

Two Chinas

than they could farm themselves and redistributed among poor peasants and agricultural laborers who owned little or none. By the end of 1952 more than one hundred million acres of land had been confiscated and redistributed among some 300 million peasants. As many as two million landlords and others lost their lives in the ensuing tumult.

By 1952 production had been restored to pre-1949 levels, and the transition to socialism was accelerated. Industry and commerce were nationalized and planned industrial development began with the First Five Year Plan (1953-57). In a series of stages, family farming of privately-owned land was replaced by agricultural cooperatives, whereby land was collectively owned and worked, and the harvest shared among members and the state. The party and government asserted complete control over the arts and education, and Marxism became the official doctrine of all cultural and intellectual life. During the period 1953-57, the Chinese economy grew at an estimated annual rate of nine percent and the country's industrial sector was at least twice as large in 1957 as it had been in 1952. Even so, the Chinese leadership realized that they would need increased cooperation from non-Party intellectuals if they were going to turn China into a world power. Accordingly, political controls were relaxed in China in the spring of 1957, under the slogan "Let a hundred flowers bloom, let a hundred schools of thought contend." As it happened, a storm of criticism quickly spread all over the country. Alarmed by the growing ferocity and expanding scale of the protests, Mao Tse-tung clapped the muzzle back on the media. This repression was followed by the "anti-rightist" campaign of 1957-58, which served mainly to widen the gap between the Party and the intellectuals, and to make the latter thoroughly intimidated and disillusioned.

Great Leap Backwards

A dramatic shift toward more radical policies culminated in the "Great Leap Forward" program of 1958-60. Launched under the slogan of "surpassing Britain in industrial production within fifteen years," output targets for 1958 were revised upward again and again. Each county was encouraged to establish "five small industries" with the aim of both decentralizing and accelerating production. Steel making was to become everybody's business. Over peasant resistance, agricultural cooperatives were consolidated into larger "people's communes," and communes were also created in cities. These communes were designed to provide the "human capital" for China's rapid industrial growth and to combine economic, cultural, political and military affairs, formerly managed by local governments, into one all inclusive organization, operating under the slogan "Let politics take command." The relatively free labor market was replaced by a widespread system of job assignment. After posting a respectable record of growth during 1958, output dropped about twenty-five percent over the next two years. Bad planning, bad management, bad techniques and bad weather were responsible for the conspicuous failure of the Great Leap Forward. China's grain output dropped dramatically. According to Sun Yangfang, a leading Chinese economist, Chairman Mao's farm policy produced immediate famine and a doubling of China's death rate. The statistics cited by Sun in the Chinese journal *Economic Management* point to ten million

starvation deaths in 1960, the worst year, and perhaps twenty million during the 1959-62 famine. Beginning in 1961 urban communes were abolished and rural communes were reduced to more manageable size. In addition, the peasants were allowed to maintain some private plots for growing vegetables or raising pigs or poultry to sell on the open market.

Then the Cultural Revolution

By 1963 farm production had been restored to pre-leap levels, but factory output did not recover its earlier peak until about 1966. At that point the industrial sector was plunged into the turmoil of the Cultural Revolution, and it did not recover from that crisis until about 1969. Experts were pushed aside in favor of decision-making by the masses; according to one Chinese official, some eight million workers lost their jobs between 1966-69. Higher education was disrupted for several years under the slogan "Destroy the old to establish the new" and when schools reopened education was politicized at the expense of professional proficiency. Material incentives for workers were disparaged and ideological motivation extolled. Roving bands of youthful Red Guards so disrupted the process of government and industry (though not of agriculture) that the People's Liberation Army had to be called in to restore order.

Beginning in 1969, the regime dispatched more than ten million "educated youths" from the cities to the countryside, often to the most remote regions of the country. This move was designed to ease urban overcrowding and unemployment and route the remnants of the Red Guards. Throughout the early 1970s the struggle continued within the Party between radical ideologues and advocates of moderate, pragmatic policies. Meantime, however, little, if any, economic expansion occurred between 1972 and 1976. Hundreds of thousands of officials and others were damned as rightists or sentenced to labor camps. All cultural activity came to a standstill. And then Chairman Mao died in September 1976. On month later the moderates purged the radical faction associated with Mao's wife, Chiang Ching. "The Gang of Four," as they were labelled, was imprisoned and so were several thousand of their supporters. More than 100,000 political prisoners were released by the new leadership, which also permitted limited relaxation of intellectual, political and economic controls. In March 1978 the new leaders unveiled an ambitious ten-year development plan intended to bring China into the front rank of industrial nations by the turn of the century.

Like Chairman Mao's "Great Leap Forward", Vice-Chairman Teng Hsiao ping's "Four Modernizations" goals were too ambitious. In June 1979 the government put forward a new program calling for three years of adjustments before attempting any ambitious increases in overall output. And Chinese policymakers have recently announced a plan that will maintain the austere stance beyond 1982.

Reversal or Cycle?

Like Mao's One Hundred Flowers movement, this so-called new Democracy movement was negated in the summer of 1979. First the government closed down the wall in Peking used as a billboard for protest posters. Then the