

Chinese Communist Revolution

The **Chinese Communist Revolution**, known in mainland China as the **War of Liberation**, was the conflict, led by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and Chairman Mao Zedong, that resulted in the proclamation of the People's Republic of China, on 1 October 1949. The revolution began in 1946 after the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937–45) and was the second part of the Chinese Civil War (1945–49).

Historians disagree about the long and short-term factors behind the 1949 Revolution. Historians in mainland China trace the origins of the 1949 Revolution to sharp inequalities in society and imperialist aggression. They charge that high rates of rent, usury and taxes concentrated wealth into the hands of a minority of village chiefs and landlords. One Western historian quotes the statistic that "Ten percent of the agricultural population of China possessed as much as two-thirds of the land". These historians also argue that imperialist pressure by the Western powers and the Japanese and "Century of Humiliation" starting with the Opium Wars and including unequal treaties and the Boxer Rebellion led to a rise in nationalism, class consciousness and leftism.

After internal unrest and foreign pressure weakened the Qing state, a revolt among newly modernized army officers led to the Xinhai Revolution, which ended 2,000 years of imperial rule and established the Republic of China. Following the end of World War I and October Revolution in Russia, Chinese radical intellectuals founded the CCP and Sun Yat-sen founded the Chinese Nationalist Party.

The French historian Lucien Bianco, however, is among those who question whether imperialism and "feudalism" explain the revolution. He points out that the CCP did not have great success until the Japanese invasion of China after 1937. Before the war, the peasantry was not ready for revolution; economic reasons were not enough to mobilize them. More important was nationalism: "It was the war that brought the Chinese peasantry and China to revolution; at the very least, it considerably accelerated the rise of the CCP to power." The communist revolutionary movement had a doctrine, long-term objectives, and a clear political strategy that allowed it to adjust to changes in the situation. He adds that the most important aspect of the Chinese Communist movement is that it was armed.

The Chinese Communist Revolution was a class-based revolution with peasants as its main supporters. To maintain class-based interests in the newly founded People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949, the Chinese government soon registered every citizen as belonging to 1 of 3 broad classes according to his or her presumed role in the revolution: "good class" ("red class" revolutionary cadres, revolutionary soldiers, and revolutionary martyrs as well as industrial workers and poor and lower-middle peasants),

middle class (middle- and upper-middle peasants, urban routine staff, small businessmen, intellectuals, and professionals), and “bad class” (also called the “black class,” including landlords, rich peasants, capitalists, capitalist roaders, counterrevolutionaries, rightists, and “bad elements,” such as criminals). This classification scheme was largely property based, as it would classify essentially anyone with property at the time of the revolution as bad class. However, the presence of revolutionary classes also allowed persons from families with property to be classified as good class if they had contributed to the revolution in significant ways. Using this class scheme, the PRC government devised and implemented a series of class-based preferential social policies.

One of the most visible and most consequential policies was the distribution of educational resources in favor of good-class children at the expense of bad-class children. Redistribution strategies included rapidly expanding education at all levels, opening special schools for government cadres only, and developing college admission policies that aimed to increase the enrollment of good-class students and restrict the number of bad-class students. More than 60 years have passed since these policies were first implemented. Most grandchildren of the revolutionaries have now completed their educations. A natural question to ask is whether these preferential policies actually succeeded or failed to transform the social stratification order by favoring descendants of those disadvantaged classes who supported the revolution.

There are good reasons to suspect that these policies may not have worked. Bad-class citizens had relatively high levels of education and enjoyed social and economic privileges prior to the revolution. It is well known that family socioeconomic status (SES) has a significant influence on children’s educational outcomes in almost all societies. Prior research has shown that family SES has persistent large effects over time, and this is true even in Eastern European countries that experienced a transition to socialism similar to that in China after World War II. Through both economic resources and noneconomic means, the latter of which include parenting styles, socialization, development of noncognitive skills, and social networks, parents transmit their social advantages or disadvantages to their children. While the revolution took away economic resources from bad-class citizens, they still possessed superior cultural and educational resources that could be used to advance their children’s education. Research has also shown that family SES effects persist even when education expands, as high-SES parents can find ways to use resources in competition for higher levels of education as lower-level education becomes more widely available. Further, even if the influence of parents’ SES on the immediately following generation

is blocked or reversed by a revolution, recent research suggests that the third generation may still be affected by grandparents' SES.

However, the Chinese Communist Revolution was not an ordinary social event. It was a radical class struggle intended to fundamentally transform social relations between 2 opposing classes: good versus bad. Even after properties of the formerly privileged classes were taken away by the revolution, children from these classes inherited permanent bad-class designations and suffered the same effects, being considered "bad" people to be "cleaned up" in postrevolutionary China. Thus, bad-class children were not only deprived of equal rights to education ; they were also subject to social isolation, systematic discrimination, and sometimes physical abuse. In this study, we examine the long-term impact of these class-based preferential policies on the social stratification order in post revolutionary China.

Founding of the Chinese Communist Party

The CCP was founded in 1921, during the May Fourth Movement, which Mao Zedong referred to as the birth of communism in China. This anti-Japanese patriotic movement motivated both established intellectuals and students, and made the Nationalist Party, which was already in existence, and the newly formed CCP into first allies, then rivals.

After a period of slow growth and the First United Front with the Kuomintang (Chinese Nationalist Party), the alliance broke down and the Communists fell victim in 1927 to a purge carried out by the Kuomintang under the leadership of Chiang Kai-shek. After 1927, the Communists retreated to the countryside and built up local bases, such as the Jiangxi Soviet, which it held until Nationalist pressure forced the Long March. During the Japanese invasion and occupation, the Communists built more secret bases in the Japanese occupied zones and relied on them as headquarters.

Chinese Civil War, 1945–1949

The Nationalists had an advantage in both troops and weapons, controlled a much larger territory and population, and enjoyed broad international support. The Communists were well established in the north and northwest. The best-trained Nationalist troops had been killed in early battles against the better equipped Japanese Army and in Burma, while the Communists had suffered less severe losses. The Soviet Union, though distrustful, provided aid to the Communists, and the United States assisted the Nationalists with hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of military supplies, as well as airlifting Nationalist troops from central China to Manchuria, an area Chiang Kai-shek saw as strategically vital to retake. Chiang determined to confront the PLA in Manchuria and committed his troops in one decisive

battle, the Battle of Liaohsi, in the autumn of 1948. The strength of Nationalist troops in July 1946 was 4.3 million, of which 2.3 million were well-trained and ready for country-wide mobile combat. However, the battle resulted in a decisive Communist victory and the Nationalists were never able to recover from it.

Consequences

On October 1, 1949, Chairman Mao Zedong officially proclaimed the founding of the People's Republic of China at Tiananmen Square. Chiang Kai-shek, 600,000 Nationalist troops and about two million Nationalist-sympathizer refugees retreated to the island of Taiwan. After that, resistance to the Communists on the mainland was substantial but scattered, such as in the far south. An attempt to take the Nationalist-controlled island of Kinmen was thwarted in the Battle of Kuningtou. In December 1949 Chiang proclaimed Taipei, Taiwan the temporary capital of the Republic, and continued to assert his government as the sole legitimate authority of all China, while the PRC government continued to call for the unification of all China. The last direct fighting between Nationalist and Communist forces ended with the Communist capture of Hainan Island in May 1950, though shelling and guerrilla raids continued for several years. In June 1950, the outbreak of the Korean War led the American government to place the United States Seventh Fleet in the Taiwan Strait to prevent either side from attacking the other.

Conclusion:

The Chinese Communist Revolution that culminated in the 1949 founding of the People's Republic of China fundamentally transformed class relations in China. With data from a nationally representative, longitudinal survey between 2010 and 2016, this study documents the long-term impact of the Communist Revolution on the social stratification order in today's China, more than 6 decades after the revolution. True to its stated ideological missions, the revolution resulted in promoting the social status of children of the peasant, worker, and revolutionary cadre classes and disadvantaging those who were from privileged classes at the time of the revolution. Although there was a tendency toward "reversion" mitigating the revolution's effects in the third generation toward the grandparents' generation in social status, the overall impact of reversion was small. The revolution effects were most pronounced for the birth cohorts immediately following the revolution, attenuating for recently born cohorts.

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