

# China in post-WWII Global History

## 2. Evolution of China's role in geopolitics (1950s – 1960s)

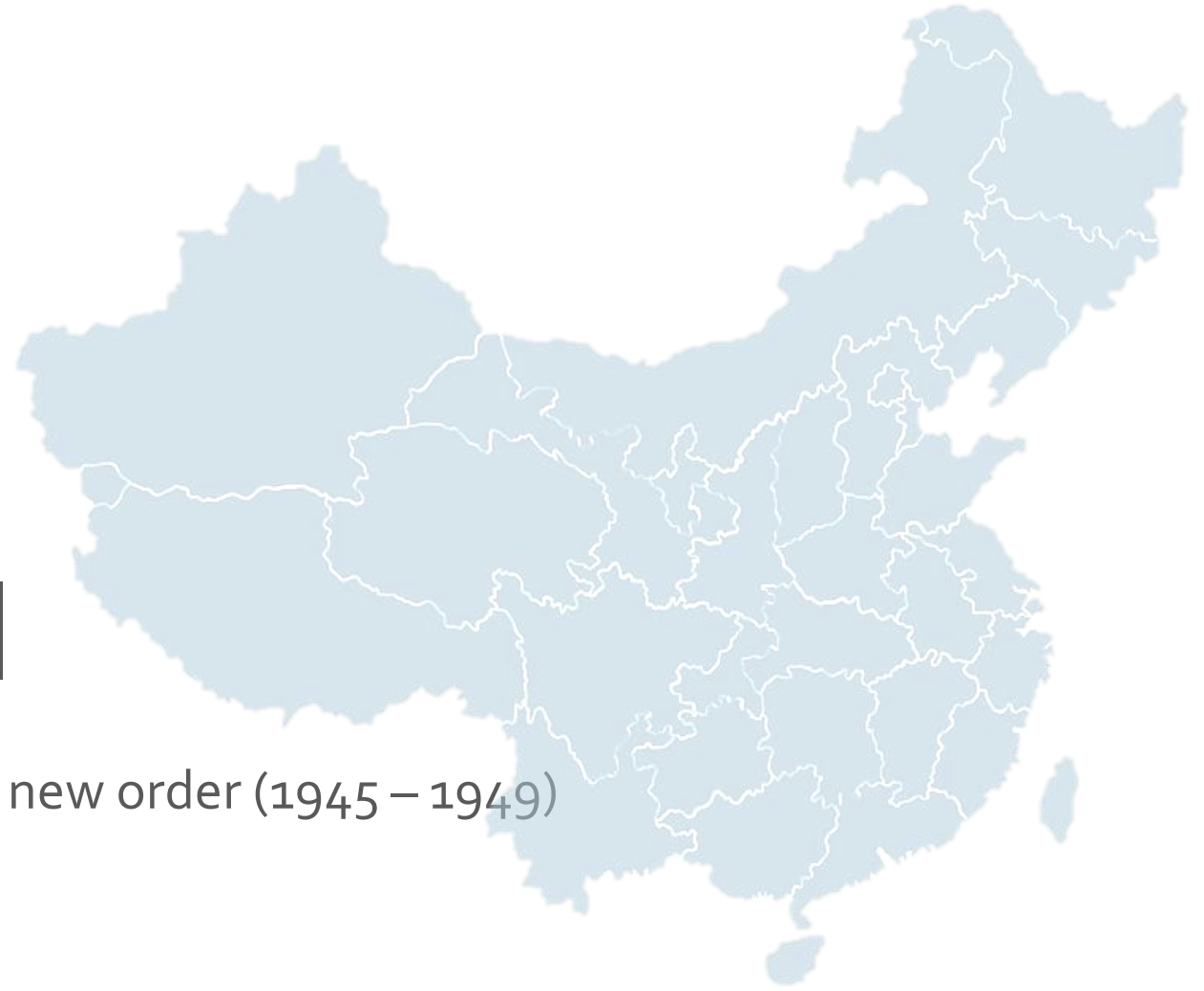
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# Part I

Civil war and new order (1945 – 1949)



## 2<sup>nd</sup> Sino-Jap War (1937-1945)

- **CCP and GMD join forces to fight the Japanese invasion**
- 13 December 1937 – the rape of Nanjing
- CKS: “the Japanese are a disease of the skin, The Communists are a disease of the heart”
- End WWII Jap are defeated but who is going to rule China?

Beginning of civil war 1945-1949

# GMD - CCP Civil War and International Involvement

- Potsdam 1945 → Japanese surrender
- Civil war breaks out in North China – Manchuria – (Japanese colony)

## *Background*

- *Yalta Conference (1945)*

*US and Soviet Union failed to agree on future political shape of Asia  
Manchuria (steel and machinery industry) awarded to USSR*

- U.S. troops landed in mainland China
- The Soviets in Manchuria helped Chinese Communists.
- Fearing deep involvement in China, US pushed for GMD – CCP negotiations --> unsuccessful
- 1949 thanks to guerrilla tactics the Communists eventually won



# Part II

Economic development in Mao's China



# The start of the Sino- Soviet Alliance

**1949** Mao's principles for China's new foreign policy.

'leaning on one side' = PRC ready to receive Soviet strategic protection and comprehensive guidance in economic development

**1950** Sino-Soviet Treaty

vast and systematic program of industrial + military construction + technology transfer (loans to be repaid by China)

Soviet Union and allied Socialist countries would contribute to build the PRC's new industrial base and set the foundations for scientific research as well as technical education.

# Sino-Soviet Alliance State of the Art

- “largest technology transfer in human history” (*L. Brandt et al., Industrialization in China, in: The Spread of Modern Industry, 2017, p. 201*)
- “The Soviet assistance program for China was (...) the biggest such program undertaken by any country anywhere, including the US Marshall Plan for Europe.” (*Odd Arne Westad, The Global Cold War, 2017, p. 237*)
- “no doubt that China’s links to Eastern Bloc countries and to the Soviet Union led to the most systematic transfer of knowledge and technology in its modern history” (*Mühlhahn, Making China Modern, 2019, p. 376*)

## Which development model for China?

- The Soviet Union had a tremendous influence on many developing countries, including the People's Republic of China.
- Soviet economic growth fascinating for the leaders who were dreaming to implement modernization.
- From 1928 to 1937, the proportion of heavy industrial production in the Soviet Union increased from 44.5% to 57.8%.
- It usually takes 50 to 100 years for capitalist countries to develop light industry first and then heavy industry
- Soviet = Unbalanced growth model BUT achieved a much higher speed in economic growth than that of capitalist countries
- China: Which level of economic centralization? Is it right to marginalize light industry (textile)?

Propaganda posters  
to create popular  
consensus



爲了社會主義·獻出我們最大的力量！

We devote our greatest strength to Socialism



1957

Mao increases  
speed of  
industrialization  
policies



Smelt more steel to accelerate the establishment of socialism

China  
declares to have  
achieved  
self-sufficiency  
in oil production  
(1963)



(1962年6月，余秋里和康世恩陪同周恩来视察大庆油田)

## Coexistence of two models

The evolution of economic development in the years of the Socialist planned economy can be explained by the juxtaposition and integration of two different models:

- Devpt model I: Revolutionary Stalinism and consensus strategy
- (Mao Zedong) revolutionary Stalinism + semi-autarkic strategy relying on China's innate abilities
- Devpt model II: Adaptation of bureaucratic Stalinism
- (Zhou Enlai, Liu Shaoqi, Chen Yun)
- bureaucratic Stalinism + ISI strategy for self-reliance + opening to market



# Revolutionary Stalinism and consensus strategy

Mao Zedong

- Mao was unsatisfied with slow pace of Socialist ec. transformation and with China's dependency on the Soviet Union.
- By mid-1950s Mao was already promoting his "rash advance" development approach based on revolutionary Stalinism.
- Embracing the concept of **self-reliance**, Mao's vision led to: Great Leap Forward, Third Front, Cultural Revolution.

# Adaptation of bureaucratic Stalinism

Zhou Enlai  
Liu Shaoqi  
Chen Yun

- Many of 1<sup>st</sup> generation Communist Party leaders had studied and worked overseas and in China's cosmopolitan areas, such as Shanghai.
- They were critical of the exploitative foreign market economies, but also believed that the financial and technical knowledge in the international marketplace could supplement the economic base provided by the FFYP to ensure long-term domestic development.
- They supported the continuation of bureaucratic Stalinism and its ISI strategy for self-reliance.

# Mao's China Chronology

- 1950 Sino-Soviet Alliance
- 1950-1953 Korean War
- 1953-1957 First Five Year Plan (FFYP)s
- 1958 Great Leap Forward
- 1959-1961 Three years of famine
- 1960-1963 Sino-Soviet Split
- **After 1960 → Mao retires from the scenes**
- Bureaucratic Stalinists implement their Development Plan
- 1963 Four Modernizations
- **Mao comes back**
- 1965 Third Front (economics) in tandem with political mobilization
- 1966 – 1976 Cultural Revolution
- **1976 Death of Mao Zedong**

# MAIN CAMPAIGNS

- ANTI-BOURGEOIS CAMPAIGNS (1950s)

After initial cooptation of "national" capitalists into the Socialist construction → PURGE of non-revolutionary elements

- GREAT LEAP FORWARD (1958-1961)→

Accelerated industrialization (failed)

Famine and destruction (backyard furnaces dragged out people from the fields)

- CULTURAL REVOLUTION (1966-1976)→

break-up with traditional culture, violence, chaos, cult of personality, new cadres in command

# Part III

China's international politics in the Cold War:  
One China vs One-Two-Three...



# The 1949 divide

- 1949 foundation of People's Republic
- political control over entire Mainland
- CKS retreats to Taiwan (ROC)
- Hong Kong British colony until 1997
- Macao Portuguese colony until 1999



## China's trade with the world in 1950s – 1960s



50 per cent of machinery and equipment required for First Five-Year Plan had to be imported.

Reflecting Mao's statement 'lean on one side', most technology and machineries came from the Soviet Union and Socialist bloc countries.

From 1952 to 1953 China's trade with the Socialist bloc expanded by 25 per cent.

During the Korean War, China's trade with the West plummeted due to American- and UN imposed embargoes.

### Direction of Communist China's Foreign Trade, 1952-63, Adjusted (in per cent)

<i>Imports</i>	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959	1960	1961	1962	1963
Communist countries, Total	79.4	82.6	82.5	78.3	72.2	63.5	60.0	67.6	65.0	47.7	40.5	33.5
Soviet Union	62.2	63.0	60.2	56.6	50.0	39.1	34.0	47.4	42.7	25.9	20.5	14.3
Eastern Europe	(16.1)	(18.0)	(19.8)	17.9	18.0	(20.4)	22.0	16.2	17.8	11.6	6.8	(6.9)
Asian Communist countries	(1.1)	1.6	2.4	3.8	4.1	(4.0)	(4.0)	(4.0)	(4.4)	(10.2)	(13.2)	(12.2)
Cuba	----	----	0.1	Negl.	----	----	0.2	Negl.	1.7	6.5	7.8	66.5
Non-Communist countries, total	20.6	17.5	17.4	21.6	27.9	36.5	39.8	32.4	33.4	45.8	51.7	
<i>Exports</i>												
Communist countries, Total	66.7	66.0	72.8	69.1	66.1	66.7	66.5	71.5	64.7	57.2	53.4	45.1
Soviet Union	47.8	45.8	51.7	47.8	47.4	45.7	46.1	49.5	42.2	34.9	32.3	24.2
Eastern Europe	(16.9)	(17.6)	(17.2)	17.2	14.7	(15.4)	15.4	15.9	15.7	10.4	9.2	(9.1)
Asian Communist countries	(2.1)	2.6	4.0	4.1	4.0	(5.6)	(5.0)	(6.1)	(6.9)	(11.9)	(11.9)	(11.8)
Cuba	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	0.5	5.3	6.1	54.9
Non-Communist countries, total	33.3	34.0	27.2	30.9	33.8	33.3	33.5	28.5	34.7	37.5	40.5	

(Source: Eckstein 1966)



# The embargo against China

- 1950 the United States and its allies enacted a strategic economic embargo towards the Soviet Bloc
- Coordinating Committee for Multilateral Exports Control (**CoCom**)
- Based on lists of forbidden and restricted goods based on their strategic potential. List 1A would include priority items considered strategic (hence, forbidden to be exported) while List 1B had non-strategic items which could be exported in a limited way.
- 1952 Embargo is directed specifically against China (consequence of PRC participation in the Korean war)
- **ChinCom** was even stricter because the United States thought it necessary to cut both strategic & industrial potential of Red China
- China Differential (List of 200 additional goods)

## China's geopolitical role 1950s – 1960s

- Solid (?) alliance with Soviet Union --> Sino-Soviet Split (1960)
- CCP had doubts about suitability of Stalin centrally planned ec.
- Mao felt threatened by Khrushchëv's secret speech 1956
- Good ec. relations with Czechoslovakia, Poland, East Germany
- After 1960 only Albania and Romania remain allied with PRC
- No relations with US
- Limited official relations with W Europe, but good business relations in practice
- Increasing official and ec. relations with developing countries

## Limited participation in Socialist global governance: WARSAW PACT (WPO)

- 1955 Foundation of WPO
- China → Observer – not member
- China supports creation of WPO → improve relations w East Europe
- BUT rejects homologation to Soviet military guidance
- PRC interested in professionalization of armed forces, military technology, integration w armies of Socialist world
- 1955 - 1957 Khrushchëv pushed for merging Sino-Sov alliance with WPO and Chinese leaders evaluated this possibility
- Mao's radicalization stopped any chance of military integration
- (People's Liberation Army) PLA modernization put on hold

## Limited participation in Socialist global governance: CMEA/COMECON

- China → Observer – not member – of CMEA/COMECON
- Could take part in meetings, exchange information and shape common commercial policies
- BUT Chinese delegates seldom shared their own information
- Awkward atmosphere among the members, who considered China an unfair competitor



# Part IV

The emergence of PRC in the international setting...

# Moscow 1952

- Moscow International Economic Conference (April 1952) = response to American embargo policy
- (Originally launched by World Peace Council) Organised by the Soviet government It signalled that there were potential markets in the Soviet Bloc open to a wide public.
- non-governmental character
- 471 participants from 49 countries
- The peak of opportunities created by the Korean War for Western European companies was expiring. Uncertainty starting to spread in Western markets.
- Conference = Prelude to a turning point in the foreign economic strategy of the Soviet Union and the Bloc countries
- For PRC this event had the value of a worldwide test

## Geneva 1954

- The Geneva Conference on Indochina (spring 1954)
- Important occasion to decide the future of Western foreign policy in East and South-Asia when communism and national independence were acquiring increasing importance.
- Negotiations on Korea's partition unfruitful, but end of hostilities between France and the Viet-minh
- For the first time China participated together with the big powers. Zhou Enlai (Premier and Minister of Foreign Affairs) met high-profile delegates from non-communist countries (British Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden and French Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Pierre Mendes-France).
- China in fact participated with two delegations. The second one was a business delegation led by Vice-minister of Foreign Trade Lei Renmin (200 people) talks with West European business leaders

# Bandung 1955

- **Bandung = birth of non-aligned movement**

Zhou Enlai → Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence (ideological neutrality)

- Mutual respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty
- Mutual non-aggression
- Non-interference in each other's internal affairs
- Equality and mutual benefit
- Peaceful coexistence

- **1955 Emergence of China as potential leader of Third World struggle**

- Based not on ideology but on concrete example  
(peasants acted the Chinese revolution = people's war)

- First World (US + capitalism)
- Second World (Socialist countries)
- Third World (underdeveloped)



# The transnational element: Chinese Diaspora(s)

- **1949** capitalist background élite (businesspeople and economists) flee from Mainland to Taiwan, Hong Kong, SE Asia (Singapore, Malaysia, etc...), US, Europe
- **Taiwan** they contribute to export-led growth (1950s – 1960s) financed by US and supported by local state policies → continuity with ROC govt-led economic development (1928-1937)
- **Mainland** → Few businessmen take part in CCP project of national economic development
- Some had been active under GMD while secretly adhering to CCP (outlawed)
- Some had experience in other capitalist countries (HK, SE Asia, US, Europe)
- PRC → some continuity with GMD- and international capitalism
- Bigger continuity line is with Chinese diaspora(s)
- SE Asia → Chinese merchants had established business networks already since 15<sup>th</sup> century.
- Cold War → ROC and PRC strive to involve overseas communities (Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia) into their projects