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CHINA: POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT

Tony Saich

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TO MY MOTHER

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Preface

The aim of this book is to provide an up-to-date introduction to the politics and government of the People's Republic of China. Since the dramatic events of 1976 when Mao Zedong, Zhou Enlai and Zhu De died and the Gang of Four were arrested there have been major changes in both policies and personnel. Particularly since the Third plenum of the Eleventh Central Committee (December 1978) the degree of experimentation and change has meant that almost daily new information about the Chinese political system has been released. Obviously this makes the proposed objective a difficult task but it appears that the basic pattern for the future is set. Although prediction is a dangerous exercise, particularly in the field of Chinese politics, it does seem that China is set for a relatively calm period in the near future. The problem of succession, in terms of both people and policies, has been solved. This problem has provided a sharp focus of debate throughout the seventies. The policies and personnel associated with the Cultural Revolution have been rejected, Mao's personalisation of politics attacked and the way paved for a collective leadership to assume power. However, this does not mean that there is no potential for future conflict. The programme of the four modernisations will entail a sharp competition for scarce resources while those left behind in the race to modernise may seek redress. The promises of the new leadership to raise living standards may lead to mass discontent should the promises not be fulfilled.

In some respects the book has been a race to keep abreast of the new developments. Even while the preface was being written, it was announced that the National People's Congress is to meet. The meeting is to make several important announcements worthy of mention. For example, Xu Xiangqian is to be replaced as Minister of Defence, Song Zhengming is to resign as Minister of Petroleum and Wu Bo is to be replaced by Wang Bingqian as Finance Minister. The head of the

State Planning Commission, Yu Qiuli, is to become the head of a new State Energy Commission. His place is to be taken by Yao Yilin. At the meeting new laws are to be discussed governing Chinese citizenship, income tax for joint ventures and marriage. The more open approach the Chinese are taking is shown by the fact that, for the first time in twenty years, four of the sessions will be open to foreign correspondents. Although further such announcements about personnel changes and so on will render parts of the book out of date by the time it is published the general trends dealt with in the book are sufficiently well set to ensure that the vast majority of the text will remain relevant for the foreseeable future. It is to be hoped that these do not prove to be 'famous last words'.

Although the book concerns the People's Republic of China I felt it necessary to devote chapter 1 to the period before 1949. Most students reading this book will be unfamiliar with the history of this period. A consideration of this period demonstrates the large-scale changes China has undergone in the twentieth century. More importantly, it shows the effect the struggle for liberation has had on the developmental strategy and institutions employed in China since 1949.

I have profited from the advice of many people while writing this book and from the many detailed studies from which I have drawn general observations. In particular I would like to thank Dr James Cotton for his valuable advice on some of the earlier chapters of the book. I am grateful to Dr Martin Harrop for his suggestions concerning the first two chapters. The book as a whole has benefited from the careful proofreading, suggestions and companionship of Heather Stewart. I am indebted to David Chambers for providing the general map of China and to Mrs Oxley for her excellent typing of the manuscript. Finally I would like to thank David S. G. Goodman for the incalculable debt I owe to him. First as teacher and later as a colleague and friend, he has provided a constant source of stimulating ideas about the nature of Chinese politics. The final product owes much to his expert advice. The responsibility for any errors and shortcomings in the book lies entirely with myself.

A. S.

Abbreviations

APC	Agricultural Producers' Co-operative
BR	<i>Beijing Review</i> ¹
CC	Central Committee
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
COMINTERN	Communist Third International
CPPCC	Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference
CQ	<i>China Quarterly</i>
GHQ	General Headquarters of the People's Liberation Army
GMD	Guomindang
GMRB	<i>Guangming Ribao (Guangming Daily)</i>
MAC	Military Affairs Commission
NCNA	New China News Agency
NPC	National People's Congress
PC	Party Congress
PLA	People's Liberation Army
Politburo	Political Bureau
PR	<i>Peking Review</i> ¹
PRC	People's Republic of China
RMRB	<i>Renmin Ribao (People's Daily)</i>
SWB FE	Summary of World Broadcasts: the Far East

¹ *Beijing Review* and *Peking Review* are the same journal. The first edition of 1979 adopted the Pinyin system of romanisation and consequently the name changed from *Peking* to *Beijing Review*.

Chinese measures

- mu Measure for land equal to one-sixth of an acre. Often spelt mou.
- yuan Chinese currency unit. Obviously the precise value of this against the English pound varies, but there are approximately 3.3 yuan to £1.00 sterling.

Romanisation

The system of romanisation for Chinese characters used in this book is the Pinyin system. This system is used by the People's Republic of China and is increasingly used by scholars in the West. However, some people still use the Wade—Giles system of romanisation and students will come across this system in most of the books written before 1979. Also, there are numerous names with familiar spellings in English which belong to neither of these two systems. Two names have been used throughout the text in their more familiar spelling — China and Sun Yat-sen. Given below are some of the more frequently occurring names in both Pinyin and their more common English spelling.

<i>Pinyin</i>	<i>Familiar spelling</i>
Beijing	Peking
Changjiang	Yangtse River
Deng Xiaoping	Teng Hsiao-p'ing
Dongbei	Manchuria
Guangdong	Kwangtung
Guangzhou	Canton
Guomindang	Kuomintang
Hua Guofeng	Hua Kuo-feng
Jiang Jieshi	Chiang Kai-shek
Jiang Qing	Chiang Ch'ing
Liu Shaoqi	Liu Shao-ch'i
Lugouqiao	Marco Polo Bridge
Mao Zedong	Mao Tse-tung
Nanjing	Nanking
Nei Menggu	Inner Mongolia
Shaanxi	Shenxi
Sichuan	Szechwan
Sun Zhongshan	Sun Yat-sen
Tianjin	Tientsin

Xian	Sian
Xinjiang	Sinkiang
Xizang	Tibet
Yanan	Yenan
Ye Jianying	Yeh Chien-ying
Zhang Chunqiao	Chang Ch'un-ch'iao
Zhao Ziyang	Chao Tsu-yang
Zhejiang	Chekiang
Zhou Enlai	Chou Enlai
Zunyi	Tsunyi

Map 1. China provinces