Your notes

GCSE History: revision notes

Mao's China, 1945–76

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Establishing communist rule, 1945–49

- Mao Zedong's Communists won the Civil War against Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalists, who fled to Taiwan. Mao proclaimed the **People's Republic of China** on 1 October 1949.
- The Agrarian Reform Law (1950) took land from landlords and gave it to peasants; many landlords were killed. The Three-Antis and Five-Antis campaigns (1951–52) targeted corruption and business owners.

The economy and the Great Leap Forward

- The First Five-Year Plan (1953–57), with Soviet help, built heavy industry.
- The **Great Leap Forward** (1958–62) forced peasants into **communes** and set up backyard furnaces to make steel. Farming collapsed, and tens of millions died in the famine that followed. Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping later led a recovery.

Control and the Hundred Flowers

- In the **Hundred Flowers** campaign (1956–57), Mao invited criticism, then turned on the critics in the Anti-Rightist campaign (1957).

The Cultural Revolution, 1966–76

- Mao launched the **Cultural Revolution** to regain power and purge enemies. **Red Guards**, carrying the Little Red Book, attacked the '**Four Olds**' and anyone seen as an enemy.
- Millions of young people were sent to the countryside (from 1968). Lin Biao died in 1971, and the **Gang of Four** rose. Mao died in September 1976.

Key terms

People's Republic of China	The communist state proclaimed by Mao in 1949.
Commune	A large collective farm and community in the Great Leap Forward.
Great Leap Forward	Mao's 1958–62 plan to industrialise fast, which caused famine.
Hundred Flowers	The 1956–57 campaign inviting criticism.
Cultural Revolution	Mao's 1966–76 campaign to purge enemies and old culture.
Red Guards	Young people who attacked Mao's enemies.
Four Olds	Old customs, culture, habits and ideas.
Gang of Four	Radical leaders, including Mao's wife, Jiang Qing.

Quick questions

Cover the answers and test yourself: remembering is what makes it stick.

1. Who did Mao defeat in the Chinese Civil War?
2. When was the People's Republic of China proclaimed?
3. What did the Agrarian Reform Law (1950) do?
4. What was the Great Leap Forward?
5. What happened after the Hundred Flowers campaign?
6. Who were the Red Guards?
7. What were the 'Four Olds'?
8. Who led China's recovery after the Great Leap Forward?

Answers

1. Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalists
2. 1 October 1949
3. Took land from landlords and gave it to peasants
4. A plan to industrialise fast, with communes and backyard furnaces
5. Mao turned on the critics in the Anti-Rightist campaign
6. Young people who attacked Mao's enemies in the Cultural Revolution
7. Old customs, culture, habits and ideas
8. Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping

What to do next

Practise 10 questions on this topic

Try 3 exam questions, with mark schemes

Read the lesson, one step at a time

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