

## History Higher Level – DBQ: Communism in Crisis

### 1. Power struggle following the death of Mao (Hua Guofeng, Deng Xiaoping and the Gang of Four)

#### The Gang of Four

- Consisted of Jiang Qing and her male counterparts
- The core of the Cultural Revolutionary Group and Mao's political tool when he was forced to the second line after the Great Leap Forward
- Disliked by the public for their hypocritical lifestyles and excessive behavior
- Persecuted 750,000 and killed 35,000 during the Cultural Revolution (ostensibly to preserve Communist ideology by purging capitalist and traditionalist elements)
- Made plans to assassinate key figures
- Was always protected by Mao but was left in the open after his death
- Arrested and charged with almost every political crime possible under Hua Guofeng's orders
- Controlled only the militia which lacked organization and firepower, and their manipulation of the state media and cultural scene alienated them

**Politically defeated due to: lack of party and mass support, loss of Mao's protection, and the lack of effective political weapons.**

#### Hua Guofeng

- Named as Mao's successor
- Eliminated the Gang of Four
- "Two Whatevers" policy: to hold onto Maoist thought
- Represented Mao in a time where the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution had wrecked the country and angered the masses
- Mao's endorsement worked against him
- Was politically weaker than Deng
- Ten-Year economic plan had failed (budget deficit and inflation)

**Politically defeated due to: lack of political acumen, failure of the Ten-Year Plan, and his association with Mao.**

#### Deng Xiaoping

- Rehabilitated and accepted after being purged and mistreated during the Cultural Revolution
- Held extensive leadership portfolios through past positions, was pivotal in mitigating the Great Leap Forward and in Chinese foreign affairs under Zhou Enlai
- Four Modernizations were successful: growth of 11.5% by 1975
- Pragmatism was attractive to the masses especially after Maoism

- Never attacked the CCP and Mao: used the “70% good, 30% bad” rhetoric to argue for a change in direction

**Politically victorious due to: Gang of Four’s fall and its association with Hua, his political acumen, his policy of pragmatism, and foreign affairs expertise.**

## 2. Deng Xiaoping's Economic Policies (The Four Modernizations)

### Context:

- Failure of the Great Leap Forward placed China in a 6.5 billion Yuan deficit
- 30% of state enterprises were operating at a loss by 1980
- Institution of the **Open Door Policy** – to open China's economy to the outside world, citing Opium Wars and dangers of autarky
- **Four Modernizations** instituted after failure of Hua's Ten-Year plans: **agriculture, science and technology, industry, and defence.**

**Thesis statement: Deng's policies were successful apart from Chinese resistance, corruption and rapid population growth**

### A. Agriculture

- **Mao:** Great Leap Forward led to 20 years of poor grain and cotton production (annual growth at an average of 2-2.6%), leaving China with no choice but to import huge amounts to feed the population
- **Deng:** instituted a "household responsibility system", with 98% coming under this by 1983
- The land remained public but each household received a plot of land that they could cultivate, after which they could either keep or sell in the free market the excess crops after collection
- **Success:** rice and wheat yields rose by 50% over the commune system by 1987—China also achieved a trade surplus of \$4 billion between 1980 and 1984
- **Limitations:** the communist ideology meant beyond a certain point incentive or hard work was meaningless. Decline in collectivization led to deferred maintenance of mechanical systems and greater use of low-grade fertilizers. Low prices also meant low profit margins.
- **Perennial problems:** illiteracy, rural to urban migration, natural disasters, and a population explosion, which was met with the one child policy.

### B. Science and Technology

- **Mao:** adopted the Soviet model and relied on Soviet aid, which provided for 156 major Chinese projects. It was more bureaucratic than professional.
- **Deng:** aimed for scientists to work without political interference and emphasized practical skill instead of ideology. Chinese students were sent abroad to learn from the Western model and to apply their skills in the Special Economic Zones. **It was the largest success out of the Four Modernizations.**

### C. Industry

- **Mao:** the state provided all the factors of production and did not recognize the presence of basic economic theory. There was no incentive to perform as wages and funding were regardless of performance and quality. There was total state control and "irrational" pricing structure.

- **Deng:** changed the State-Owned Enterprises to function on material incentive—the “industrial responsibility” system was like the agricultural policy in terms of profit making. Four “Special Economic Zones” were set up in 1979 to attract foreign capital and introduced income taxation.
- **Success:** work enthusiasm increased and the SEZs started accounting for a major part of China’s growth and exports. The increased income of the SEZ workers had a multiplier effect on the rest. Chinese exports grew fivefold and FDI quadrupled.
- **Limitations:** there was resistance to the new system due to wanting to preserve an “iron rice bowl”. The SEZs also were prone to corruption and benefited the foreigners more than the locals.

#### D. Defense

- **Mao:** preferred an impractical policy of ideology and manpower over weapons—had a large standing army of 4.3 million, but poor military technology.
- **Deng:** initially did not prioritize defense, as he did not foresee conflict in the near future. Began to increase purchase of foreign arms by the 1980s as part of the Open Door Policy. The emphasis remained on developing technology and reduced the PLA strength by 1 million.
- **Success:** modernization of the army and sowed the roots for China’s emergence as a superpower

### 3. Deng Xiaoping's Political Policies (leading up to Tiananmen 1989)

#### Context:

- Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution led Deng to recognize the need to focus first on internal stability, eschewing democracy
- His rise coincided with Gorbachev's policies of glasnost and perestroika, motivating students to echo the same desires in China
- Deng was an economic progressive but a political conservative—believed in the proliferation of Western technology and expertise but adamant in preserving Chinese socialism as Western democracy would slow China down

#### Political Climate:

- The Open Door policy allowed free flow of ideas and capitalist sentiments—with economic development came the desire for political change.
- Hua Guofeng's declaration of the end of the Cultural Revolution in 1977, combined with the disbanding of the Red Guard, as well as publishing the mistakes and ignorance of economic planning on part of Mao served to demystify him as a ruler
- The 70% good and 30% bad rhetoric gave Deng a platform to further his pragmatic reforms and introduce "socialism with Chinese characteristics"

#### Political Actions

- **Abolition of the Four Big Rights:** free speech, airing of views, debates, and big character posters—instituted during the Cultural Revolution but abolished by Deng as a warning to intellectuals, forcing pro-democracy groups underground
- **Institution of the Four Cardinal Principles:** keeping to the socialist road, upholding democratic dictatorship, upholding CCP leadership, and upholding Marxism-Leninism and Mao Thought.
- **CCP Reforms:** rejection of Hua Guofeng's "two whatevers" and replaced the traditional leadership in the CCP with younger members. The CCP went through a cleansing purge and Hua was forced to resign in 1980, being replaced by liberal Hu Yaobang.
- **Combating Student Activism:** the revival of student activism and support from academics stemmed from the formation of democracy salons and the desire to increase living standards and employment. The government interpreted this as misplaced patriotism and suspected that there was a political orchestration.
- **Tiananmen, 1989:** a student demonstration was held at Tiananmen Square in 1989 to mourn the death of Hu Yaobang, a liberal. The use of violence was a result of a political struggle that persuaded Deng to use force. In the aftermath, political freedoms and the state media were muzzled.

#### 4. Brezhnev and Stagnation

##### Context:

- 1964 to 1982: Brezhnev Era succeeded de-Stalinization of Khrushchev Era
- Plagued by economic issues stemming from Khrushchev and Stalin, e.g. perennial problems such as high defense spending, inefficient industries and a weak agricultural sector
- Political issues: ossification of the CPSU and dissidence stemming from Brezhnev doctrine

##### Economy (deficit spending and imbalanced economy):

- Increased arms and developed new technologies but fall in production of consumer goods and agriculture as the money was spent on military and the space program—15% of GNP on the military by 1969, spent thrice USA's amount
- Agricultural sector was starved due to overspending on the military, as well as lack of material incentive and technology; output was only 25% of USA's, had to import food
- Lack of desire to reform into a consumer goods economy due to fear of capitalism
- Poorly integrated and coordinated, resulted in corruption
- History of falsification by managers out of fear
- Budget deficit and lack of incentive to increase productivity
- Iron rice bowl resulted in complacency

##### Political (dissidence and ossification):

- Citizens began to voice their opinions and intellectuals began to openly criticize the government
- Illegal pamphlets that criticized the government were illegally copied and distributed
- No interest from the CPSU in reforming government or party structure—average age of Politburo rose from 58 to 68 by 1978
- Submissive and apathetic party with 19 million members; Khrushchev's attempt to reform them resulted in resentment
- Formed a nomenklatura with privileged access to luxuries such as private housing at the cost of the economy
- Brezhnev doctrine emerged in 1968 following crackdown of the Prague Spring in Czechoslovakia—causing unhappiness combined with bread and butter issues such as price of meat
- 1970 riots in Poland
- 1975 Helsinki Summit's Basket 3: promoting freedom of speech and association—rise of dissidence and "Helsinki Watch Groups"

## 5. Afghan War (1979-1989)

### Context:

- Fought in Afghanistan and lasted from 1979 to 1989, resulting 1.5 million Afghan casualties
- Fought between insurgent groups (the “mujahideen”) backed by China, USA, Pakistan and other Middle Eastern nations versus the Red Army and the Afghan communist regime
- USSR shared a border with Afghanistan while the USA saw its potential as a strategic location in Central Asia hence the backing of different sides by both superpowers
- Red Army invaded Afghanistan in 1979 following the chaos of the civil war between the communist regime and the mujahideen
- Carter began Operation Cyclone in 1979 to finance the mujahideen and Reagan pursued this in line with his doctrine

### Theses:

- Soviet intervention primarily revolved around Soviet security interests rather than imperialism—détente failed because both sides wanted to seek unilateral geopolitical advantage
- Reagan’s rollback in Afghanistan was not as important as Gorbachev’s fundamental change in overall foreign policy (ending of the Brezhnev Doctrine) in undermining the Soviet Union’s position in Afghanistan and Eastern Europe

### Causes of Soviet invasion:

- **Threat of Islamic fundamentalism**—the mujahideen was fighting to preserve Islam in Afghanistan, which conflicted with communist ideals. The Soviets were worried that this would spread to Soviet Muslim Republics
- **Threat of American imperialism**—the Soviets feared that the US might take hold of Afghanistan following communist regime’s contact with the CIA
- **Weak communist regime**—Soviets felt that the current administration was unpopular which sparked the civil war in the first place

### US response:

- Misinterpreted the invasion as Soviet expansionism
- Carter Doctrine in 1980: expend all resources to defend their interests there
- Imposed economic sanctions on the USSR, e.g. grain embargo and withdrew from SALT II talks, increasing defense spending and funded the mujahideen
- Gave the mujahideen direct economic and military support (over 3.2 billion USD from 1981 to 1987 and paramilitary officers from CIA) as well as weapons (Stinger ground to air missiles) and involved Pakistan as a conduit for US aid and as a base for recruitment and reorganization, and China’s PLA which trained and supported the mujahideen with missiles, rocket launchers and machine guns—Chinese involvement was also a political disincentive for the USSR’s involvement to continue

### **Gorbachev's "New Thinking":**

- Characterized by unilateral Soviet concessions as Gorbachev wished to keep the peace, withdrawing troops from Afghanistan as a key aspect of New Thinking as he thought the US wished for the Red Army to be bogged down in Afghanistan
- The Red Army had inexperience in guerilla conflict and the difficulty of the battle terrain anyway; furthermore, Reagan only significantly increased aid from 1985, following Soviet withdrawal (Stingers were supplied only in 1986)

### **Consequences of withdrawal:**

- **Directly undermined the USSR**—questions raised regarding the ability of the Red Army to maintain regional and international interests
- **Indirectly undermined the USSR**—freed up resources for glasnost and perestroika and exacerbated the disastrous consequences of glasnost (openness)
- **Directly undermined Gorbachev**—party conservatives resented the withdrawal



## 6. Glasnost, Perestroika and “New Thinking”

### Glasnost (policy of openness):

- Wished to promote transparency and openness, revitalize the USSR and CPSU given the political problems from the Brezhnev era of ossification of the party and its opaqueness seen in the Chernobyl crisis—Gorbachev was not even made aware
- Free exchange of ideas and relaxation of censorship, which led to news of cover-ups, sloppy work and revealed the true issues with the USSR
- Released political prisoners, allowed freedom of religion and relaxed censorship
- Led to the rejection of the CPSU’s claim to having the correct line and admission of fallibility as well as anti-Soviet protests by 1987, upsetting party conservatives

### Perestroika (policy of restructuring) in politics:

- Aimed to restructure the party given its ossification, encouraging decentralization
- Separation of the party and the state led to the party losing its power over economic policy
- Held elections for a new Congress in 1989, ending the single-party state and approved political pluralism in 1990
- Created a powerful executive presidency but did not put it through national elections, ruining his own legitimacy
- Resulted in growing conservative opposition in the party, rise of civil society especially in satellite states and growing domestic unpopularity—fall in ratings from 52% to 10% and was the first USSR leader to be jeered at in public

### Perestroika (policy of restructuring) in the economy:

- Removed party control of the economy, emphasizing discipline and efficiency
- Cut subsidies for COMECON countries and caused trade to be driven by market forces
- Allowed greater industrial autonomy and gave more freedom to managers—removing the safety net of the system
- Tried to move from heavy to light industry and instituted reforms to break up the collective agricultural system but failed to increase production
- Promoted workers’ rights and the right to elect managers as well as striking in 1989
- Tried to seek FDI but foreign economic theory of profit motive rivaled Soviet theories
- Resulted in confusion as Gorbachev’s measures were halfway and did not have much clarity—also lacked the structure to introduce market capitalism in addition to undermining standard of living; basic necessities vanished from stores

- Decline in GNP by 8% and fall in national income by 10%, inflation hit 250%

**“New Thinking” and effects on East Europe:**

- **Poland and Solidarity**—roots in Lech Walesa’s leadership in 1980 in response to 100% increases in meat prices; amassed 8 million workers and backed by the Catholic Church, but was cracked down on by the Red Army. Walesa was jailed till 1982 and Solidarity would win elections in 1989 after the regime was told by Gorbachev to hand power over
- **Czechoslovakia and the Velvet Revolution**—roots in the 1970s Charter 77, calling for peaceful resistance but was a small movement; in 1989, demonstrations and protests broke out with over 38% stopping work. Communist party promised free elections in November 1989 and lost
- **Fall of the Berlin Wall**—Gorbachev advised Honecker to follow the trend of the other East European countries to reform, even telling an East German crowd that reforms were required; Honecker resigned in October and was replaced by a progressive leader that knocked down the wall in November

## 7. Poland, Czechoslovakia, and East Germany

### Poland:

- Strong sense of nationalism—anti-Russian since 18<sup>th</sup> century; Catholic church also played a major role in Polish lives, even more so when Polish Pope John Paul II was elected
- Economic stagnation—in debt by 25 billion USD by 1980, the government could not fully collectivize agriculture which was still owned by small farmers, who did not increase production hence the shortages
- 200% inflation in 1988 and debt had become 40 billion
- Solidarity formed in 1980 by Lech Walesa following a strike for lower food prices—supported by Catholic church, intellectuals, students, and workers; had 10 million members by 1981 (population was 38 million)
- Demanded for political and economic reforms but the communists only allowed the latter, suppressed in 1981 with martial law by Jaruzelski, leading to mass arrests
- Resurged in 1987 following bad economic conditions
- Communist government was supportive of Gorbachev's reforms, legalizing Solidarity and reforming after Round Table Agreements—Solidarity could compete for 35% of lower house of parliament, while upper house was decided by free elections
- Solidarity won 92/100 in upper house and 160/161 in lower house, but Jaruzelski remained president and controlled defense, interior, transportation and foreign trade
- Solidarity installed their member as a PM (Mazowiecki), Jaruzelski resigned in 1990 and Lech Walesa became president

### Czechoslovakia:

- Growing opposition due to the demand for rights in the Czech constitution, Helsinki basket 3 and UNDHR; resented the secret police and was aggravated by fall of the Berlin Wall
- Charter 77 formed in 1977 to encourage reforms based on Helsinki accord but was small and had only 243 supporters which grew to 1600 by 1987; VONS formed in 1978 to highlight unjust prosecution
- Very small base, largely students and intellectuals—many of the members were jailed, while workers avoided supporting them as the government protected their interests
- Up to 40 opposition groups emerged in 1989, Catholic church unexpectedly threw support behind opposition and working class joined the movement in late November
- Civil Forum in 1989 led by Havel united 12 groups and coordinated demonstrations of 750,000 strong
- 75% of the population were involved in the 27<sup>th</sup> November demonstration in Prague, demanding the resignation of the communist government
- Communist regime refused reforms but Husak gave up by 1987 and was replaced by Milo Jakes who also refused reforms

- Regime became split over issue of crackdown in 1989
- Entire Politburo resigned on 24<sup>th</sup> November to placate the people and abandoned its monopoly power—communist PM went to Moscow but was not supported by Gorbachev
- Non-communist government formed on 3<sup>rd</sup> December and Havel was elected as the president; free elections in 1990

#### **East Germany:**

- Unhappiness due to heavy industrialization and nuclear weapon proliferation—if war broke out Germany would be the nuclear battleground
- Honecker assumed that people were content because they had the highest living standard amongst the Warsaw Pact nations but had a lower standard of living compared to West Germany (Ostpolitik)
- Economy was deteriorating after 1987 due to serious foreign debt and slowing of growth
- East Germans became very discontented after travels to West Germany and mass media showing their disparity, desired reunification
- Resented repression from the Stasi and Honecker
- Growing protest movement in late 1987, supported by the Lutheran church but remained small as the Stasi were effective
- Church began to be more active; East Germans on holiday in Hungary demanded to leave for West Germany
- Rise of opposition groups like New Forum in 1989 organized demonstrations in East German cities and had a wide base of support, even communist youths
- 1989—demonstrations in Leipzig and Dresden coordinated by the church, 500,000 strong demonstration in the state, demanding recognition of opposition groups, free elections and freedom of travel
- Honecker wanted repression but Gorbachev refused support
- Honecker was replaced by the progressive Krenz
- Honecker's successor Krenz eased travel restrictions but lack of clarity led to East Berliners overwhelming the Wall—gates were eventually opened by guards due to confusion
- Government resigned 7<sup>th</sup> November and Krenz was replaced by Hans Modrow
- 1990—free elections which the Christian Democratic Union won 41%, Modrow replaced by a coalition government
- Gorbachev was initially opposed but accepted it in 1990, Four-Plus-Two Treaty reunited the two Germanys and it entered NATO