social policies that were successful at both appealing to the people and exerting Mao’s and his CCP’s control over them. While successful economic and social policies did contribute to Mao’s maintenance of power, it was not the most essential factor. This was because there were significant failures in economic policies, such as the Great Leap Forward, and social policies affecting women received opposition from some sectors of society. The most essential factor was state repression, since it was a reliable way for Mao-why do you say that Joshua? Justify your stand. Despite repression there have been continued expression of opposition from different segments. For me, I feel that once people’s needs are largely satisfied due to the economic and social policies, even repression govt becomes justified and what Mao’s policies did for the people after decades of injustice or negligence they faced was key in maintaining his power to exert his control over the population, although he preferred the more volatile method of mass mobilisation.

State repression was one method which Mao used to maintain his power. A surveillance state was established in China. There was a central investigation department within the CCP from 1949 and a military wing of the PLA. During the Cultural Revolution, the ‘Central Case Examination Group’ was also set up. From 1951, official residence permits were needed for those over 15 years old and a special government department was created to draw up a dangan, or dossier, on every suspect Chinese person. These state security apparatuses and surveillance measures meant that any potential opposition was keenly followed by the state, and suppressed before such opposition could gain traction to significantly threaten the power of the CCP and Mao.-refer to notes on how ordinary people too became informers and thus state surveillance at another level

The legal system was also involved in state repression. Even though under the state constitution of 1954, there was equality before the law, this was not practised until after Mao’s death. During the Maoist era, party committees replaced courts and, despite some effort to make the legal system work between 1954 and 1957, the belief that different standards should be applied to class enemies destroyed any real sense of justice. After the 1957 anti-rightist campaign, many judicial functions were passed to local cadres and by the 1960s the court system existed only for public ‘show trials’ during the Cultural Revolution-so? What happened during this trials or during CR to explain how repression exactly maintained Mao’s and CCP’s control over the society?. All these developments represented the increasing control of the party over the judicial system, allowing the party to use it to show partially against its opponents. Opposition could be weeded out by the legal system before they became a threat to the power of Mao and the CCP.

There was **the use of labour camps** or laogai or 're-education through labour' in suppressing opposition to the state. These camps appropriated those seen as opponents of the state as prisoners and they were used as slave labour for back-breaking projects. Many of the worst camps were deliberately built in the most inhospitable regions, unbearably cold in winter and correspondingly hot in summer. Food rations were dependent on confessions. Refusal could lead to solitary confinement, beatings and sleep deprivation. As a result, many prisoners died from hunger, ill-treatment or suicide. The extent of this laogai system was great. On average, there were 10 million prisoners per year held at the camps under Mao and, by 1976, there were more than 10,000 labour camps spread across China. These camps also helped to terrify others into obedience. If a prisoner was executed, the family could be sent the bullet and a bill for the cost. Even released prisoners faced a constant threat of re-arrest and families of those imprisoned were deemed guilty by association and shunned by her neighbours. This extensive laogai system thus created fear in the people that prevented them from opposing the state, while generating deep **social pressures that encouraged conformity**. It was in this way that the power of the CCP and Mao behind the state was protected through the labour camps.

Repression was not limited to outside the party, but within too. Party members that criticised Mao's policies could be purged. By 1959, it was clear that Mao's economic policies under the Great Leap Forward, which intended to develop China's industry at break-neck speed, had failed. In July, the Defence Minister Peng Dehuai had told Mao at the Lushan Conference that the Great Leap was a grave mistake, criticising his policies and decisions. As a result, he was removed from the Politburo decision-making body and from his position as Defence Minister. **This was a signal from Mao to other party members that any independent thought that went against Mao's views would be repressed.** When party leaders such as President Liu Shaoqi and party general secretary Deng Xiaoping had initiated a loosening of the state control of the economy to help it recover after the failures of the Great Leap, Mao saw this as a return to capitalism and was worried. The removal of the Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev from power in 1959 had also alerted Mao to the possibility of being removed from power himself. The growing power of the pragmatic leaders like Liu and Deng after Mao's failure in the Great Leap thus alarmed Mao further. Thus, the Cultural Revolution was initiated in 1966 partly as an effort to remove party leaders that were threatening Mao's power. Both Liu and Deng were purged from the party. Hence, Mao initiated repression within the Party to ensure there were no challenges to his personal power within the Party and within China.

Through all these means, repression was achieved directly by the state or directly by Mao in order to maintain the power of the Party and Mao. However, **state repression was not the most important factor in Mao's maintenance of power.** please check this Joshua, seems to contradict with your thesis in the intro The PRC never had a highly centralised security apparatus like the KGB in the Soviet Union. This was partly because of Mao's reliance on mass campaigns, and his expectation that individuals would expose those whose

background or behaviour appeared at variance with the expectations of the regime. Mao believed that, given correct guidance, the people could police each other, thus avoiding the need for much state repression to maintain his power.

Joshua, look at the parts which I have highlighted in yellow. While all the points/para above is fine...they are very flat..they are very narrative/ feel like just regurgitation of facts – try to bring in info on how society was exactly affected, number of people and how they were affected by repression, how would you bring in concept of single-party state into the discussion? – consider all these

Thus, mass mobilisation was important in Mao's maintenance of power. Mass organisations were set up by the party in the years following the establishment of the People's Republic. These mass organisations were semi-governmental bodies of gigantic size, which drew their members from diverse sectors of society. There was the All-China Federation of Democratic Youth with a membership of 18 million, the All-China Federation of Trade Unions with a membership of 10.2 million and the All-China Democratic Women's Federation with a membership of 76 million, just to name a few. Even children were not forgotten. The Young Pioneers was set up for children between the ages of 9 to 14 and this claimed a membership of 8 million. Through these organisations, the government indoctrinated the people and organised them for demonstrations, parades and drives. Thus, mass mobilisation through the introduction of mass organisations became a way for the government to enforce conformity by directing the people's energies to certain activities. This created social pressures that prevented people from opposing the CCP and Mao.

The mass campaigns that these organisations were involved in also **targeted** potential opposition, but instead of using the state apparatuses, **the power of the masses would be utilised.** For example, the three antis campaign of 1951 was a campaign against corruption, waste and obstruction, and was directed against both communists and non-communists. Managers, state officials, police and cadres were obliged to take part in struggle sessions. Struggle sessions involved individuals being required to practise self-criticism while inviting the criticisms of others towards these individuals, and was an effort by the people. The sessions were organised daily or weekly by work units, neighbourhood and street committees. There were also larger mass meetings, of which there were no fewer than 3000 in Shanghai in February 1952, where individuals admitted of crimes or publicly denounced colleagues and neighbours. These struggle **sessions put in practise Mao's belief in the ability of the masses to police** themselves and suppress opposition to the CCP and Mao.

The Cultural Revolution represented a climax in Mao's use of mass mobilisation to secure his power. In it, Mao mobilised bands of radical students, or Red Guards, who were bands of radical students, and ordered them to remove 'bad elements' among the party, teachers, intellectuals and former bourgeoisie. Terrifying assaults were permitted and the police were instructed not to intervene. Public denunciations, struggle sessions and mass mobilisation were practised in their most extreme form. Partly because of such mass mobilisation, CCP officials, who were attacked

frequently during the revolution, were subjected to a replacement rate of about 60% and up to 40,000 died during the revolution itself. Lee Feignon pointed out that the revolution reduced the bureaucracy to one-sixth of its former size. Through the revolution, Mao was able to maintain his power through the support of the masses why do you think he had this support?, who attacked potential opposition severely and created fear that prevented opposition to Mao, even within the party.

Chang and Halliday have pointed to the uniqueness of Mao's regime in its use of mass mobilisation to maintain power. While other dictators carried out purges through an elite secret police force, which removed victims silently to prisons, camps or death, Mao enforced ritualised public humiliation. However, while mass mobilisation was used more extensively than state repression in the maintenance of power of Mao, mass mobilisation could be an unreliable and unwieldy means of securing power. For example, the revolutionary atmosphere of the Cultural Revolution encouraged people to press for more autonomy from the government. On 5 February 1967, the Shanghai People's Commune was created, which raised the possibility of a new form of governance. The commune wanted to direct election of officials, the right to recall them and to ensure that the leaders were paid no more than the workers – a more democratic form of governance where workers would govern themselves. This created an autonomous self-governing unit that could have set the pattern for regional autonomy, which would have in turn threatened Mao's and the CCP's ability to control China. Thus, Mao told the leader of the commune, Zhang Chunqiao, to transform the commune into a revolutionary committee which would be a three-way alliance between representatives of the masses, the army and the party. The implementation of such a committee reduced the autonomy of the workers and allowed Mao's control to be reasserted through the party and army apparatuses. This is an example of how state control compensated for the shortcomings of mass mobilisation in helping to maintain his power-excellent!, and so despite being less extensive, is still important. These were the political methods by which Mao maintained his power, but economic and social policies and their successes in appealing to the people and controlling them also contributed to Mao's maintenance of power.

Hence, the success of economic and social policies of the CCP were important to Mao's maintenance of power because..... Economic and social policies were used by the CCP to both appeal to and control the Chinese people. For example, the Chinese peasants were appealed to and controlled through the implementation of land reform. In June 1950, the Agrarian Reform Law was implemented, which aimed to confiscate land from the landlords and redistribute it to the landless peasants. Deep resentment against the landlords, under the legitimacy of such a law, escalated into violence against the landlords. Party cadres stirred up hostility in 'speak bitterness' campaigns, with the slogan, 'Dig the bitter roots, vomit the bitter waters'. Such campaigns encouraged the peasants to turn on their landlords – executing them on the spot or subjecting them to a 'trial', following which they lost their civil rights, land, animals and household goods, which were distributed among the poor peasants of the area. In the anger stoked during the whole process, up to 2 million people were killed, including victimised members of landlords' families. Such

violence shows that the CCP, by implementing land reform, was effectively addressing the grievances of the poor peasant population against the landlord system, thus appealing to such a population. Yeah, vgd! In addition, land reform also cemented CCP control of the country at the village level, as the landlord class, formerly the dominant elites and the backbone of the traditional society was destroyed-excellent. This ruling class was replaced by CCP control. Hence, land reform by the CCP helped to maintain the power of CCP and Mao since it appealed to a majority of the peasant population while tightening the Party's control over the peasantry and its activities.

The First Five-Year Plan, from 1953 to 1957, also successfully appealed to the people and tightened the party's control over the people. Under this economic plan, industry expanded. Vast new industrial schemes were planned for areas in the north-east and north-west. Iron and steel mills were set up in former small market towns, such as Lanzhou and Baotou. Roads and railways were built, including a spectacular new rail link from Lanzhou across the Gobi Desert to Urumqi, where oil, coal, iron ore and other minerals were found. In the north-east, the factories and mines formerly operated by the Japanese were developed, creating more industrial expansion. Such industrial expansion was shown through the official statistics, with heavy industry output nearly trebled and light industry rising 70% during this First Five-Year Plan. Overall targets were exceeded by 20%. These figures cannot necessarily be trusted, since they may have been massaged by CCP officials, industrial managers, foremen and workers anxious to be seen as fulfilling their targets, but for the first time China came to produce its own cars, tractors, aeroplanes, cargo ships, machine tools and penicillin. Such peaceful economic growth aroused optimism within the Chinese people, since previously China had been devastated by wars as well as inefficient Qing and KMT governments which failed in addressing their needs for decades. The prospect of a better life under the economic growth induced by the First Five-Year Plan thus appealed to people. At the same time, through the introduction of the nationalisation of private businesses and industries, the CCP exerted a greater control over the people through a greater control over the economy. Both these trends ensured that through the First Five-Year Plan, the CCP's and Mao's power would be maintained.

However, economic policies were not always successful being appealing to the people to maintain Mao's power. For example, the crash collectivisation and rapid industrialisation under the Great Leap Forward from 1958, meant to modernise all aspects of China's production capacity, catch up with the West in economic production in 15 years, and develop a larger proletariat base in China, failed disastrously. Due to misguided government policies and the occurrence of droughts, there was famine on a gigantic scale – the Great Chinese Famine from 1959 to 1962. According to Jonathan Spence, the famine claimed 20 million lives or more from 1959 to 1962. This large-scale devastation by the economic policies would certainly not have made CCP rule appetising to the people.

In fact, Mao's power was on the wane after the failure of the Great Leap, even within the party. Mao was sidelined as more pragmatic leaders such as Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping instituted 'cooling down' policies that reversed the course of the

Great Leap. They reduced collectivisation by reducing communes to one-third of the original size. They gave back private land to some farmers, and by January 1962, 20% of arable land was being farmed individually. Industrial workers mobilised during the Great Leap were returned to working on farms. The relative success of such policies in allowing the economy to recover, since by 1965 agricultural production had returned to pre-Great Leap levels, would have placated the people. However, while the CCP did implement policies that corrected the failures of earlier policies, such successful policies were a threat to Mao himself within the party. This was why the Cultural Revolution was launched: to attack his party rivals such as Liu and Deng that had risen in power due to their better policies. Hence, in some cases successful economic policies only served to threaten Mao's power. He had to turn to mass mobilisation to shore up his power during the Cultural Revolution since the party had shown itself to be disapproving of his policies. -very good links to other methods

Meanwhile, the social policies of the CCP, which improved the status and lives of women, contributed to Mao's maintenance of power. Traditionally, women had been expected to stay at home and to obey their menfolk while practices of concubinage, foot binding and arranged marriages had given women a second-class status. The CCP, which had advocated women's equality, with Mao famously proclaiming that "Women hold up half the sky", tried to change these traditional ways. The 1950 Marriage Law forbade arranged marriages and child betrothals, the payment of dowries and concubinage. Official registration of marriage was introduced and new laws made divorce permissible by mutual consent or on the complaint of either husband or wife. Those who had been subjected to an arranged marriage were allowed to petition for divorce. Women were also given greater economic opportunities. Some were granted land in their own name in the redistributions that followed the campaign against the landlords. The number of women in work increased from 8% to 32%. The new social and economic freedoms for women appealed to the female population in China, which had been traditionally subjugated in a patriarchal society, encouraging their support for Mao's regime. In this way, women's policies of the CCP helped Mao to maintain power.

However, by and large China remained a patriarchal society. The CCP faced resistance from the people with regards to the Marriage Law. Some husbands felt they had the most to lose, as many men had paid money to their bride's family at the time of marriage and their wives were thus a financial investment as well as mothers for their children and partners in fieldwork. A poor man could have seen the new law as a loss from which he could never recover. Meanwhile, mothers-in-law had enjoyed power over their daughters-in-law and the new law threatened to upset this long-standing relationship. Finally, CCP cadres found the law troublesome: village leaders feared alienating their neighbours if they pursued implementation of the new regulations too vigorously. Along with resistance from significant groups within Chinese society, the laws that promoted CCP equality also failed to address the double burden that women faced of being both mothers and workers. Hence, while women's policies of the CCP improved the status and opportunities that women had over decades/centuries, which would have built a considerable support base among

women for Mao and the CCP, it was quite unpopular with many sectors of society in China. Thus, women's policies did not contribute much to Mao's appeal to the people and thus did not make a significant impact on helping to maintain his power.

So which is the consensus building argument, in line with your thesis statement in the intro, as to which method/s is/are essential since you have very well provided two sided for every method? I feel like your essay is still hanging in the air Joshua. It does not demonstrate a sophisticated overall conclusion- attempt it.. you can do it...tie up the whole essay

Overall, Mao sought to maintain his power through firstly, state repression, secondly, mass mobilisation, and thirdly, economic and social policies that were successful at both appealing to the people and exerting Mao's and his CCP's control over them. While successful economic and social policies did contribute to Mao's maintenance of power, it was not the most essential factor. This was because there were significant failures in economic policies, such as the Great Leap Forward, and social policies affecting women received opposition from some sectors of society. The most essential factor was state repression, since it was a reliable way for Mao to exert his control over the population, although he preferred the more volatile method of mass mobilisation.