

4

Deng Xiaoping and His Successors (1976 to the Present)

BRUCE GILLEY



The period of Chinese political history since 1976 represents China's return to its long quest for wealth and power.¹ In this period of reform, China has picked up the pieces from the disastrous consequences of the Mao era and resumed a trajectory of development that had been abandoned in the early-1950s. China remains an authoritarian regime, but it has become a more institutionalized and regularized one, and one that no longer deserves the label "totalitarian." The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) remains committed to the preservation of its power, but it has abandoned the aim of totally controlling and transforming Chinese society.

Yet it is easy to draw too sharp a distinction between the reform era and the pre-reform era. Many things have changed in the reform era, but many others have not. China's official ideology retains its references to Mao Zedong Thought, and Mao's portrait remains ubiquitous in the country—on the currency, in trinket shops, and most notably over Tiananmen Square in Beijing, the large space that dominates the seat of government. Party leadership remains the central and unchallengeable principle of political life in the PRC. And, despite extensive privatization, the party continues to view state ownership of strategic sectors of the economy—airlines, banks, energy suppliers, and even automobiles—as essential. Revolutionary mass mobilization campaigns continue to be practiced—although in a more managed manner than under Mao—by the CCP periodically to achieve policy objectives or enforce ideological compliance.²

Beyond these longitudinal comparisons with China's own recent history, two sets of cross-country comparisons are useful for understanding China's era of "reform and opening" (*gaige kaifang*) that began under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping and

continued with his successors. The first is comparison with rapid industrialization in other Asian countries. Japan's Meiji-era (1868–1912) period of “wealthy country and strong arms” (*fukoku-kyōhei*) is perhaps the earliest example of this. An even more relevant parallel can be found with the post-1949 Republic of China regime on Taiwan under the Nationalist Party (see chap. 19). There, an authoritarian state was transformed through economic liberalization and rapid growth, which eventually resulted in a political opening for democracy in the 1980s. A similar economic and political transformation occurred in South Korea. From the perspective of culture, East Asian economic success has been deeply rooted in the work ethic associated with the region's entrepreneurial spirit. What was missing on the Chinese mainland before the reform era was an efficient, stable, and market-friendly government to unleash that spirit. There is today a great debate on how well China's experience fits with the developmental trajectories of other East Asian states, including the links between modernization and democratization in Taiwan and Korea.³

The second comparative perspective is with other communist and postcommunist states. In Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, communist party-states began experimenting with decentralization, market prices, and expanded foreign trade in the 1950s and 1960s in response to the failures of highly centralized Stalinist economic policy. But those changes did not save the regimes from collapse in the late 1980s and early 1990s, after the threat of Soviet intervention against anti-party movements was lifted. In some places, such as Central Asia and Russia, authoritarianism resurfaced after the collapse of communism, often with strong nationalist dimensions. From the perspective of comparative communism, China is an important case in which a communist party has successfully carried out and adapted to market reforms.⁴ This success has, in turn, been a crucial factor in the survival of communist rule in the PRC at a time when democracy has spread throughout most other parts of the world.

Thus, China's reform era, fascinating in its own terms, can be even more richly studied as a case of comparative East Asian development and comparative communist politics. These comparative perspectives can be very helpful to understanding the dramatic divergence between contemporary China's rapid and radical economic transition and its less radical political transition, which lies at the heart of many of the most important challenges that the PRC faces today.

THE ORIGINS OF THE REFORM ERA

At the time of Mao's death in September 1976, the damaging effects of his rule were palpable in nearly every aspect of life in China. Society was so weakened and fractured by the Chairman's repeated campaigns that the party-state remained de facto totalitarian in spite of lessened repression in the early 1970s. Government institutions had been damaged or suspended by the Cultural Revolution. For example, the **National People's Congress**, China's parliament, had not met in full session since 1964. Economic growth had barely kept pace with population growth for much of the Mao era, despite a brief recovery in the early 1960s. An estimated 74 percent of China's population lived in poverty in 1976. Beijing's streets were nearly as empty of traffic as those of modern-day Pyongyang, North Korea's capital.

The arrest of the Gang of Four orchestrated by Mao's immediate successor as the CCP chairman, Hua Guofeng, and his political allies in October 1976 made the reform era possible by removing from power the radical leaders who advocated a strict adherence to Maoist policies. In the two years between then and the landmark meeting of the party leadership in December 1978 (the **Third Plenum**) when Deng Xiaoping's newly consolidated power was clearly on display and the first road map of economic reform was laid out, there were, in retrospect, many signs of things to come.

In 1977–1978, local cadres in some of China's poorest regions illegally divided the communal land among private households and contracted with them for output quotas to be turned over to the collective, letting them keep or even sell anything produced above the quota. These practices were condoned by the provincial leadership and tolerated by the central authorities, even though decollectivization wouldn't become official policy until the early 1980s.⁵

There were also some telling signs of liberalization in culture and education in 1977. A ban on the “bourgeois” works of Beethoven was lifted to mark the 150th anniversary of the composer's death, allowing the Central Symphony Orchestra to perform his works for the first time since 1959. University entrance examinations were held for the first time since 1965. The first example of a genre of writing that would come to be known as “wound literature,” which dealt with the sufferings under Mao, appeared in the official periodical *People's Literature*. The Yugoslavian president and communist party leader Josip Tito visited Beijing in a sign of the early post-Mao leadership's interest in Tito's decentralized type of “market socialism,” which had led Yugoslavia to be excommunicated by the world communist camp by Moscow in 1948 and Tito to be denounced by Beijing as a traitor to Marxism-Leninism. Shortly after Tito's visit, the influential *Guangming Daily* newspaper ran an editorial arguing that workers should be paid bonuses for higher output or better work, while a meeting of provincial agriculture leaders made similar arguments for rural labor.

The key event that had profound and lasting consequences for China was the political resurrection of Deng Xiaoping in 1977 (see Table 4.1), who had been purged the previous spring by Mao for his alleged role in the April 1976 “Tiananmen Incident” (see chap. 3). Deng resumed his posts as PRC vice premier and CCP vice chair as a part of a deal brokered between the party's two ideological factions, the “whateverists” who were loyal to “whatever policy decisions” Mao made and “whatever instructions” he gave, and the “pragmatists,” who argued that “practice is the sole criterion of truth” when formulating policies.⁶

Party chairman Hua Guofeng, as Mao's chosen successor, was affiliated with the **whateverist faction**, although he tended to emphasize the more moderate form of Maoism. Deng's return to power gave the **pragmatist faction**, led by the Long March veteran and senior economic planner Chen Yun, the chance to press its case without fear of retribution, as Deng was known to sympathize with that group. Throughout 1978, the two factions engaged in arcane debates about topics such as rural labor management and commune accounting policies. While both sides agreed with Hua Guofeng's suggestion to make economic development rather than class struggle the primary task of the party, they differed on how to go about it. Borrowing from the experiences of reform communism in Eastern Europe, Chen Yun's faction worked hard to discredit the blind adherence to Mao's Stalinist economic policies. Drawing

TABLE 4.1 Top Leaders of China Since 1976

Name (Birth–Death)	Key Titles and Dates	Comments
Hua Guofeng (1921–2008)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCP Chairman (1976–1981) • PRC Premier (1976–1980) • Central Military Commission Chairman (1976–1981) 	Mao's designated successor, Hua was instrumental in the arrest of the Gang of Four, unintentionally paving the way for the rise of reformers led by Deng Xiaoping. Generally supportive of economic reforms in 1977–1978, he was pushed aside by Deng and Chen Yun and was removed from key posts in 1980–1981. Out of respect for Mao, Hua was still given a seat on the CCP's Central Committee until 2002. See Table 3.1 in chap.3 of this book.
Deng Xiaoping (1904–1997)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCP Vice Chairman (1977–1982) • PRC Vice Premier (1977–1980) • Central Military Commission Chairman (1981–1989) 	Long March veteran who overthrew the weak Hua Guofeng and launched China's reform movement. "Core" of the "Second Generation" (after Mao). Deng is widely revered in China for his role in steering economic reforms, but his legacy is clouded by his role in ordering the 1989 Tiananmen Massacre. See Table 3.1, in chap.3 of this book.
Chen Yun (1905–1995)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCP Vice-Chairman (1956–1966, 1978–1982) • PRC Vice-Premier (1949–1966, 1979–1980) 	Veteran revolutionary who became one of China's leading economic planners after 1949, though in and out of favor with Mao. Re-emerged as a key leader in late 1978 with a major influence on economic policy, initially supporting reform but increasingly cautious and conservative from the mid-1980s. See Table. 3.1 in chap.3 of this book.
Hu Yaobang (1915–1989)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCP Chairman (1981–1982) • CCP General Secretary (1982–1987) 	Protégé of Deng Xiaoping. Played a key role in rehabilitating Cultural Revolution victims, promoting political reforms, and arguing for liberal policies in Tibet. Demoted by Deng Xiaoping in 1987 for soft-time on democracy protests. His death sparked the 1989 Tiananmen Square movement. Officially rehabilitated in 2005.
Zhao Ziyang (1919–2005)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PRC Premier (1980–1987) • CCP General Secretary (1987–1989) 	Protégé of Deng Xiaoping. Pioneer of market-oriented economic reforms and proponent of democratizing political reforms. Purged after the Beijing Massacre in June 1989, Zhao became even more pro-democratic in his long period under house arrest.
Jiang Zemin (b. 1926)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCP General Secretary (1989–2002) • PRC President (1993–2003) • Central Military Commission Chairman (1989–2004) 	Jiang oversaw China's recovery from Tiananmen by promoting economic reforms and rebuilding ties to the United States. "Core" of the "Third Generation," Jiang was the first PRC leader to step down voluntarily and peacefully when he handed over power to Hu Jintao in 2002.
Hu Jintao (b. 1942)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCP General Secretary (2002–2012) • PRC President (2003–2013) • Central Military Commission Chairman (2004–2012) 	Hu sought to address issues of social justice, redistribution, and welfare. But without major political reforms, those efforts faced stiff opposition. "Core" of the "Fourth Generation," Hu displayed little personal charisma.
Xi Jinping (b. 1953)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CCP General Secretary (2012–) • PRC President (2013–) • Central Military Commission Chairman (2012–) 	When Xi, the "core" of the "Fifth Generation" of CCP leaders came to power in 2012–2013, he was seen as an avid economic reformer and competent administrator who would overcome the sclerosis of China's governance system. But he has taken steps to both recentralize the Chinese economy and consolidate his own personal power at the expense of the norms of collective leadership that has prevailed in PRC elite politics for decades. He has also presided over a more assertive foreign policy in pursuit of China's great power ambitions.

upon a thirty-year repertoire of policies, ideological concepts, and institutions that had been used to limit the ravages of Mao, Chen effectively isolated and discredited the whateverists' hopes of continuing even a more moderate version of Mao's economic policies. It was Chen who revived the Sichuanese adage first used by Deng to justify modest market reforms in rural areas in 1962 that got him into political trouble with Mao: "It doesn't matter whether a cat is black or white as long as it catches mice," clearly implying that economic policies should be judged only on whether they increased production, not on whether they conformed to some abstract ideological litmus test.

At a month-long CCP Central Work Meeting in November–December 1978, Chen warned that "commune party secretaries will lead the peasants into the cities demanding food" if the party did not reform rural policies to boost production. Deng, who missed the opening of the conference while on a state visit to Southeast Asia, returned to find that a consensus had developed between the pragmatists and the whateverists on the need for management reform, international opening, and abiding by "objective" (meaning market-based) economic laws.

The Third Plenum of the CCP Central Committee in December was "a final turning point" that "allowed a fundamental departure from the economic and other policies of the Cultural Revolution."⁷ The emphasis on economic development was reiterated, while rural communes were given greater autonomy and the right to experiment with incentive pay. Political institutions were to be rebuilt. Mass movements were to be abandoned. Many prominent victims of Maoism were to be rehabilitated, and the April 1976 "Tiananmen Incident" was declared patriotic rather than counterrevolutionary.

The pragmatists were helped by an eruption in late 1978 of political posters along a 200-meter stretch of wall on Chang'an Boulevard, west of Tiananmen Square in Beijing, which came to be known as **Democracy Wall**, where the mistakes of Mao and the dangers of the "whateverist" faction were widely debated by Chinese citizens. Once the posters started criticizing Deng and questioning his commitment to political reform, he ordered the suppression of Democracy Wall in early 1979 and the arrest of many of the activists. One of the most articulate activists, Wei Jingsheng, who had written an essay titled "The Fifth Modernization" that called for democracy to be added to the officially proclaimed "Four Modernizations" in agriculture, industry, science and technology, and national defense,⁸ was imprisoned for eighteen years before being allowed to go to the United States for medical treatment in 1997.

What ultimately tipped the balance in favor of reform was Chen Yun's effective critique in 1979 of Hua Guofeng's overly ambitious ten-year plan (1976–1985) of economic modernization, which already showed signs in 1978–1979 of being a repeat of the Great Leap mentality of setting unreasonably high production targets. Under pressure to produce more oil, for instance, a newly bought Japanese oil rig sank while being hastily towed into position in China's Bohai sea in November 1979 with a loss of seventy-two lives. Chen's counterproposal for "readjustment, reform, correction, and improvement" of the economy had sounded a decisively cautious and pragmatic tone.

After this, Hua was gradually eased out of power, first being removed from the position of PRC premier in 1980 and then as party chairman in 1981. Out of respect for Mao's legacy, Hua—now referred to simply as “Comrade Hua” rather than as “wise leader Chairman Hua”—retained a seat on the Central Committee until 2002. After all, Hua had supported the arrest of the Gang of Four and endorsed the shift to economic development—aspects of his life officially recognized when he died in 2008. With his removal, the balance of power in the top party organizations came to rest firmly in the hands of Deng Xiaoping, Chen Yun, and others strongly committed to abandoning Maoist economics.⁹

THE REFORM ERA BEGINS

Conventional views that China reformed its economy first and its political system second are mistaken. Indeed, in many ways political changes preceded and were the necessary condition for important economic ones. The party's repudiation of “class struggle” as its primary objective in late 1978 opened the door for many important political changes. During the 1980s, nearly five million people wrongfully accused of political mistakes and persecuted since the founding of the PRC, including 1.6 million intellectuals, were exonerated. A law passed in 1979 expanded the direct popular election of people's congress delegates from the **township** to the **county** level. Voting was reinstated within the party, and cadres were allowed to see the text of policies before being asked to approve them. Village government also became more accountable with the passage in 1987 of a law allowing villages to elect their own leaders, who would enjoy wide autonomy in village affairs. Within a decade, most of the country's nearly one million villages would elect their own leaders (see chap. 9). The term “political reform” was formally introduced into the modern lexicon of the PRC in a speech given by Deng in 1980. Deng slammed “bureaucracy, over-concentration of power, patriarchal methods, life tenure in leading posts, and privileges of various kinds” within the party-state leadership.¹⁰

The repudiation of the Maoist era (see chap 3) was made most clear with the passage in 1981 of a resolution on the mistakes made by Mao and the party since the leftward turn of 1957—a kinder but similar rebuke to Khrushchev's denunciation of Stalin in 1956. It accused the Chairman of smugness, impatience, bad judgment, and being out of touch, although it said his merits exceeded his faults. Earlier drafts had been more scathing, but Deng had to tread carefully on the PRC's founder and its founding mythology. As part of efforts to reinvigorate the ranks of the CCP, in 1982, Deng set up a **Central Advisory Commission** as an organization with little power to ease elderly senior leaders into retirement. He also launched a program of fast-tracking promising young cadres who had college educations and good administrative skills. Among the beneficiaries of this program was an obscure foreign trade official named Jiang Zemin, who was promoted to vice minister of electronic industry and membership on the Central Committee in 1982; another was an equally obscure party-state bureaucrat working in the hinterlands, Hu Jintao, who was made second secretary of the Communist Youth League and an alternate (nonvoting) member of

the Central Committee the same year. A final beneficiary was Xi Jinping, the son of a veteran party leader purged by Mao, who was sent to Zhengding county in Hebei province as deputy party secretary. These three would go on to become successors to Deng as the top leaders of China. Courts were revived as semi-independent bodies, although party committees continued to make the final decision on major cases, and the party retained its control of judicial appointments.¹¹ The role of the legal system in the PRC political system was boosted with the passage in 1989 of the Administrative Litigation Law, which for the first time allowed citizens to sue the government (see chap. 7). At the top level, military members of the Politburo fell from 57 percent in 1977 to 10 percent by 1992.

With the political obstacles cleared, China entered upon a new era of “reform of the economy and opening to the world” in the early 1980s (see chap. 8). In essence, this boiled down to increasing the role of market forces while reducing government planning in the economy and inserting China more fully in the global economy. Ideologically, it was conceived of not as an abandonment of socialism but as a better pathway toward achieving it. The party declared that China was in the primary stage of socialism (see chap. 5), under which a flourishing capitalist economy was a prerequisite for a later move to total state ownership. Mao was said to have tried to skip or compress this inevitable stage of historical development by jumping too quickly to the collectivization of agriculture and the nationalization of industry in the 1950s. It could be said that, in Deng’s view, a good communist first needed to be a good capitalist.

Formally, party-state leadership in the 1980s was under two relatively young protégés of Deng Xiaoping. Zhao Ziyang, who had overseen market-oriented rural experiments as party leader of Deng’s native Sichuan province, replaced Hua Guofeng as premier of the State Council in 1980. Hu Yaobang, who had been head of the Communist Youth League prior to the Cultural Revolution, succeeded Hua Guofeng as the chairman of the CCP, with the title of the party leader being changed shortly thereafter to “general secretary” in order to disassociate the position from Chairman Mao’s abuses of power. But Deng was clearly the power behind the throne or, as he was called, China’s “paramount leader.” The one top formal position that he did keep for himself until November 1989 was chair of the Central Military Commission (CMC), which made him the commander in chief of China’s armed forces.

China was fortunate in seeking to unravel a planned command economy that had fewer political and bureaucratic supporters than in the Soviet Union and other communist states. A full 69 percent of China’s labor force in 1978 was engaged in agriculture (versus just 22 percent of the Soviet Union’s labor force in 1975, when party leaders there were attempting unsuccessfully to loosen the powers and perquisites of industrial bureaucrats). Most Chinese farmers hated Soviet-style collective agriculture.¹² This made it comparatively easy to introduce household contracting in place of communes, which were virtually eliminated by the end of 1982.

One of the key innovations in this period was the spread of **township and village enterprises**—rural factories owned and operated by local governments that competed head-on in the opening market economy with inefficient state factories and provided employment for excess rural labor. The 1980s was the “golden era” for

China's rural economy. Per capita rural incomes increased nearly six fold between 1980 and 1990.

Urban and industrial reforms were a tougher nut to crack—as the leaders of Eastern Europe's disappointing attempts at “market socialism” had discovered. The CCP leadership was particularly wary of a repeat of the worker protests in Poland in 1980 that had led to the resignation of the head of the Polish communist party and to the recognition of a new independent workers' movement, Solidarity. China's strategy with **state-owned enterprises (SOEs)** was to gradually let the small and medium-sized ones sink or swim, hoping that laid-off or underpaid workers would find jobs in a growing private sector. The state-owned sector's share of national industrial output fell from 78 percent in 1978 to 55 percent by 1990, bringing China to the brink of an era in which the state sector would be an archipelago of strategically controlled large state enterprises in a sea of private business.

Annual GDP growth between 1978 and 1988 averaged 10 percent, twice the average of the previous two decades, and GDP per capita doubled, a remarkable feat for any country. But this came with a cost. After decades of virtually state-fixed prices for all commodities, China's consumer prices began creeping up as price reforms took hold and as the central government, facing a declining tax base from state enterprises, printed more money to finance its investments. Corruption, meanwhile, which had been widespread but petty and mostly invisible in the Mao era, became more lucrative and more visible, especially among the party elite with the market reforms. Deng's own son, Deng Pufang, established the Kanghua Development Company (whose Hong Kong subsidiary was memorably called the Bring Fast Company). It signed lucrative **joint ventures** with foreign firms and property deals amid widespread allegations of corruption.

As for unemployment, as state-owned enterprise reforms began to take hold, workers lost their jobs in growing numbers—especially in the industrial heartland of the three Northeastern provinces that had been industrialized under Japanese colonialism. Chinese officials struggled to invent euphemisms to describe the plight of laid-off workers—“awaiting assignment” (*daiye*) was the most popular. Unemployment insurance was launched in 1985, but it was a pittance compared to the perquisites of the **iron rice bowl** of state socialism, which included cradle-to-grave benefits as well as guaranteed lifetime employment. The CCP's main newspaper, *People's Daily*, proclaimed in 1988 that unemployment was normal and beneficial during the “primary stage of socialism,” noting that tens of millions of state employees had spent their work days getting paid for “playing poker or chess, watching television, or racing on bicycles.” The question was how the party would deal with the political consequences of these dramatic changes.

THE LIMITS OF POLITICAL REFORM

From the very beginning, Deng was careful to make clear that there were limits to political reform. In response to the 1979 Democracy Wall protests, Deng had articulated the so-called **Four Cardinal Principles**. These entailed a commitment to socialism, to the dictatorship of the proletariat, to CCP leadership, and to Marxism-Leninism-Mao

Zedong Thought (see chap. 5). In other words, the CCP was determined to remain in charge in the era of reform and opening up: “What kind of democracy do the Chinese people need today? It can only be **socialist democracy**, people’s democracy, not bourgeois democracy, individualist democracy,” Deng said.¹³ This meant that there would be a more codified, rules-based political system than that under Mao, but one that was still firmly under the control of the communist party.

A new constitution was promulgated in 1982 that formally reinstated the notions of equality before the law, along with basic rights including religious belief, speech, press, assembly, and demonstration. But these and other rights were contingent on a duty to uphold the “the security, honor, and interests of the motherland.” The constitution also declared that “The socialist system is the basic system of the People’s Republic of China” and that “Sabotage of the socialist system by any organization or individual is prohibited,” which, in effect, gave the party-state enormous unchecked leeway in deciding when and how to exercise its power. The rights to free movement and to strike were not included, as they had been in earlier PRC constitutions, and the radically participatory **Four Big Rights**—speaking out freely, airing views fully, holding great debates, and writing big-character posters—that were part of the 1975 Cultural Revolution constitution were removed.

Yet the economic reforms, political reforms, and international opening launched under Deng Xiaoping’s leadership in the 1980s emboldened Chinese society. Graphic novels, rock music, and action films flooded into the hands of consumers. The “father of Chinese rock and roll,” Cui Jian, became the balladeer of this generation of youth with his 1986 song “Nothing to My Name” (*Yi Wu Suo You*), which would inspire youth with its antimaterialistic message. Increased openness to the outside world, along with looser controls on domestic publications, gave birth to a generation of youth enamored with the West and with studying abroad. Between 1978 and 2007, more than one million Chinese students would go abroad to study, only 30 percent of whom ever returned.¹⁴

Alongside the growth of pop culture and consumerism were some serious critiques of the party-state, especially in the realm of literature. Author Bai Hua’s 1981 screenplay *Unrequited Love* (*Ku lian*) was a scathing portrayal of how intellectuals and artists had been treated by the CCP; in one scene, the daughter of an artist who (like Bai Hua) was persecuted during the Anti-Rightist Campaign and the Cultural Revolution, asks her father, “Dad, you love our country, but does this country love you?”

Such pointed questions were too much for Deng and other top party leaders. Bai Hua and his screenplay were denounced, and campaigns were launched, first against the **spiritual pollution** (1983–1984) caused by certain, mostly foreign, influences and then against **bourgeois liberalization**, (1986–1987), which was a way of saying that some people had taken the reforms too far and crossed into the forbidden “bourgeois” zone of challenging the principle of party leadership.

The antibourgeois liberalization campaign had a particularly important impact on the course of Chinese politics. Deng believed that Hu Yaobang, the party general secretary, had not dealt firmly enough with the dissent, especially in handling rather small-scale student demonstrations for faster political reform in late 1986 to early 1987, and ousted him, although he remained a member of the Politburo Standing Committee. Deng chose Zhao Ziyang, the premier, to take over as party general

secretary in January 1987. Zhao had been given much of the credit for the successful implementation of the economic reforms and, up to that point, had toed the correct political line, even chiming in loudly in denouncing the dangers of bourgeois liberalization.

However, Zhao's interest in political reforms went far beyond what Deng envisaged. Working through a number of new think tanks in Beijing universities and research institutes, and more directly through an official Central Research and Discussion Group on Political Reform, Zhao gave his blessing to studies of bold political changes. Thus, despite Hu's demotion, China's citizens continued to consider political liberalization and the critique of CCP autocracy as valid topics for public discussion. As inflation soared in late 1988 due to leadership paralysis over price reforms, the stage was set for large-scale demonstrations demanding that the party-state undertake bolder economic and political reform.

TIANANMEN 1989

In the spring of 1989, intellectuals in China published three open letters calling for the release of political prisoners who had been jailed following the Democracy Wall movement of 1979. The airing of the letters helped to create a mood of free expression and party vulnerability, a mood already rising as a result of the clear split in the leadership between reformers led by Zhao and hard-liners led by Premier Li Peng, who had taken over that position when Zhao had replaced Hu Yaobang as general secretary in 1987. It was Hu's death on April 15, due to a heart attack suffered a week earlier during a Politburo meeting, that lit this tinderbox. Within hours of the announcement of his death, thousands of students from several Beijing universities who regarded the late leader as a champion of deeper political reform began to converge on Tiananmen Square with flower wreaths and poems of condolence—just as students had done in April 1976 to commemorate the death of Zhou Enlai in January of that year.

In the following two months, China was shaken by the largest mass protest against the state since 1949. The **Tiananmen Movement** spread to 341 of China's cities (three-quarters of the total) and was joined by a hundred million people, a third of the urban population at the time. In Beijing, staff associations from the National People's Congress, China Central Television, and the Chinese Navy and other party-state organizations joined in with their own banners. As the movement continued through the end of May 1989, the Beijing Autonomous Workers Federation was established with the tacit support of the official All-China Federation of Trade Unions. About the only groups that did *not* take part in the 1989 protest were top CCP leaders and the peasants.

Zhao was tolerant of the movement, commenting in internal meetings that it reflected reasonable demands for stronger anticorruption measures and faster democratization. But party elders like Deng and his fellow **Eight Immortals** (including Chen Yun) who had fought in the civil war and been among the leading founders of the People's Republic were aghast at the challenge to party authority. As the protests persisted into late May, party elders and hard-liners, like Premier Li Peng, allied

against Zhao, now accused of the same ideological and political mistakes as Hu Yaobang.

The way was paved to implement the Eight Immortals' decision to end the demonstrations by force. Estimates of the number of civilians killed when PLA soldiers were brought into Beijing to clear the streets near Tiananmen of protestors on the night of June 3 and the morning of June 4, 1989, range from a few hundred to several thousand. The exact toll is unknown since the Chinese authorities have never given an accounting.¹⁵ Party rhetoric in the months following the massacre, justifying the suppression of what was (and still is) called counterrevolutionary political turmoil, was reminiscent of the Maoist-style propaganda that China had supposedly left behind. Zhao Ziyang was removed as general secretary and stripped of all his official positions in late June. He was placed under house arrest, where he remained, except for a few closely escorted excursions, until his death in 2005.

Outrage about the Beijing Massacre was widespread but could only be obliquely expressed. The official logo for the Asian Games in Beijing in 1990, when looked at from the back, was a blood-splattered "6-4" (the shorthand for the June 4 massacre), while the words "Down with Li Peng, End People's Rage" were embedded diagonally in a poem carried in the *People's Daily* in 1991.

The fate of Zhao Ziyang and the Tiananmen Movement continue to be unhealed wounds, and whatever the regime says about the protestors, they continue to be remembered with sympathy both inside and outside the party. Every year as June 4 approaches, the authorities take extra precautions to ensure that no public commemorations of the Tiananmen Movement take place (see Box 4.1).

ECONOMIC RECOVERY AFTER TIANANMEN

The person that Deng tapped to fill the post of party general secretary, Jiang Zemin, was a bona fide economic reformer but, unlike Hu or Zhao, without politically liberal instincts. After being promoted to the fringes of the central leadership during Deng's youth drive in the early 1980s, Jiang, who was trained as an electrical engineer before embarking on a career in the party-state bureaucracy, went on to become mayor and then party chief of Shanghai, where he was credited with doing a good job on both the economic and political front, including skillful handling of the pro-democracy protests in that city. Plucked suddenly from his perch in Shanghai in June 1989 to take on the top formal position in the party hierarchy, Jiang said he felt like he was standing "at the brink of a large precipice."¹⁶

Deng hoped that the Tiananmen crackdown would not slow down economic reforms. But the purge of Zhao Ziyang and those said to sympathize with him—plus the sudden collapse of communist regimes in Europe between 1989 and 1991—led to the ascendance of economic hard-liners under Premier Li Peng. In 1989–1990, they engineered a wrenching reversal of the trend of economic reform through a combination of austerity (tightening up on wages and prices as well as on investment and credit funds for business expansion), recentralization (all investment decisions reverted back to the provincial or central level), and attempts to rebuild state-owned

BOX 4.1 WHY DID THE TIANANMEN MOVEMENT FAIL?

Why did the Tiananmen protests of 1989 fail to overthrow the ruling Communist Party in China as had similar movements in Eastern Europe? Many answers have been offered. One reason is that the movement never intended to overthrow the party in the first place, advocating only tougher anticorruption measures, better living standards for students, and non-system-threatening political reform. Yet virtually every democracy movement starts in this way before the logic of its own protests against an authoritarian system leads in an unplanned and haphazard way to democratization. China's 1989 protests were no different, and indeed party leaders in their own discussions appeared well aware of the democratic implications of the protests.

Another explanation is bad luck. Unlike other postrevolutionary authoritarian states, for example, several of communist China's "founding fathers" were still alive in the form of the "Eight Immortals" of the CCP, including Deng Xiaoping who took charge during the crisis. Had they already died, Zhao Ziyang might have retained power and been allowed to initiate a process of real democratization (which he would later tell a friend was his intention). Also, the liberal chairman of the National People's Congress, Wan Li, happened to be out of the country when the protests erupted, making it easier for the Eight Immortals to neutralize the parliament's sympathies with the protests.

Yet the protests also enjoyed a lot of good luck, especially the international media coverage from journalists who arrived to cover a state visit by Mikhail Gorbachev in May and then stayed on to cover the protests. Luck and contingency seem to have acted both for and against the protestors.

Some have argued that the protests leaders misplayed their hand. To some, the student leaders were too extreme. They openly humiliated Premier Li Peng during a televised meeting on May 18, for instance. Others, ironically, have argued that the student leaders were too deferential. For example, three students kneeled in Confucian obeisance to the state on the steps of the Great Hall of the People to present a petition on April 22. Students gathered in the center of Tiananmen Square on the fateful night of June 3–4 and sang the communist anthem, *The Internationale*. Others have said the students displayed too much disdain for the nascent worker movements that sought to join them, confining them to security duties in the square and ignoring their livelihood issues in favor of political ones.

Similar arguments have been made about Zhao Ziyang. For some, his tacit admission of a leadership split on the movement when expressing sympathy for its aims in a speech to Asian Development Bank governors in Beijing on May 4 was an imprudent move that rankled party elders who might have been more tolerant otherwise. To others, Zhao was too timorous. Unlike Boris Yeltsin, who faced down an attempted hard-line backlash in 1991 by mounting tanks and standing with the protestors outside the Russian parliament, Zhao simply bid a teary farewell to the students in Tiananmen Square on May 19 and then sheepishly went home to live out his life in silence.

Given that such arguments seem to work both ways, more recent analysis has focused on *structural* explanations. Only a decade into post-Mao reforms in 1989, Chinese society remained relatively poor and disorganized, while the state retained a hard edge of Leninist intolerance and military might, not to mention organizational effectiveness. Moreover, China remained largely immune to the sorts of foreign pressures that, for instance, had encouraged democratization in Taiwan and South Korea, and it lacked the proximity to democratic neighbors that provided great support for the anticommunist democracy movements in Eastern Europe. In this view, the cards were stacked heavily against the movement's success. It would have taken nearly miraculous luck and leadership to overcome those obstacles. In the event, Zhao and the protestors of 1989 were not up to that task.

(Continued)

BOX 4.1 (Continued)

Yet still another answer can be offered: the Tiananmen protests did *not* entirely fail. Tiananmen was followed by even faster economic and social liberalization and continued incremental political changes. The scars of 1989 inside the party led to a new search for popular support, especially in the wake of the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. When alleged transcripts of the leadership were published as *The Tiananmen Papers* in 2001, it caused a sensation in China, a reminder of the lingering widespread sympathies with the movement. The fact that the memoirs of Deng, premier Li Peng, and the Beijing municipal party secretary at the time, Chen Xitong, all seek to distance themselves from the bloodshed and show their sympathy with the “patriotic” students reflects how far the movement shifted debate even inside the party elite. As the acclaimed Chinese filmmaker Jia Zhangke, who was graduating from high school in 1989, told the *New Yorker* magazine in 2009: “Although it failed, it didn’t really fail because it took freedom and democracy, individualism, individual rights, all these concepts, and disseminated them to many people, including me.”

The CCP took those lessons to heart after 1989, seeking to avoid the fate of the East European and Soviet communist parties by initiating reforms that would reestablish its legitimacy and avert a repeat of the Tiananmen movement. So far it has succeeded. China’s current youth barely know about the events of 1989 and, with their newfound prosperity, generally don’t care. The erasure of this collective memory was documented in the 2015 book *The People’s Republic of Amnesia: Tiananmen Revisited* by a former BBC correspondent in China. By then, most of the founders of the Tiananmen Mothers movement of bereaved parents of students killed in 1989 had died or been silenced.

enterprises. Economic growth slowed to 4 percent in both years, a drop of more than a half in the average annual rate since the reform era began in 1978.

Deng, in a last gasp, became convinced that China had to press ahead with reform and opening by the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. What finally turned the tables was his dramatic **Southern Inspection Tour** (*Nanxun*) in early 1992, in which he decamped from Beijing for central and southern China, where the country’s most notable economic progress had taken place.¹⁷ During his tour, he gave a series of speeches with ringing endorsements of the bold and successful economic reforms in the areas he visited, saying bluntly, “Development is the absolute principle” and warning the party of the danger of being “overcautious” in promoting reform. “Like a boat sailing against the current,” he told his audience “we must forge ahead or be swept downstream.”¹⁸ He also conveyed a barely concealed threat that those who did not support reforms should quit the leadership.

Party conservatives, particularly Premier Li Peng, fearing they would be deposed by Deng, began frantically issuing documents in support of reform. The signal given to provincial and local leaders was *invest, invest, invest*. Economic growth and foreign investment surged. At the national party congress held in October 1992, the CCP formally committed itself to building a **socialist market economy**, replacing the “socialist planned commodity economy” that had been touted as the official aim of economic reform since 1984—a slight change in wording with momentous significance for the economic miracle to come because of the use of the word “market.”

Like his speech to the December 1978 plenum launching the reform era, Deng's Southern Inspection Tour was more the culmination than the beginning of a policy battle. But the very public imprimatur of his remarks had a galvanizing effect on economic actors throughout the country. The 1990s became boom years for China's economy, and the economic proceeds allowed party leaders still steeped in Stalinist traditions to launch a series of gargantuan new projects like the Shanghai Pudong economic zone, the **Three Gorges Dam** along the Yangtze River, and the Qinghai-Tibet Railway. At the same time, the state sector's share of urban employment plummeted from 60 percent in 1990 to 35 percent by the year 2000, as hurried privatizations were arranged. In signs of just how far reform and opening up went in the 1990s, stock exchanges—the epitome of a market economy—were established. In 1992, official diplomatic relations were established with booming capitalist South Korea, China's sworn enemy from the Korean War. South Korea quickly became one of the PRC's major trading partners.

Subnational levels of governments enjoyed a degree of autonomy unprecedented in the history of the PRC. Many provincial **people's congresses** in 1993 rejected governor candidates proposed by the central government. Vice Premier Zhu Rongji complained that he lost fifteen pounds hammering out a tax reform package with the provinces in 1994. China also tied its fate to the future global trading system by joining the **World Trade Organization** in 2001 after fifteen years of negotiations; as a result, the PRC agreed to open its economy even more widely to international business. It also began a rapid sell-off of public housing in urban areas.

As has historically been the case during the takeoff stage of a country's economic modernization, including the industrial revolutions in Europe and the United States, China's 1990s boom created losers as well as winners. As the initial gains of rural decollectivization wore off, agricultural incomes stagnated. Antitax riots by ten thousand farmers in Sichuan's Renshou county in 1993 were the first indicator of a malaise spreading through the countryside. Unemployment among former state sector workers rose dramatically—Western economists estimated that China's urban unemployment rate was 11.5 percent in 2000, compared to the official rate of 3 percent, meaning that about thirty million unemployed people languished in cities. A popular joke went that “Mao asked us to plunge into the countryside, Deng asked us to plunge into business, and Jiang asked us to plunge into the ranks of the unemployed.”

Between 1994 and 1997, a series of four **Ten Thousand Character Letters** (*wanyanshu*) critical of the direction reform was taking were issued in the form of underground pamphlets. The authors of the letters, CCP writers associated with the party ideological magazine *Mainstream* (*Zhongliu*), complained of the decline in the state sector, rising foreign and private investment, and the declining hold of communist ideology over society. This group of critics was referred to as China's “New Left.” Jiang Zemin successfully beat back these attacks, including by shutting down *Mainstream* in 2001: he thus ironically came to power in part by shutting down a reformist publication (the *World Economic Herald*) during the Tiananmen-inspired protests in 1989 and then stayed there by shutting down an antireformist one.

THE JIANG ZEMIN ERA (1992–2002)

Jiang Zemin was widely dismissed as a weak transitional figure when he came to power in the wake of the Tiananmen crisis of 1989. By the time Deng Xiaoping died in 1997, Jiang was fully in charge of the party-state and the military, and he more than proved his mettle in the following decade.

One of Jiang's most decisive acts came in April 1999. The CCP's loss of moral authority among its traditional constituents was dramatically highlighted by a protest that year around the **Zhongnanhai** leadership compound near Tiananmen by an estimated ten thousand adherents of a hitherto obscure spiritual organization, called **Falun Gong** (literally, "Law Wheel Practice"). Complaining about the government persecution and disparagement of the group in the nearby port city of Tianjin, the protestors dispersed after only one day. But the event unsettled a leadership with its eerie parallels to the religiously inspired and hugely destructive Taiping Rebellion of 1850–1864 (see chap. 2) that had taken over half of China and was often cited as a critical factor leading to the collapse of the Qing dynasty in 1911.

Jiang Zemin took the lead in getting a bare majority of the other top leaders to vote to ban the group as a subversive cult, leading to a decade-long suppression movement, one of whose unintended consequences was to create by far the best-organized and most committed source of opposition to CCP rule outside China itself. But inside China, the Falun Gong crackdown was thorough and effective, with many of its practitioners sent to labor camps.¹⁹ The party had been alarmed at Falun Gong's ability to organize such a large protest at the symbolic and actual center of its power and by the popularity of the counternarrative to the official ideology that the movement offered. The harsh crackdown was also likely intended to send a strong message to others about the futility of challenging party authority.²⁰

Jiang's rule can be seen as ushering in the era of relatively consensual elite politics in China after the volatile strongman rule of Mao and Deng. Under Jiang, each leadership faction, defined more by geographical base, personal ties, and institutional affiliation than by policy or ideological differences, got its fair share of appointments (described by a new slang word, *baiping*, or "to arrange evenly"), and policy making became more institutionalized. In 1998 Jiang banned the very lucrative business activities of the PLA, which ran the gamut from selling weapons to running brothels, shutting off this source of independent income and forcing it, in the words of a classical stratagem of rule in imperial China, to "rely on the emperor's grain."

Jiang's era also accelerated the era of **socialist legality** in China's politics (see chap. 7). In 1997, the state constitution was amended to say the PRC "is governed according to the law and aims to build a socialist country under the rule of law." The "legalization" of the CCP party-state under Jiang was an important part of the transition from the charismatic dictatorships under Mao and Deng in which the wishes and whims of the leaders had more authority than the law.

The PRC government promulgated one law or regulation after another that sought to create a legal framework for both its expanding market economy and also for its most repressive policies. Examples of the legalization of repression that has become staple of the party-state from the Jiang era to that of Xi Jinping include a state security law to deal with peaceful dissent (1993), a **martial law** act to deal with mass protests

(1996), regulations to limit and control domestic NGOs (1998), an antisecession law to threaten Taiwan about any moves toward independence (2005), regulations preventing Tibetans from recognizing their own living Buddhas (2007), a national security law criminalizing any perceived threat to the party or its policies (2015), and regulations governing foreign NGOs (2017).

Just as market reforms in the 1990s gave rise to a New Left in the PRC, political reforms gave birth to a New Right political current, which borrowed from traditional Chinese tenets of meritocracy, legalism, and hierarchy to advocate a new form of party dictatorship called **neo-authoritarianism**. The New Right, to which Jiang Zemin was quite sympathetic, argued for elitist rule by **technocrats** who combined high levels of education in technical fields with substantial experience in the party-state bureaucracy, a strong military, and continued market economics mixed with national corporate champions. A typical representative of this line of thinking was the Beijing University professor Pan Wei, a University of California at Berkeley PhD graduate, who argued for a “consultative rule of law” system modeled on British-colonial Hong Kong and Singapore. Singapore’s (staunchly anticommunist) ruling People’s Action Party was a model for emulation—a ruling party that tolerated a symbolic opposition, promoted a market economy, and ruled by legal edicts enforced by pliant courts. To some outsider observers, the New Right represented something that looked more likely to result in a polarized “bureaucratic-authoritarian” regime such as those of Latin America in the 1960s and 1970s.²¹

This main trend of legalized, technocratic authoritarianism was challenged by some democratizing pressures. In 1998, a **China Democracy Party** was established as an official and open opposition party by Tiananmen-era activists and, remarkably, was initially given permission to register as an NGO in Zhejiang province. By March 1999, the CDP boasted twenty-nine nationwide branches and eighty-three core leaders. But Beijing’s tolerance ended as the CDP started to spread, and by the end of the year the organization was banned and twenty-six of its leaders were put behind bars.

Activists at the local level also continued to press for political change. In 1998, Buyun township (the lowest level of formal government above the village in the hierarchy of rural administration), in Sichuan province, held the first **direct election** for its township head, a position that was legally supposed to be appointed by the township people’s congress with oversight from the local party organization. This “illegal” direct township election triggered a dozen copycat experiments in the following decade, which higher level authorities soon stopped. (see chap. 9).

During his final year in office, Jiang codified the ideological rationale for his economic program. His so-called **Three Represents** (*sange daibiao*) theory became the party’s newest guiding slogan and was inserted into the party constitution in 2002 on the eve of Jiang’s retirement as general secretary. In claiming that the CCP should represent the advanced forces of the economy (including private entrepreneurs), modern culture, and the vast majority of the Chinese people, the Three Represents legitimized the party’s shift away from its worker-peasant constituency and more orthodox Marxism. (see chap. 5).

The result of the Three Represents was that the CCP was no longer challenged mainly by the middle class, the educated, nationalistic youths, and intellectuals, as it had been in the 1980s. These groups flourished under Jiang’s rule and, for the most

part, became staunch supporters of the regime and the party's main de facto constituency. Instead, it was the poor—the urban proletariat and the less well-off among the rural population—along with unreconstructed radical and Marxist intellectuals who became increasingly dissatisfied with the direction being taken by party-state.

Overall, Jiang Zemin could claim to have steered China from a period of threatened re-Stalinization after Tiananmen to irreversible economic liberalization and political institutionalization. President Bill Clinton bluntly told Jiang during a visit to the United States in 1997 that his policies with respect to human rights and democracy were “on the wrong side of history.” Yet, the regime that Jiang rescued remains firmly in power.

ENGAGING THE WORLD AFTER TIANANMEN

The 1980s had been a honeymoon period between China and the West. Deng had toured the United States in 1979, even donning a ten-gallon hat at a Texas rodeo. Western countries began selling small amounts of military equipment to China as part of their informal alliance against the Soviet Union. The protestors in Tiananmen in 1989 had erected a statue called the Goddess of Democracy that strongly resembled the Statue of Liberty, which reflected the esteem in which the United States was held by many at the time.

But after Tiananmen, Western nations imposed sanctions on China, including a ban on military sales. The Tiananmen generation was officially and effectively besmirched at home as stooges of foreign forces intent on weakening China and the party. The party-state began espousing traditional cultural nationalism. The writings of Confucius were promoted in 1994, and the PRC attempted to expand its influence overseas through **soft power** by launching cultural promotion agencies located in host universities in other countries; these agencies were called Confucius Institutes in 2004, and similar organizations in grade schools were called Confucius Classrooms. By 2017, there were 525 Confucius Institutes located on every continent, including 110 in the United States.²²

Rising cultural nationalism in China, coupled with post-Cold War American global hegemony, created the conditions for rising tensions between China and the West, particularly the United States. A popular book published in 1996 called *China Can Say No* argued for a get-tough approach to the West, echoing the title of a similar book published in Japan in 1989. A series of run-ins—the inspection in Saudi Arabia of the Chinese cargo ship *Yinhe* in 1993 following U.S. allegations that it was shipping chemical weapon components to Iran, Western politicking in 1993 to deny China the 2000 Olympic Games (China eventually won the 2008 games), the U.S. dispatch of an aircraft carrier battle group in response to PLA missile tests off Taiwan in 1995–1996, the accidental NATO bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade in 1999, the collision between an American spy plane and a Chinese fighter jet off the south coast of China in 2001, and harassment by Chinese boats of a U.S. Navy submarine detection ship in waters off the PRC island province of Hainan in 2009—brought nationalist emotions to the fore among the Chinese public.²³

Nonetheless, in the end, Jiang took the strategic view that Beijing's road to great power status ran through Washington, DC. He paid an official state visit to the United

States in 1997, and President Bill Clinton did likewise to China the following year. Jiang and Clinton were attempting to build a “constructive strategic partnership” between the two nations. But the CCP found that it could not simultaneously encourage nationalism at home as the basis of regime legitimacy while at the same time aligning itself with the United States. This led to a period of U.S.-China rivalry that would shape world politics into first decades of the twenty-first century.

THE HU JINTAO ERA (2002–2012)

Hu Jintao, like Jiang Zemin, had been one of the beneficiaries of Deng’s plan to fast-track the promotion of well-educated and competent young cadres in the early 1980s. During that decade, Hu, a hydroelectric engineer by training, served successively as party secretary of two poor western regions—Guizhou and Tibet. His willingness to accept the tough assignments and to maintain order when protests erupted in Tibet in early 1989 stood him in good stead with his mentor, Song Ping, one of the party elders whom Deng put in charge of choosing the new Politburo that would be installed at the CCP congress in 1992.

Aware of the dangers of a botched succession to the party leadership after Jiang, particularly if Deng had died by then (as turned out to be the case), Song convinced Deng to anoint a presumptive successor to Jiang at the congress. This would settle the post-Jiang succession in advance. Hu Jintao was the one who got the nod because of his strong record of accomplishments as a technocrat and his fealty to party orders. In the years after his 1992 appointment to the Politburo Standing Committee, Hu was showered in titles to indicate his status as the successor-in-waiting: vice president of the PRC, vice chairman of the Central Military Commission, and head of the **Central Party School**, the highest-level institution for training CCP leaders. He was designated as the “core” of the fourth generation of party leadership, following Mao, Deng, and Jiang, who had, respectively, been the cores of the first, second, and third generation of party leaders since the founding of the PRC in 1949. His elevation in 2002 to the position of party general secretary (and in 2003 to PRC president and in 2004 to chair of the military commission) was thus known a decade in advance. Two five-year term limits established for the state presidency as part of the institutionalization of succession procedures meant that it was also clear that Hu would serve until 2012.

Perhaps the single most important fact about Hu Jintao was that he was the only top leader of reform China who did *not* suffer under Mao. Deng Xiaoping, Hu Yaobang, Zhao Ziyang, Jiang Zemin, and even the current head of the party, Xi Jinping (who was sent to do manual labor in the countryside during the Cultural Revolution), all did to one degree or another. During his ten-year stint in power from 2002 to 2012, Hu was thus more responsive to the New Left critique of Jiang’s policies and initiated measures to redress the questions of social justice and environmentally sustainable development. Hu’s so-called **Scientific Outlook on Development**, which emphasized a shift toward more equitable and sustainable growth and included his conception of a **harmonious socialist society** and commitment to “putting the people first” (*yiren weiben*) were written into the party constitution as one of the CCP ideological guides to action in 2007 (see chap. 5). Health insurance was significantly expanded. Tough

new rules on industrial safety were introduced, which cut annual coal mine deaths in half to 3,200 in 2008. As a sign of a new seriousness in the crackdown on official graft, Chen Liangyu, the party chief of Shanghai, Jiang Zemin's political base, was jailed for eighteen years for corruption involving property deals and investment funds. A new National Bureau of Corruption Prevention was established with greater autonomy and authority—at least on paper—than its ineffective predecessor body.

In 2006, a forty-eight-year-old head tax on peasant families with land under cultivation was abolished. Hu's administration accelerated the loosening of the household registration system, (*hukou*), which had stringently restricted rural to urban migration during the Mao era (see chap. 9). It also initiated policy changes that eliminated one of the most egregious procedures used by police to detain citizens for extended periods without formal charges—"custody and repatriation" (*shourong qiansong*)—and brought more procedural controls to another, called "reeducation-through-labor" (*laojiao*) (see chap. 7).

The emphasis on sustainable and equitable development led to new forms of citizen activism. In the first years of Hu's rule, sixty-one environmental groups in Yunnan province sought to block the planned construction of thirteen small dams along the Salween (Nu) river and a large one at the confluence of three rivers at Hutiaoxia Gorge.²⁴ Urban protests—against an ethylene plant in Chengdu, against a paraxylene plant in Xiamen, and against the extension of a high-speed train railway in Shanghai—also gathered steam under Hu's new approach. The central government's environmental watchdog was upgraded to ministerial status as the new Ministry of Environmental Protection in 2008.

One of the key documents of the Hu era was the 2004 resolution issued by a party plenum on strengthening the "governing capacity" of the party. For the first time, the CCP admitted that the 1949 revolution was no longer a sufficient basis on which the party could claim to be the legitimate ruler of China. "The party's governing status is not congenital, nor is it something settled once and for all," read the preamble to the document. By officially raising the question of defining the CCP's legitimacy as an ongoing task rather than a historically established fact, the resolution stirred an outpouring of discussion among political elites about how the CCP could continue to earn the support of China's people. The party's rapid and relatively successful response to the global economic recession that began in 2008 (see chap. 8) helped it to avert what might have been a serious challenge to its legitimacy.

But in all these areas, Hu's attempts to develop a more sustainable and equitable model of Chinese development ultimately foundered on the lack of serious efforts to disperse political power from local party organizations. Hu's populism did not extend to democratic elections. True to his Leninist sympathies, Hu emphasized an improvement in **inner-party democracy** instead, in which party members would vote on such things as policies and appointments. When a group of three hundred intellectuals, activists, and scholars in China issued a blueprint for democratic reforms under the title **Charter 08** in 2008 (mimicking the ultimately successful Charter 77 democratic movement in the former Czechoslovakia), its leading signatories were detained and sometimes jailed. Among those imprisoned was Liu Xiaobo, who won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2010 and died of untreated cancer while serving an eleven-year prison sentence in 2017.²⁵

Hu also showed less interest than his predecessor in boosting China's place in the world—even though that place expanded considerably on his watch, especially with the exposure provided by the flawlessly executed 2008 Beijing Olympics. As befitted a politician who made his career in inland areas, Hu's focus was on internal problems, and he made no major efforts to improve relations with the United States or regional neighbors. This meant that China's foreign policy direction seemed adrift, veering between a “smile diplomacy” aimed at reassuring the world of Beijing's “peaceful rise” and a sometimes more aggressive posture. One of Hu's last acts as party chief in 2012 was to formally inaugurate China's first aircraft carrier, the *Liaoning*, a refurbished Soviet Union ship that had been towed rudderless and engineless from Ukraine in 1998, an event that can, in retrospect, be seen as an initial step in the PRC's continuing modernization and expansion of its naval power.

What was Hu's legacy? His pathway to power—selected for obedience and a firm hand and then groomed over a long period in which caution and consensus were key—left him ill-equipped for the challenges of reform. While Jiang can claim to have rescued China from the trauma of Tiananmen, Hu inherited a China that needed more than mere stability. In his somber final report to the party, Hu admitted that China's development was “unbalanced, uncoordinated, and unsustainable” and that social problems had “increased markedly” on his watch. China's share of the global GDP rose from 8 percent to 15 percent on his watch. But the private sector shrunk as a contributor to GDP as Hu poured money into the state sector. The image that many Chinese most closely associate with the Hu Jintao era is that of work crews quickly removing twisted passenger rail cars dangling from a viaduct after a high-speed railway crash in 2011 that killed forty and symbolized the still pervasive preoccupation with often hastily implemented gargantuan projects and the censorship of photos or discussion of the accident that lay beneath his promotion of a “harmonious socialist society.” The era of Hu Jintao was like that of the ineffective leadership in the Soviet Union under Leonid Brezhnev (communist party chief from 1964 to 1982). In one common joke that reflects the perception of how unimaginative he was in exercising his power, Hu complains to an aide that the speech he just made took three times as long as it was supposed to, “That's because I handed you three copies,” the aide replies. This may be an unduly harsh judgement of his accomplishment, but there was a wide recognition by 2012, when Hu's term as party general secretary was set to end, that China needed dramatically different leadership to revitalize the country.

XI JINPING TAKES CENTER STAGE

The man chosen to succeed Hu Jintao was Xi Jinping, who as the son of a revolutionary “party elder” is considered a CCP **Princeling**, had been groomed for power since at least 1997 (see Box 4.2). While Xi's succession in 2012 was largely a formality having been signaled five years earlier, the handover of power was significant in several respects. For one, because he was not promoted to the CCP's top body, the Politburo Standing Committee, until 2007 at the start of Hu's second term, he came into office as party general secretary in 2012 having less association with his predecessor's

BOX 4.2 WHO IS XI JINPING?

Xi Jinping, born in 1952, is the son of a guerrilla organizer of communist armies in China in the 1930s, Xi Zhongxun (1913–2002). The elder Xi went on to join China's post-1949 leadership. But like many he was purged by the paranoid Mao, enduring various forms of hard labor and house arrest between 1962 and 1977. As a result, Xi Jinping was targeted as the offspring of a political pariah in the early years of the Cultural Revolution, and in 1968, at the age of sixteen, he was sent to work on a remote rural commune, where he remained for seven years. He joined the Communist Youth League in 1971 and the CCP in 1974.

When the elder Xi was rehabilitated after Mao's death, Xi Jinping's career took off. He graduated in chemical engineering from Beijing's Tsinghua University, China's premier institution of science and technology, in 1979, and took a series of assignments in local party and government organizations beginning in 1982. There he won high marks as an economic reformer with a personal touch. His father was again purged from the Politburo in 1986 for defending Hu Yaobang's tolerant attitude toward student protestors, yet Xi Jinping's career was unaffected. As early as 1997, the party leadership had Xi in mind for future promotion when it added him to the Central Committee as an "over-quota" alternate member after he failed to secure enough votes from delegates to a party congress to win one of the 150 regular alternate seats.

Rising rapidly through the ranks, he became governor of prosperous Fujian province in 2000. During plans for the 2002 leadership succession that brought Hu Jintao to power, consideration was given to promoting Xi to the Politburo to indicate that he was the future leader. But the plan was abandoned because it was seen as binding the party's hands too far in advance. By mid-2007, a consensus had developed around Xi as the "core" of the "fifth generation" leadership that would replace Hu Jintao's "fourth generation" in 2012. Xi was appointed to the nine-member Standing Committee directly from the Central Committee and without having served on the Politburo, an unusual "two-step" move up the ranks. A few months later he was made PRC vice president, a largely ceremonial post used to signal that he was to be Hu's successor as general secretary. When that took place in November 2012, Xi became the first CCP leader who was not chosen by an "elder" (*yuan lao*) of the party, a term that refers to those who joined before 1949 and later rose to prominent positions in the Mao era. Deng had personally chosen Xi's predecessors, Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao. In March 2013, Xi became president of the PRC, a position that has been simultaneously held by the CCP general secretary since 1992. He is the first top leader of the country to be born after the founding of the PRC. He is also a relatively cosmopolitan figure who mixes easily in international business and government circles. His daughter, Xi Mingze, attended Harvard University under an assumed name.

Xi was seen as the strongman needed by China in order to realize its great power ambitions. When he first came to power many observers thought he would be an avid economic reformer and competent administrator who would overcome the sclerosis of China's governance system. But he has taken steps to both recentralize the Chinese economy and consolidate his own personal power at the expense of the norms of collective leadership that had prevailed in PRC elite politics for decades. One of the clearest signs of this was his decision to revise the Chinese constitution in 2018 to eliminate the two five-year term limit for state president, which would be a key part of a plan to remain in power beyond 2022/2023 when precedent would dictate he should step aside for a new and younger leader.

In addition to his undergraduate degree, Xi was awarded a doctorate in politics and Marxist theory (with a dissertation on rural marketization) from Tsinghua, where he was enrolled from 1998 to 2002 in an in-service postgraduate program while concurrently

serving in party and government positions in several provinces. Large parts of his dissertation appear to have been copied from other works, including lengthy sections that differ little from the published works on the same topic by a junior academic at Tsinghua, Liu Huiyu, who was assigned to help him during his "studies." She was later promoted to a senior position at Fujian's Jiangxi University, where she is in charge of "library materials" among other assignments.

Xi's views on political reform are cautious, perhaps a legacy of his father's suffering as a "liberal" on political issues. He believes that cadres should be popular and uncorrupt, but he has not gone beyond official doctrine in advocating any changes to the way they are chosen. He was tolerant of mass citizen protests against development projects that erupted during his brief tenures as party chief of Zhejiang province and Shanghai. But he did not initiate new forms of public consultation. Xi appears to favor meritocratic despotism over messy democracy.

Xi is a robust nationalist. On a visit to Mexico in 2009, he warned that "some well-fed foreigners, with nothing else to do, keep pointing fingers at us." China, he said, had ceased exporting revolution as it had in the Maoist era, conquered poverty at home, and refrained from interfering in the affairs of other countries in the reform era. "What is there to criticize?" he wondered. His nationalism is shared by his wife, Peng Liyuan, a popular singer with the rank of major general in the People's Liberation Army who serenaded troops in Tiananmen Square in 1989 shortly after they massacred protestors; she has a special ballad she sings to commemorate the military units that invaded the Tibetan capital of Lhasa in 1959. When the relatively obscure Xi first came to power, the joke went: "Who is Xi Jinping? He is Peng Liyuan's husband." By his second term in office (2017–2022) a new joke reflected the dashed hopes that he had inherited his father liberal tendencies: "I heard that Xi Jinping is the son of a Party elder!" "Yes, you are right. He is the son of Mao Zedong."

administration. This meant he could promote more distinctive policies. In addition, unlike Hu, who had to wait for two years after becoming the CCP general secretary to be given the position of chair of the Central Military Commission, Xi took over as head of the CMC at the same time he became party chief, further strengthening his hand.

A Chinese saying has it that "a new leader will begin by lighting three bonfires," and Xi was handed a golden opportunity to ignite one by the ignominious fall of his one-time rival for the top party post, Bo Xilai, in mid-2012. A charismatic and telegenic "princeling" son of an esteemed early member of the CCP and important PRC leader, Bo became Minister of Commerce in 2004 and then a Politburo member and party chief of Chongqing in 2007, where he initiated a brutal crackdown on criminal gangs and revived Maoist sloganeering. Bo styled himself as a hard-nosed corporate leader willing to take on entrenched interests. In 2011, Bo's wife, Gu Kailai, murdered a British family friend over a personal financial dispute. Asked to cover up the murder, the Chongqing chief of police fled to a U.S. consulate seeking protection, a major political embarrassment for China. In 2012, Gu was sentenced to death (suspended for two years and commutable to life imprisonment depending on her behavior). Bo was found guilty of bribe-taking, embezzlement, and abuse of power and sentenced to life in prison in 2013. Bo's fall from power provided Xi Jinping with an opportunity to show that the CCP took top-level corruption and abuses of power seriously.

Over the next three years, four more Politburo members were purged by Xi, including Hu Jintao's former top-policy advisor, who had tried to cover up the death of his son in a crash of his Ferrari in Beijing that also killed one woman passenger and seriously injured another. The official *People's Daily* quoted one of Xi's allies in 2016 as saying that the group of five Politburo members had collectively sought to "seize party and state power," a formulation not applied to top party leaders since the Cultural Revolution. Senior party officials began to regularly assert that Xi had "saved the party," "saved the country," and "saved socialism" with his decisive action. According to one high-ranking official, "They had high positions and great power in the party, but they were hugely corrupt and plotted to usurp the party's leadership and seize state power."²⁶

One of the hallmarks—and most popular policies—of Xi's administration has been its unprecedented campaign against official corruption. Using the party's antigraft apparatus, the **Central Commission of Discipline Inspection**, the campaign has targeted high-ranking leaders (so-called "tigers") and rank-and-file party cadres ("flies"). During Xi's first five years in office, more than 150 senior officials, in addition to 70 military officers, and a dozen executives of major state-owned corporations were investigated, indicted, tried, or convicted. To put that in perspective, in the entire reform era from 1982 to 2012, only 50 senior officials were convicted for corruption. Under Xi, seventeen members of the Party's Central Committee were also purged for corruption (normally only one to two are purged every five years). In the lower ranks of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), 250,000 members were indicted on corruption-related criminal charges. The anticorruption campaign has also been a means for Xi to purge some of his political rivals (like Bo Xilai) and malcontents within the party leadership.

While Hu's first domestic trip as CCP general secretary was to an old Maoist revolutionary base in the poor north, a month after coming to power Xi headed to the booming southern city of Shenzhen abutting Hong Kong, echoing Deng's tide-turning 1992 Southern Inspection Tour. There he outlined a two-pronged vision of China's future: a flourishing market economy that avoided the "closed and ossified old path" of state-led bureaucratic management alongside a renewed commitment to communist party leadership and ideology. In a leaked speech that he made at the time, Xi emphasized the importance of a unified top leadership, a loyal military, and a full embrace of Marxism-Leninism, including important aspects of Mao Zedong Thought, if the CCP were to survive attempts to undermine party rule: "The Soviet Union's communist party had proportionally more members than us, but when it was threatened, nobody was man enough to stand up and resist." He also asked rhetorically, "Why did the Soviet Union disintegrate? Why did the Soviet Communist Party collapse? An important reason was that their ideals and beliefs had been shaken."²⁷

Indeed, Xi has taken significant steps to reassert party authority in numerous spheres of life in the PRC. For example, the space for civil society has been significantly reduced on his watch. Like Russia's Vladimir Putin, Xi views citizen's organizations independent of state control as sign of Western interference or political opposition. The tightening of constraints on civil society has focused on three groups in particular: lawyers engaged in "rights protection" cases (see chaps.6 and 7); environmental NGOs which had long been given significant space in China because they

were seen as useful to the state (see chap. 12); and foreign-funded NGOs, particularly those from Hong Kong and Taiwan.

The party has also ramped up the subjugation of China's booming Christian community to party authority. Bibles were pulled from retail shelves and banned from online sellers in 2017, while several Christian megachurches in the southeastern provinces were demolished. Beijing also forced the Vatican to back down on their sixty-year dispute when Pope Francis in 2018 accepted two state-appointed bishops for China's official Catholic Church. Since 1958, the communist Party had appointed 190 "bishops" who lacked the necessary imprimatur of the Vatican. The party's already harsh treatment of its Muslim minorities in the western provinces went beyond the normal controls on personnel and education to include a ban on new "Arab-style" mosques, as well as other outward manifestations of the faith (see chap. 17). As Xi Jinping put it in his report to the 19th Party Congress in 2017, "[R]eligions in China must be Chinese in orientation and provide active guidance to religions so that they can adapt themselves to socialist society."²⁸ Nationalism had replaced official atheism as the basis of the CCP's religion policy.

A one-sentence addition to the PRC constitution in March 2018 captured Xi's intent to strengthen party control over Chinese society. In paragraph 2 of Article 1 of the Constitution, which states that "The socialist system is the basic system of the People's Republic of China," the following was added: "The defining feature of socialism with Chinese characteristics is the leadership of the Communist Party of China." Prior to this amendment, the leadership communist party was mentioned only in the document's preamble. By including it in such a prominent place in the body of the state constitution for the first time, the party is clearly signaling that its political preeminence is not to be doubted or challenged.

Since becoming general secretary Xi has also moved to consolidate his personal power to an extent that, some observers argue, harkens back to the days of Mao.²⁹ One very early boost to this end was the agreement of the party leadership in 2012 to shrink the Standing Committee of the Politburo back down to its usual size of seven from its nine-member composition of the Hu Jintao era. The upshot of this was that Xi had more control over the party's most powerful body, a shift that was reflected within the PRC government by a reduction in the number of cabinet-level departments in 2013.

In March 2018 China's rubber-stamp legislature, the National People's Congress, amended the PRC constitution, removing the two-term (ten year) limit on the state presidency imposed by Deng in 1982 and then applied informally to the party general secretary when the two positions were linked in 1993. The abolition of the formal two-term limit came as a bombshell to scholars of China's politics who had argued that the CCP had solved the common authoritarian problem of leadership succession by institutionalizing a formal process for changing leaders. It also meant that Xi, if he stayed on, would violate an informal post-Tiananmen norm that Politburo leaders should be sixty-eight or younger when appointed to the body (Xi will turn sixty-nine in 2022). The measure was not extended to other senior state posts that had two-term limits and was thus interpreted as an amendment specifically for Xi to remain "president for life." "The people love their dear leader," *China Central Television* explained in a barrage of propaganda promoting Xi's continued rule.³⁰

The expectation that Xi would continue to rule beyond the end of his second term in 2022 was strengthened by the fact that no presumptive successor-in-waiting from the younger “sixth” generation of leader was appointed to the Politburo Standing Committee in 2017 at the party congress that marked the beginning of Xi’s second term as general secretary. In the two previous leadership transitions, an heir apparent was designated at the start of the serving general secretary’s second term in office. The fact that this didn’t happen at a similar time in Xi’s tenure, means that he likely will choose his own successor without a party process or consensus when he eventually steps down. According to the *People’s Daily*, Xi ditched the internal “straw poll” voting system among the CCP elite instituted by Hu Jintao to choose the party’s top leaders, believing it was subject to various kinds of malpractice, including vote-buying. Instead, he put in place a top-down process based on “face-to-face interviews, investigation and study.”³¹ The upshot of this change was that it gave Xi a significant amount of personal sway in the leadership selection process and even in the choice of his own successor.

Xi has further cemented his grip on power by personally taking charge of a variety of policy issues. He assumed the role of managing the economy that would normally be the responsibility of the premier, Li Keqiang, as well as making himself the head of **leading small groups** on national security, foreign policy, and cyberspace governance (for the latter, see chap. 15.) Xi used his position as chair of the Central Military Commission to implement a wide-ranging reorganization of the People’s Liberation Army, which consists of all of the PRC’s armed forces service branches. In 2016, he was named commander in chief of the military, a title that no other top CCP leader, including Mao and Deng, had assumed.

On the ideological front, shortly after becoming the party leader in 2012, Xi began espousing his idea of the **China Dream** (*zhongguo meng*) that embodied his vision for what he hoped to accomplish during his administration. That vision involves a combination of a much higher standard of living for the country and the ascent of China to greater power status, or as he put it “the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.”³² This was a first step toward staking his claim to shaping Chinese communist ideology as each of his predecessors from Mao to Hu had done. As he began his second term in October 2017, his contributions to that ideology were codified as **Xi Jinping Thought for a New Era of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics** and written in to the party constitution as the latest installment of the CPC’s guide to action.³³ Deng Xiaoping, Jiang Zemin, and Hu Jintao had to wait until they were out of power to have their thinking enshrined in this way (see chap. 5).

Furthermore, Xi has been referred to with the special term *lingxiu*, meaning “revered leader,” a term last used for Mao. This represented a reversion to the cult and clout of the individual leader and another step away from collective leadership that Deng had sought hard to promote. Xi has justified such accolades by noting that the People’s Republic went through two formative stages of roughly thirty-years each—the Mao era and the reform era—before his own accession in 2012, which marked the start of a third decisive era in China’s development. This formulation has led to speculation that he is planning a thirty-year era of his own that would last until 2042.

As with his counterpart “president for life” in Russia, Vladimir Putin, Xi showed that a major motivation for his continuation in power was to turn the external dimension

of the “China Dream” into reality. One aspect of this was creating China-owned foreign policy initiatives that did not require Beijing to ride the coattails of Western powers. The first stage of the **Belt and Road Initiative** (BRI) for expanded economic integration between China and its Central and South Asian neighbors—and eventually beyond—announced in 2013 was one example (see chap. 8). By delinking China’s world status to its relations with the United States in particular, Xi seemed inclined to follow the path of Putin who gambled that his people would accept the economic costs of sanctions as long as their national pride swelled. A second aspect of this was to reconfigure China’s approach to relations with its Southeast Asian neighbors, which had long been characterized by a search for cooperation and compromise. Under Xi, China’s militarization of disputed islands in the South China Sea accelerated while its assertion of maritime claims in the area became more robust. Again, Xi was gambling that the Southeast Asian nations would accept the new dispensation, just as Putin guessed that Europe would accept Russia’s 2014 annexation of Crimea.

CONCLUSION

China’s trajectory since 1978 has reflected the twin impulses of economic dynamism and authoritarian politics. How long the CCP can continue market-based economic reform without undermining its base of power is the most widely debated topic among observers of Chinese politics. There is no doubt that life has become vastly better for most Chinese during the reform era. Real per capita income in purchasing-power equivalent terms rose from just \$300 in 1980 to nearly \$20,000 by 2019 (about one-third that of the U.S.). Hundreds of millions have been lifted from absolute poverty to at least a minimally secure standard of living. Infant mortality for children under one year old, probably the most reliable indicator of material progress, fell from forty-eight per one thousand live births in 1980 to eight by 2017, roughly twice as fast as the global average decline in that same indicator over the same period. The reform era has brought a long period of relative stability and growth (with the exception of the Tiananmen setback) to China. Chinese politics seems to have passed beyond the cycles of crisis and recovery that characterized the Mao era.

Still, there are palpable signs of deep discontent as reflected in rural and urban protests as well as online discussion forums about the quality of life, the commitment to public service rather than personal gain of party-state officials, and the overall responsiveness of the political system. Most senior Chinese leaders, including Xi Jinping, not only send their children to be educated abroad but also keep ample stores of assets in the hands of family members abroad. In order to survive in power, the CCP needs to constantly reinvent itself to maintain the expectation that things will continue to get better for the ordinary person, not just economically, but politically as well.

What are the broader implications of the reform era for the study of modern China? As noted in chapter 1, during the Mao era many scholars felt that politics in China was best analyzed by the use of highly state-centered models. For example, the theory of totalitarianism saw China as the kind of state that attempted to control all aspects of society, indeed as a country where the separation of society from the party-state

barely existed. Or there was “Beijingology,” the China Watchers version of analyzing Soviet politics known as Kremlinology, with its focus on trying to decipher what goes on in the highly secretive top levels of leadership—a more nuanced and informed version of which is still used today to study Chinese politics.

Four decades into the reform era, these extreme versions of the state-centered theory are no longer appropriate to explain political processes or outcomes in China. At the very least, the political system has become multifaceted, if not pluralistic, and its various constitutive parts—including local governments, people’s congresses, judges and lawyers, the military, **mass organizations**, state enterprises, bureaucrats, journalists, public intellectuals, and party members—more openly contest for political influence. Beyond the boundaries of the state, new forms of civil associations have emerged in China—such as homeowners’ associations, independent business associations, and environmental groups—with the potential to shape policy outcomes. As a result, state-society models that focus on the interactions between state and society can now be usefully applied to some questions about politics in China.

Yet the ability of independent social forces to influence policy is still deeply constrained in a system where communist party leadership remains an unchallengeable principle of political life. Comparative analyses of China’s politics continue to stress what has not changed in the political system, especially in a world where many states around the world have in recent decades been moving in a more democratic direction.

The People’s Republic of China, in other words, is a remarkable lesson in the autonomy of politics—why politics cannot be reduced to economic conditions or changes. The Chinese Communist Party created China’s economic miracle with early political reforms, managed the consequences with a judicious mixture of repression and accommodation, and rebuilt party-state institutions and ideologies to ensure they would remain compatible with rapid socioeconomic development while sustaining CCP rule. In this sense, it seems that Mao’s theory of “politics in command” of social change and economic growth³⁴ is one part of his legacy that remains firmly embedded in China four decades into the otherwise very un-Maoist era of reform and opening up.

NOTES

1. See Orville Schell and John Delury, *Wealth and Power: China’s Long March to the Twenty-first Century* (New York: Random House, 2013.)

2. See Elizabeth J. Perry, “From Mass Campaigns to Managed Campaigns: Constructing a ‘New Socialist Countryside,’” in *Mao’s Invisible Hand: The Political Foundations of Adaptive Governance in China*, ed. Sebastian Heilmann and Elizabeth J. Perry (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), 1–29.

3. See, for example, Andrea Boltho and Maria Weber, “Did China Follow the East Asian Development Model?,” in *State Capitalism, Institutional Adaptation, and the Chinese Miracle*, ed. Barry Naughton and Kellee Tsai (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 240–264.

4. Thomas P. Bernstein, “Resilience and collapse in China and the Soviet Union,” in *Why Communism Did Not Collapse: Understanding Authoritarian Regime Resilience in Asia and Europe*, ed. Martin K. Dimitrov (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 40–66.

5. See Frederick C. Teiwes and Warren Sun, *Paradoxes of Post-Mao Rural Reform: Initial Steps Toward a New Chinese Countryside 1976–1981* (New York: Routledge, 2016).

6. The full loyalty oath of the whateverists was “We will resolutely uphold whatever policy decisions Chairman Mao made, and unswervingly follow whatever instructions Chairman Mao gave,” which was included in a joint editorial of the CCP main propaganda organs published on Feb. 7, 1977. The motto of the Pragmatists, “Practice is the sole criterion of truth” was the title of an article published in another party organ on May 11, 1978.

7. Barry J. Naughton, *The Chinese Economy: Adaptations and Growth*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2018), 88.

8. See Merle Goldman, “The Reassertion of Political Citizenship in the Post-Mao Era: The Democracy Wall Movement,” in *Changing Meanings of Citizenship in Modern China*, ed. Merle Goldman and Elizabeth J. Perry (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 159–186; and Wei Jingsheng, “The Fifth Modernization,” http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/ps/cup/wei_jingsheng_fifth_modernization.pdf.

9. For more on Chen Yun, see David M. Bachman, *Chen Yun and the Chinese Political System* (Berkeley: University of California Institute of East Asian Studies, 1985); and Nicholas R. Lardy and Kenneth Lieberthal, eds., *Chen Yun’s Strategy for China’s Development: A Non-Maoist Alternative* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1983).

10. Deng Xiaoping, “On the Reform of the System of Party and State Leadership,” Aug. 18, 1980, <http://en.people.cn/dengxp/vol2/text/b1460.html>

11. See, for example, Randall Peerenboom, *China’s Long March Toward Rule of Law* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

12. See Kate Xiao Zhou, *How the Farmers Changed China: Power of the People* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996).

13. See “Uphold the Four Cardinal Principles,” <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/dengxp/vol2/text/b1290.html>.

14. See David S. Zweig, *China’s Brain Drain to the United States* (Berkeley, CA: East Asian Institute, China Research Monograph, 1995).

15. There is a large body of scholarly and popular literature about the Tiananmen Movement and the Beijing Massacre. See “Suggested Readings” at the end of this chapter for a few recommended titles. Two books, based on materials smuggled out of China, reveal the inner workings of the party leadership during the crisis. One book, *The Tiananmen Papers* (New York: Public Affairs, 2002) is largely the minutes of meetings of the top leaders, while *Prisoner of the State: The Secret Journal of Premier Zhao Ziyang* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2009) contains transcripts of recordings made by the ousted party general secretary.

16. See Bruce Gilley, *Tiger on the Brink: Jiang Zemin and China’s New Elite* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

17. See Suisheng Zhao, “Deng Xiaoping’s Southern Tour: Elite Politics in Post-Tiananmen China,” *Asian Survey* 33, no. 8 (Aug. 1993): 739–756; and the website “Southern Tour Legacy,” at <http://www.globaltimes.cn/SPECIALCOVERAGE/Dengssoutherntour.aspx>.

18. Deng Xiaoping, “Excerpts from Talks Given in Wuchang, Shenzhen, Zhuhai, and Shanghai,” Jan. 18–Feb. 21, 1992, in *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping*, vol. 3 (1982–1992). (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1994), <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/dengxp/vol3/text/d1200.html>.

19. See James Tong, *Revenge of the Forbidden City: The Suppression of the Falungong in China, 1999–2008* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009); and David Ownby, *Falun Gong and the Future of China* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

20. Vivienne Shue, “Legitimacy Crisis in China?,” in *State and Society in 21st Century China: Crisis, Contention and Legitimation*, ed. Peter Hays Gries and Stanley Rosen (New York: Routledge, 2004), 24–49.

21. See, for example, Guillermo A. O'Donnell and David E. Apter, *Modernization and Bureaucratic-Authoritarianism: Studies in South American Politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979).
22. See "Confucius Institute Online" at <http://english.hanban.org/>. See Randy Kluver, "Chinese Culture in a Global Context: The Confucius Institute as a Geo- Cultural Force," in *China's Global Engagement: Cooperation, Competition, and Influence in the 21st Century*, ed. Jacques deLisle and Avery Goldstein (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 2017).
23. On the role of nationalism in Chinese politics, see Peter Hayes Gries, *China's New Nationalism: Pride, Politics, and Diplomacy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).
24. See Andrew C. Mertha, *China's Water Warriors: Citizen Action And Policy Change* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008).
25. See Liu Xiaobo, *No Enemies, No Hatred: Selected Essays and Poems*, ed. Perry Link (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013).
26. Wendy Wu and Choi Chi-yuk, "Coup Plotters Foiled: Xi Jinping Fended off Threat to 'Save Communist Party,'" *South China Morning Post*, Oct. 19, 2017, <http://www.scmp.com/news/china/policies-politics/article/2116176/coup-plotters-foiled-xi-jinping-fended-threat-save>
27. "Leaked Speech Shows Xi Jinping's Opposition to Reform," *China Digital Times*, Jan. 27, 2013, <https://chinadigitaltimes.net/2013/01/leaked-speech-shows-xi-jinpings-opposition-to-reform/>
28. Xi Jinping, "Secure a Decisive Victory in Building a Moderately Prosperous Society in All Respects and Strive for the Great Success of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era," report delivered at the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, Oct. 18, 2017, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/special/2017-11/03/c_136725942.htm
29. Roderick MacFarquhar, "The Red Emperor," *New York Review of Books*, Jan. 18, 2018.
30. See, "How China's Media Sold Xi Jinping's Power Grab" (video), *New York Times*, Feb. 28, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/video/world/asia/100000003926677/who-is-xi-jinping.html>.
31. Alice Miller, "The 19th Central Committee Politburo," *China Leadership Monitor* 55 (Winter 2018), <https://www.hoover.org/research/19th-central-committee-politburo>.
32. Xi Jinping, "Achieving Rejuvenation of the Chinese Dream," Nov. 29, 2012.
33. Chris Buckley, "China Enshrines 'Xi Jinping Thought,' Elevating Leader to Mao-Like Status Image," *New York Times*, Oct. 24, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/24/world/asia/china-xi-jinping-communist-party.html>.
34. Jack Gray, "Politics in Command: The Maoist Theory of Social Change and Economic Growth," *Political Quarterly* 45, no. 1 (Jan. 1974): 26–48.

SUGGESTED READINGS

- Baum, Richard. *Burying Mao: Chinese Politics in the Age of Deng Xiaoping*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994.
- Brooke, Timothy. *Quelling the People: The Military Suppression of the Beijing Democracy Movement*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998.
- Economy, Elizabeth C. *The Third Revolution: Xi Jinping and the New Chinese State*. Oxford University Press, 2018.
- Gilley, Bruce. *Model Rebels: The Rise and Fall of China's Richest Village*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001.
- Heilmann, Sebastian, and Elizabeth J. Perry. *Mao's Invisible Hand: The Political Foundations of Adaptive Governance in China*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011.

- Johnson, Ian. *The Souls of China: The Return of Religion after Mao*. New York Pantheon, 2017.
- Li, Cheng. *Chinese Politics in the Xi Jinping Era: Reassessing Collective Leadership*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2016.
- Minzer, Carl. *End of an Era: How China's Authoritarian Revival is Undermining Its Rise*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2018.
- Overholt, William H. *China's Crisis of Success*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018.
- Pei, Minxin. *China's Crony Capitalism: The Dynamics of Regime Decay*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016.
- Teiwes, Frederick C. and Warren Sun, *Paradoxes of Post-Mao Rural Reform: Initial Steps Toward a New Chinese Countryside 1976–1981*. New York: Routledge, 2016.
- Vogel, Ezra. *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011.
- Zhang, Liang, Andrew J. Nathan, and E. Perry Link. *The Tiananmen Papers*. New York: Public Affairs, 2002.