

### **The Power Struggle after Mao's Death**

#### **Hua Guofeng and the Gang of Four**

At Mao's funeral Hua Guofeng delivered the major eulogy, this was a sign of his future importance. Mao's wife Jiang Qing played only a small role as she had fought with one of her cousins over the placing of a wreath while Mao lay in state.



**The body of Mao lying in state.**

Mao had nominated Hua as his successor a month before he died. 'With you in charge, my heart is at ease' were the last words Mao spoke to Hua before he fell into a coma and died. Hua was a little known official in 1976 but he had always been loyal to Mao.

It is important to note that Mao did not think of handing power over to his wife Jiang Qing and her followers known as the 'Gang of Four'. Mao had been suspicious of their motives. The "Gang of Four" were more extreme than Mao himself. The 'Gang of Four' were Jiang Qing and three Party members from Shanghai, Zhang Chunqiao, Yao Wenyan and Wang Hongwen.

After Mao's death the Politburo split into two groups. One followed Hua and the other the 'Gang of Four'. Although the Politburo was the main political body the position of the army was also important.

Hua had worked closely with the army as a co-ordinator in the Tangshan earthquake in 1976 and he had become close to a number of generals. Wang Dongxing head of the special security forces and Marshal Ye chief of Beijing armed forces both sided with Hua.

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The 'Gang of Four' tried to gain the political upper hand in the provinces. They hoped to use their influence in Shanghai. But the main political force was in Beijing. This was shown when Jiang Qing's main military supporter Mao Yuanxin (a nephew of Mao) was dismissed from his Beijing post by Marshal Ye.

Jiang had tried to bribe Mao Yuanxin to find evidence in his uncle's papers or forge it to say Mao wanted the Gang of Four to succeed him. This was an allegation later used at Jiang's trial.

Jiang hoped that Wang Hongwen would be able to win support for the 'Gang of Four' from other areas of China. Hua feared that this policy was working. He asked the 'Gang of Four' to attend a re-arranged Politburo meeting. When the male members arrived they were immediately arrested. Jiang was seized in her own home. For a time it seemed that the 'Gang of Fours' supporters in a Shanghai would cause problems. But when the Gang's downfall was announced on 15<sup>th</sup> October 1976 there was no opposition.

**Wang Hongwen**

**Zhang Chunqiao**



**Yao Wenyuan**

**Jiang Qing**

### The 'Gang of Four'

### **Deng Xiaoping**



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### **The Re-Emergence of Deng Xiaoping**

Deng was living in Guangzhou after his demotion in 1976. However he still had a lot of supporters in the Party and in the army. He decided not to challenge Hua as leader but waited for Hua to lose popularity.

Soon Hua was made fun of behind his back. The way he copied Mao by brushing back his hair and wearing a blue suit was commented upon. Also his opponents mocked his two 'whatevers'. This was a reference to Hua's method of government. 'Whatever Mao said was right, whatever Mao did must be continued'

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Deng was a natural survivor. He put himself under the protection of General Xu Shiyou in Guangzhou an opponent of the 'Gang of Four' and Hua. Xu's influence was strong in the southern and eastern provinces of China which were the most prosperous and economically advanced areas of the country. He used his contacts to get Deng reinstated to the Politburo.

For the next two years Deng's influence in the party continued to grow at the expense of Hua's. He had worked with Zhou Enlai in the 1970's on the 'four modernisations' of the economy, this helped his standing in the party.

Deng was also more experienced in foreign affairs than Hua.

In December 1978 the Central Committee of the CCP appointed Deng as Chairman of the people's Political Consultative Conference, this body would bring reform to China. In September 1980 Hua resigned as premier to be replaced by Deng's friend Hu Yaobang. Deng refused the position because of his age. Deng's honorary title was now 'paramount leader'. This had no specific duties attached to it but that gave it even more power. Deng was now in a position to begin what is now known as the 'Deng Revolution'.

***Task: Draw a table to show the strengths and weaknesses of Deng and the Gang of Four.***



***Task: What image is Deng trying to project in this poster?***

### **The Deng Revolution**

#### **The Legacy of Mao**

Deng wanted to get rid of the remaining policies of Maoism that stood in the way of progress. He knew that he could not openly denounce Mao as the people would not accept this. Deng also knew that such an attack on Mao would involve many in the present government. He decided that he would gradually let Mao's reputation erode. It was recorded that Mao had indeed been a great leader in his day, but one who had made mistakes which China could now correct.

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### The Trial of the Gang of Four

In November 1980 the 'Gang of Four' went on trial. The aim of the trial was to use them as scapegoats to explain why China had gone wrong.

The general accusations against them were that they had betrayed Mao and the Chinese Revolution.

The specific charges included:

- They were individually and collectively responsible for the death of 35,000 people during the Cultural Revolution
- They had framed a further three quarters of a million people

It was hoped that the delay in bringing them to trial would break their spirit.

Zhang was silent and stubborn. He hated the court and did not accept it.

Jiang remained totally defiant refusing to accept the charges brought against her. She shouted abuse at the court

Jiang claimed that during the Cultural Revolution she had carried out Mao's wishes.



**Jiang Qing**

I was Mao's dog.  
Whoever he told  
me to bite, I bit.

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The trial ended in January 1981 finding all the defendants guilty. Jiang Qing and Zhang Chunqiao were sentenced to death, Wang Hongwen was imprisoned for life and Yao Wenyuan was imprisoned for eighteen years. The two death sentences were commuted to life imprisonment in order to give the convicted 'time to repent'. But Jiang still claimed to be innocent when she died in 1991 (officially recorded as suicide although she had had throat cancer for some time).

The trials had meant to show Deng's China was different to that of the Cultural Revolution. But the bullying tactics and the attempts to humiliate the prisoners was not a good advert for China's justice.

***Task: What method did Deng use to increase power?***



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## Economic Reform

In the 1970's Deng and Zhou Enlai had been regarded as Moderates. They wanted to be realistic in planning economic growth. If a plan worked it should be kept; if it didn't work scrap it. If market forces produced good results adopt them; if contact with the Western capitalists increased trade, encourage it. His pragmatic approach can be summed up by Deng; 'It does not matter whether a cat is black or white, so long as it catches mice.'

Deng gave greater freedom to the managers and experts. But state owned enterprises would be still the basic form of industrial organisation.

The 'Four Modernisation', aiming to reform agriculture, industry, defence and education were a set of principles, not a detailed plan.

Deng's reforms changed China in two ways

- Restoring a market economy
- Opening China to foreign trade

The reforms divide into two main periods. Between 1978 and 1984, here the main emphasis was improving the rural economy. After 1984 attention shifted to industry and commerce.

***Task: What would Mao have thought of Deng's reform? Why was Deng able to implement them?***



**Deng's investigative tour to ShenZhen**

## Agriculture under Deng

In the countryside, the communes were abandoned and replaced by the 'xiang'. A 'xiang' was a village. Each village was required to reach a quota determined by the government, but it would now be achieved by individual peasants and their families contributing. If the peasant contributed to the village quota and paid their taxes they were then free to sell any surplus for a private profit.

***Task: Why were these reforms likely to raise production in agriculture?***



**A Peasant Market in Deng's China**

## **The effects of Privatisation on the Rural Economy**

	<b>1957-78</b>	<b>1978-84</b>	<b>1984-88</b>
<b>Annual growth in grain production</b>	2%	5%	-1%
<b>Annual growth in agricultural value</b>	1.4%	7.3%	3%

*Task: Explain how privatisation affects productivity.*

## **Industry and Commerce under Deng**

Deng wanted to modernise industrial growth and scientific education. Universities were expanded and the plan was to train one million technical students to become managers of the new economy. Students were also sent abroad to gain western technology. This training was to be used in the Special Economic Zones (SEZ) regions earmarked for concentrated development. The first four SEZ's were Shantou and Xiamen in the North and Shenzhen and Zhuhai in the south. These were areas containing China's main export industries and foreign owned companies. These were China's chief commercial outlets modelled on Hong Kong. They had regional freedoms and special taxes.

The SEZ were very successful. Between 1981 and 1991 China's exports grew by over 500% and foreign investments had quadrupled.

Greater output and improved quality of products had been achieved by introducing wage incentives.

The introduction of market forces in China took away the security of the past, when in the state run enterprises workers were guaranteed a job for life, accommodation and medical and education benefits. Now State Owned Enterprises were expected to become efficient and

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competitive. Workers were to be paid on performance and could lose their jobs if they were not productive.

Not surprisingly these modernisations were hated by the SOE. This delayed many reforms. It was not until 1986 that a modified labour contract was introduced. The size of China and wide regional differences made economic growth difficult. Still major advances were made.

### Chinas Industrial Performance, 1979-89

Year	GDP (in millions of yuan)	GDP Growth Rate pa%	Inflation Rate pa%	Manufacturing output pa%
1979	732.6	7.6	6.1	8.6
1984	1130.9	14.5	12.9	14.5
1987	1539.1	11.1	4.7	12.7
1989	1786.7	4.3	3.1	4.9

**Task: When was China's industrial performance at its best?  
What problems does the table show?**



**Task: What the photograph suggests about changes in China under Deng?**



## **The Pro- Democracy Movement, 1979-89**

### **Deng's Opposition to Political Reform**

Deng wanted to keep “to the socialist road, upholding the people’s democratic dictatorship, upholding leadership by the Communist Party and up-holding Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought”. These ‘Four Cardinal Principles’ were not meant to change the political structure but to uphold it. The Chinese Communist Party still has the absolute right to govern. In politics Deng was a hardliner.

### **The Growth of Protest**

In the Avenue of Eternal Peace near Tiananmen Square in the 1970’s there was a stretch of wall known as the ‘democracy wall’. This was a gathering place for students who posted anti –government leaflets. From time to time the government forbade the ‘democracy wall’ to be used, posters would be torn down and people arrested. In 1989 Wei Jingshen criticised the government for not introducing real democratic reform into China, He was arrested and sentenced to fifteen years in prison.



**Students at the ‘Democracy Wall’**

Wei may be seen as the first martyr in what came to be known as ‘the democracy movement’. This was never an organised party and its strength fluctuated, but it broadly represented those who wanted to see Maoism ended and a liberalised political system.

The democracy movement did not challenge the CCP, but asked for an extension of civil liberties including voting rights to the people. They demanded that Deng should adopt democracy.

The criticism that most offended the authorities was that the government in China had become corrupt. Throughout the 1980’s there were a series of sudden student demonstrations against the officials in the Party. The demands of the students were for greater political democracy and economic opportunity. Major disturbances occurred in the Universities in 1986. Thousands of students followed Fang Lizhi, a CCP member and a professor at Hefei University, in calling for open government and democracy that the authorities continually talked of but never delivered. Fang was dismissed and the ring leaders were arrested. Hu

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Yaobang the CCP General Secretary was accused of encouraging the students and put in prison. After crushing the 1986 protests Deng said there could be no democracy in China.

*Task: Given the improvement in China's economy, why did protests begin in the 1980's?*

### The Road to Tiananmen Square



**The entrance to Tiananmen Square**

The massacre in Tiananmen Square I June 1989 can be seen as the result of a decade of frustration for the people.

- After the initial increases in the economy of the early 1980's there had been a serious down turn in agricultural and industrial production.
- Inflation was high.
- The population continued to grow and more people were moving to the cities.
- Living conditions in the cities were declining.
- The number of university students had increased but job opportunities were limited
- Good jobs were reserved for party members and their children.
- People believed that the government was corrupt

On 15<sup>th</sup> April 1989 Hu Yaobang died from a heart attack. The students remembered how he had been removed from government in 1987 for daring to support the student protests. He had been treated badly in prison and his health was poor.



**Students mourn Hu's death**

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Hu was remembered by the students as someone who had stood up to the CCP and suffered to gain democracy. At his memorial service a week after his death large crowds had gathered in Tiananmen Square. The students tried to present a petition to Premier Li Peng as he made his way into the Great Hall of the People to attend the memorial service. The refusal by Peng to accept the petition was seen as a sign of how far the government had become detached from the people. A series of sit in's and the boycotting of university classes soon followed. The People's Daily, the official newspaper of the CCP said the protesters were 'a small handful of plotters' who must be crushed immediately. This made the situation worse and students from over forty universities across China joined the protests. The transport workers allowed them to travel to Beijing without paying their fares. This was a sign of support by transport workers..

The Party General Secretary Zhao Ziyang tried to calm matters by saying the People's Daily had gone too far, this had no effect. By the second week in May a group of 300 students went on hunger strike. For the first time government officials contacted the students directly, urging them to call off the strike.

The students refused to call off their protests. They had attracted wide international media cover and also Mikhail Gorbachev, the Russian leader was to arrive in China. Gorbachev had introduced into the USSR similar reforms that the students were demanding. The students felt that the government would not dare to move against them.

Gorbachev's visit began on 16<sup>th</sup> May 1989 and may have delayed the authorities taking action. But the hardliners were furious as schedules had to be re-arranged and Tiananmen Square was filled with students and couldn't be used for impressive displays.



### **The Tiananmen Square Massacre, June 1989**

On the 19<sup>th</sup> May, the sixth day of the hunger strike and the day Gorbachev left China, Zhao Ziyang promised the students that their issues would be resolved. Li Peng also addressed the students, but it already seemed that he and Deng would end the protests by force. That evening Zhao was dismissed from his post and Li announced martial law.

#### **PLA moving into Tiananmen Square**



The students voted to end the hunger strike but remained in the square. The student's determination gave them more support and the ordinary citizens of Beijing blocked the roads leading to Tiananmen and stopped the first wave of troops from reaching the square and imposing martial law. The troops were shocked by the support the students had and decided to withdraw to the outskirts of the city.

#### **Protesters and tanks**



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Deng was determined to stop the protests. By 2<sup>nd</sup> June 350,000 PLA soldiers had surrounded the square. This time they did not listen to the pleas of the local people. At 10pm on the night of 3<sup>rd</sup> June the first shots were fired into the demonstrators. By mid-day on 4<sup>th</sup> June the occupation was over. The students were marched away for interrogation and imprisonment.



June 4: Bodies of dead students lying in a Beijing hospital storeroom

### **Victims of the massacre**

The number of dead will never be known but it is estimated to run into thousands. In the following weeks those who had managed to flee the square were also rounded up and imprisoned

It has been suggested that the government could have easily dispersed the students with little force. They were not united and unarmed. Many believe that Deng wanted a violent end to the protests. Using tanks and bullets on the students was intended to show the Chinese people that the government would not tolerate rebellion. It was a clear sign that the post-Mao liberalism did not include political reform.

***Task: In what ways was Deng similar to Mao and in what ways different?***

***'Deng did more harm than good'. Do you agree with this statement?***

***Sample paper: Describe the key features of the democracy movement of 1979 – 89.***