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Patriotism and the Mass Line: CCP Ideology from Mao to Xi

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Patriotism and the Mass Line: CCP Ideology from Mao to Xi

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Abstract:

China's modern ideology and political environment have shifted over time, as lessons learned from various mass movements and policies have been incorporated into its ideological construction. Analyzing these elements and their impact on modern CCP ideology is key to understanding CCP ideology and the role it plays in Chinese politics. This paper will construct a timeline of significant movements and policies throughout modern Chinese history and examine how CCP ideology was shaped by these events.. The CCP's ideology combines Maoist ideas, such as the mass line, with ideas of patriotism and nationalism to create governmental compliance within China. It attempts to encourage participation in state-run policy and movements while discouraging non-state movements and ideology. Despite the overall success of CCP ideology, flaws have emerged in recent years due to both internal and external challenges, leading to some protest and pushback against the CCP and its policies.

Table of Contents:

Introduction	4
Background	
Literature Review	8
New Culture Movement and May 4th	13
Timeline	
Cultural Revolution	17
Tiananmen Square and Patriotic Education Campaign	25
Anti-Corruption, Rural Revitalization, and the Hong Kong Protests	32
Discussion & Analysis	41
Bibliography	48

Introduction:

China has long been regarded by many Westerners as an authoritarian dictatorship where the will of the people is not taken into account, and people's rights are repressed by the government. The reality is a lot more complex, and reveals a unique attitude about the relationship between a government and the governed. Although common Western attitudes towards China's government are not incorrect, the idea of the 'will of the people' is very influential in Chinese politics and government rhetoric. Great lengths have been taken throughout modern Chinese history to ascertain and represent the will of the people, or to make it appear as such, both to varying degrees of success. Significant efforts have also been made to gain public support and participation in government policies, and to create an alignment of the people with government policy, essentially linking the government's will with the people's will.

This idea of government based on the will of the people is significant in Western political thought, such as the idea of the consent of the governed. This is expressed through republics and democracy, where people choose their political representatives and vote on issues themselves. In China, the CCP and its government portrays itself as representing the fundamental will of the people. It is not a democracy and only allows voting at the local level, but the rhetoric behind the party is one that is ultimately connected with the public and its interests. Incorporating party rhetoric into public life by making the party and its policies integral parts of public participation and life allows the CCP to create a sense of public political participation that lessens or eradicates the population's dissatisfaction with its lack of direct political control, such as in a republic. This is arguably one of the reasons that China, a longstanding authoritarian dictatorship, has lasted for over 70 years, when most authoritarian regimes collapse much sooner.

Through cultivating support for government policies by encouraging patriotism and mass movement politics, the CCP solidifies its position as the vanguard of the people, and preserves its authoritarian governmental system without much significant pushback.

Utilizing mass movements and mass movement politics has been a major factor in China's success, but a fine line needs to be walked to ensure that mass movements are only created and conceptualized by the government, and that these mass movements fulfill the goals of the state. Additionally, the CCP needs to make sure that it encourages the adoption of mass movement rhetoric and patriotism while retaining its monopoly on the use of this rhetoric. Striking this balance is a major struggle throughout the history of modern China, and past experience in regards to creating and regulating state mass movements while suppressing non-state mass movements have given the Chinese government many lessons in how to use ideology in effective ways. This evolution in rhetoric can be seen by examining mass movements and other forms of Chinese policy throughout modern Chinese history. There have been major shifts over time as China moves away from traditional mass movements and towards more closely regulated, policy-based incorporation of the masses into the state's actions.¹ Additionally, patriotism and nationalism has emerged as an ideology to replace and/or augment traditional Maoism and Marxism, changing the political landscape of China both for its leaders and its people. Overall, mass movement politics and patriotism have attempted to lessen the sense of disenfranchisement experienced by those living in an authoritarian state by creating an idea of political representation from above. This ideological construction also legitimates the existence

¹ Elizabeth J. Perry, "From Mass Campaigns to Managed Campaigns: 'Constructing a New Socialist Countryside,'" in *Mao's Invisible Hand: The Political Foundations of Adaptive Governance in China*, ed. Sebastian Heilmann and Elizabeth J. Perry (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2011), pp. 30.

and control of the CCP. However, China's ideological construction and backing is not without its flaws. Censorship and repression are increasingly required to ensure compliance in a modern, interconnected world, in which information is freely available across national boundaries. Recent world events, such as the Covid-19 pandemic, have created new issues for China to deal with and have exposed potential issues in the CCP's ideological backing.

I will be analyzing the development of Chinese ideology and how it was impacted by several specific mass movements throughout modern Chinese history. I will analyze both government-led and grassroots mass movements; for example, state sponsored traditional mass movements, such as the Cultural Revolution, and the non-state Tiananmen Square protest. This analysis of various mass movements and their rhetoric aims to show how the Chinese government in its current era has developed its ideology based on past mass movements. I will also be examining how the CCP applies the same rhetoric of mass movements to other policy, or to more limited movements created by the state in more recent times. To do this, I will be analyzing specific mass movements and policies from Mao to the present in order to see how the CCP's ideology evolved over time. Additionally, I will be examining the increased role of patriotism within CCP ideology, leading to the political environment and ideology of modern day China. I will examine education and similar policy made to encourage patriotism in the population, as well as the censorship and repression that further ensures ideological compliance. I will also examine more recent protests within China concerning their Zero Covid policy, which shows the flaws in China's ideology.

I am interested in this topic because I find China and its government to be interesting, and different from what we see in the US and other democratic nations. However, when examining

the rhetoric behind the CCP's government, the differences are not as large as one might think.

Although the governments of the US and China operate very differently, they have some similarities on the level of political theory concerning the basic foundation of a government and a state's right to exist. Both hold that the people are a state's source of legitimation, but utilize different frameworks to understand how those people should be represented in order to achieve a certain outcome. China presents an alternate route to political participation compared to what one normally sees in Western nations. I want to examine Chinese political thought to dispel the fog around this topic, which will hopefully allow people to better understand China's government, and lessen our fear of the 'other' which is present in so many discussions concerning China.

Background:**Literature Review**

There are many books and articles about specific eras of Chinese history, but it is hard to find a good, overarching book that covers all of these periods, even just the PRC period. This is likely because of the complexity of the topic, and the sheer number of important events that occurred during this period. Because of this, I will be using several books that analyze different, more specific periods of Chinese history and leadership. Most telling for this topic is the narrative that the CCP itself presents to its subjects and regards as true and informative. This narrative shows what events and movements are important to the CCP and its history, as well as giving a view at the politics of the regime at the time based on what is embraced and what is ignored. Primary sources are central to this topic, especially concerning the development of the CCP and its Maoist era. These primary documents share the rhetoric used by thinkers and party leaders to frame their actions or ideology, revealing some of the motivation behind their ideas and policies, and giving us a view of the narrative they want to present to their audience.

The most fundamental thinkers for the development of modern Chinese ideology, and the ideas I am specifically analyzing, were Lenin and Mao, who were idolized and held up as prime examples of political thought. The ideas stated in their various texts were essential to the construction of the CCP and its ideology. According to Leninist ideology, to create a true communist society, the proletariat and other classes would need to be educated on Marxist principles. One united party would thus be necessary to become the arbiter of that ideology, to unite the different classes and peoples into one ideologically consistent revolution. This vanguard

party would thus lead the revolution, and enact policies on behalf of the people. Writing on this idea, Lenin states:

We Social-Democrats will organize these nation-wide exposures; all questions raised by the agitation will be explained in a consistently Social-Democratic spirit, without any concessions to deliberate or undeliberate distortions of Marxism; the all-round political agitation will be conducted by a party which unites into one inseparable whole the assault on the government in the name of the entire people, the revolutionary training of the proletariat, and the safeguarding of its political independence, the guidance of the economic struggle of the working class, and the utilization of all its spontaneous conflicts with its exploiters which rouse and bring into our camp increasing numbers of the proletariat.²

Once the Bolshevik Revolution succeeded, this idea of educating the people to cause a revolution turned in to educating the people in order to have a successful Communist society. Thus, the vanguard party was necessary to continue and protect the revolution and the interests of the people. As the vanguard party is viewed as the protectors of the people and the ideology, any attacks on the vanguard party can be seen as an attack on the people and the ideology backing the state.

The main key difference between Marxism and Maoism is that Marxism, along with Communism and Socialism, traditionally views the industrial proletariat as the revolutionary class of its ideology. In contrast, Maoism views agrarian peasants as the revolutionary class. Mao posits that the exploitation of industrial workers in capitalist societies is similar to the

² Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, *What Is To Be Done? Burning Questions of Our Movement*, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1901/witbd/iii.htm>.

exploitation of peasants in Chinese society, which was not industrialized. Mao says, “The ruthless economic exploitation and political oppression of the peasants by the landlord class forced them into numerous uprisings against its rule... It was the class struggles of the peasants, the peasant uprisings and peasant wars that constituted the real motive force of historical development in Chinese feudal society.”³ In traditional Marxist historical materialism, the proletariat are the driving force of history; in Mao’s view, the peasants are that force within pre-industrial societies.

Mao developed the idea of the ‘mass line’, which further develops the idea of the vanguard party and expands the connection between the party and the people. The idea of the mass line went back to Mao’s activities in rural areas during the 30s and 40s.⁴ Connecting revolutionaries to the people and their interests was crucial to determining what would work to reform rural communities and instill socialist values into the population. Additionally, the idea of ‘struggle’ in a political sense became intertwined with mass mobilization and the mass line. CCP leaders and members went to rural communities and lived alongside them in order to better understand their lives. Self criticism and criticism by a community became a central framework for determining party success and was seen as improving party members. In theory, the mass line involves consultation between the ruling ‘vanguard’ party and the masses to ascertain what the masses need. The ruling party would then come up with solutions to the problems presented by the masses, and implement these solutions. The masses would then be consulted again to see the results of these policies, and whether any changes needed to be made. Mao writes:

³ Tse Tung Mao, *Quotations from Mao Tse Tung*, <https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/works/red-book/ch11.htm>.

⁴ Edwin E. Moise, *Modern China*, 3rd ed. (London: Routledge, 2008), 63.

In all the practical work of our Party, all correct leadership is necessarily "from the masses, to the masses". This means: take the ideas of the masses (scattered and unsystematic ideas) and concentrate them (through study turn them into concentrated and systematic ideas), then go to the masses and propagate and explain these ideas until the masses embrace them as their own, hold fast to them and translate them into action, and test the correctness of these ideas in such action. Then once again concentrate ideas from the masses and once again go to the masses so that the ideas are persevered in and carried through. And so on, over and over again in an endless spiral, with the ideas becoming more correct, more vital and richer each time. Such is the Marxist theory of knowledge.⁵

Based on Mao's socialist framework, the 'masses' as a category were not defined as Chinese people, but specifically as the Chinese workers and peasants. The masses were seen as the peasant and worker classes specifically, and rather than defining Chinese citizens as anyone living in China or all Chinese people, Mao and his government were very interested in the occupations and social classes fulfilled by specific people. Thus his conception of popular will was based around a majority group, excluding a sizable minority of people.

Under the idea of the 'mass line', any policy made by the CCP should be conceived with the people in mind, and the people should be consulted in some way for their support of these policies. While the interests of the people were considered in theory, in reality the idea of the 'mass line' became less about the interests of the people, and more about swaying the people to

⁵ Tse Tung Mao, *Quotations from Mao Tse Tung*.

support the party's interests. This led to a massive increase of popular movements throughout Mao's period of rule in China.

New Culture Movement & May 4th Movement

The first Chinese mass movement was not created by the government, but instead arose from grassroots sentiments, led by scholars and journalists. The relatively new popularity of newspapers and magazines, along with increased literacy especially in urban areas, allowed the common people to become involved in political decisions they had previously had no insight into. The increased dissemination of information generated massive waves of public sentiment in the wake of increasing government instability. New ideas from Europe and America influenced ideas of political participation, and were widely spread in scholarly circles. Suddenly, the public became a group that could potentially be involved in the government or exert its influence over it, rather than being a disconnected outside group as it had for much of China's history.

With its roots in late-19th century Qing reformers, the New Culture movement brought the ideology of reform and overhaul to the population, rather than remaining an exclusive realm of scholars and governors. It began in the mid-1910s, after the new Chinese republic was briefly reverted into a monarchy by Yuan Shikai. The failure of the republic to establish itself as a true democracy and centralized government led many Chinese people to seek out alternate political and societal modes, things that could be changed to achieve success within China and resist continued instability and conflict.⁶

The movement was started mostly by scholars and professors at China's top universities, such as Peking University in Beijing. The magazine 'New Youth' was especially important for sharing many ideas on how to overhaul Chinese culture, and aimed to educate the population in order to create a stronger state. The New Culture Movement was largely an ideological one, and

⁶ Edwin E. Moise, *Modern China*, 47.

at first stayed away from politics, focusing on changing China's culture, moving away from Confucianism, and embracing Western ideas such as science, human rights, and democracy. New Culture thinkers argued that "whatever vestiges of the past remained in the daily life and thinking of the people should be rooted out; otherwise the young republic would rest on shaky foundations, and its progress would be retarded by a backward citizenry. The new order required a whole new culture. The political revolution of 1911 had to be followed by a cultural revolution."⁷ This upheaval and recreation of culture would then provide a basis for a more modern, capable state. Old values were blamed for the failure of the past, while new Western ideas were viewed as instrumental in creating success for Western nations and Japan. The framework of nations and nationality became increasingly popular as China and its people sought to define themselves in an increasingly global world, and the ideas brought into and developed within China during this time all aimed to make China strong in the wake of decades of imperialism.

The New Culture Movement grew into a public outcry during the May Fourth Movement, which was one of China's first and most foundational mass movements. The May Fourth Movement drew its name from an uprising on May 4th, 1919, in which students protested against the decisions made in the Treaty of Versailles, which ceded German-controlled Chinese territory to Japan.⁸ The protests were so large that they compelled the government to change its course,

⁷ Wing-tsit Chan et al., *Sources of Chinese Tradition: Volume 2: From 1600 Through the Twentieth Century*, ed. Wm. Theodore de Bary and Richard Lufrano, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 351.

⁸ Edwin E. Moise, *Modern China*, 3rd ed. (London: Routledge, 2008), 58.

rejecting the treaty altogether and changing its stance on Japan, which had increasingly been threatening Chinese territories and interests.

These two closely intertwined movements show the evolution of Chinese political participation from discussion to action, from culture to politics. During the New Culture Movement, “Chinese public opinion for the first time in modern Chinese history, had an opportunity to express itself. The voice of the new intelligentsia, conveying the public feeling of national humiliation, was widely heard throughout the country.”⁹ The ideas that were circulated in scholarly circles were promoted through newspapers and pamphlets. They gained popularity with the people, and this alliance between political theorists and ‘the people’ became important for turning thought into action. Ideology which had support with the people was able to effect change, and cultural changes were foundational to the success of policy and the state as a whole. The widespread popularity of these ideas led to a widespread desire for political change along with cultural change.

The importation of political and societal ideas and frameworks from the West during the New Culture Movement additionally led to the popularization of ideologies such as Marxism and Leninism. The successful Russian Revolution presented an image of a new kind of state, one based on modern ideals such as progress and equality, which interested many Chinese intellectuals. Many of the minds behind the New Culture Movement and the May 4th Movement were affiliated with Marxism, and some were later involved in founding the CCP, such as Chen Duxiu. He was a professor and editor for the magazine ‘New Youth’, largely connected to the

⁹ Tse-tsung Chow, *The May Fourth Movement: Intellectual Revolution in Modern China* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1967), 22.

New Culture Movement.¹⁰ Chen's involvement in agitating for the May 4th protests further broke down the barriers between the class of intellectuals and that of the common people. The magazine 'New Youth' became more radical after the May Fourth Movement, and in 1920 changed course to become the mouthpiece of communism in China. Chen Duxiu, along with Li Dazhao, a fellow professor and editor, founded the CCP in 1921 with the help of the Russian Comintern.¹¹

Overall, these interconnected movements changed Chinese society dramatically, increasing political activity of all types. The New Culture Movement popularized foreign ideas such as Marxism in China, leading to the foundation of the CCP. These movements forever tied the idea of 'the people' and their support to the future success of China. The connection between the CCP and these movements created a foundation of public protest and participation within, involving the will of the people and the connection between ideas and action, along with those that create them or carry them out. To this day, the CCP deliberately presents itself as the ideological inheritor of the New Culture and May 4th Movements, creating a continued legacy of mass movements within China.

¹⁰ Lee Feigon, *Chen Duxiu, Founder of the Chinese Communist Party* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014), 98.

¹¹ Lee Feigon, *Chen Duxiu, Founder of the Chinese Communist Party*, 164.

Timeline:**The Cultural Revolution**

The People's Republic of China was established in 1949 after several years of war with the KMT, who ruled the Republic of China.¹² After the departure of the ROC to Taiwan, the PRC was left as the one dominant nation ruling China, and the CCP as the one established and permitted party within that nation. Mao Zedong became the leader of the new People's Republic of China. Having majorly influenced the unique development of Chinese communism, he placed value specifically on the idea of a government by and for the peasants and workers, which would serve and protect their interests. As such, Mao began a decades-long campaign to reform China's political structure, economy, and social life to implement socialist ideals of his own definition.

It was social and cultural reform that proved the most significant in terms of Maoist ideology and mass movements. Mao argued that without a strong basis of socialist knowledge, and without social reforms to equalize the nation, China would never become strong and would forever be oppressed, both internally through class structures, and internationally by foreign powers. Mass movements were an important part of achieving the goals of social reform, while satisfying the needs of the people. As stated in 'Mass Mobilization Campaigns in Mao's China', "following the Marxist line of argument that the members of the working class would eventually recognize their common interests and unite in overthrowing capitalist mode of production, Chairman Mao Zedong and his Chinese Communist Party believed that the reconstruction of a new socialist China depended on the mass line and the frequent mass mobilization campaigns

¹² Edwin E. Moise, *Modern China*, 121.

were the techniques necessary to ensure Mao's continuing revolution."¹³ By implementing a succession of mass movements, Mao hoped to involve the masses in government and cultivate their support for him and the CCP. Struggle through mass movements was thus instrumental in creating strong socialists and eliminating bourgeois ideas.¹⁴ Mao's conception of a continuous revolution, one that would be accomplished through ongoing movements and cultural overhauls, led to his conception and promotion of various mass movements throughout his time in control of China.

The Cultural Revolution started in 1966, and continued until Mao's death in 1976. It fulfilled a political motivation for Mao, to solidify his control over the CCP and China by defeating various factions and significant individuals within the CCP. Beyond this, it also served a social role — to overhaul Chinese culture and to keep Chinese communism from being corrupted, either by internal capitalists or the external threat of the USSR, which was seen by Mao and the CCP at this time as based upon false socialism.¹⁵ The Cultural Revolution first emerged from Mao's political struggles within the CCP, and started when Mao began targeting these opponents.¹⁶ Small party conflicts escalated when Mao issued a party memo denouncing various factions within the CCP, known as the May 16th Notification. It focused on several

¹³ Wen-hui Tsai, "Mass Mobilization Campaigns in Mao's China," *American Journal of Chinese Studies* 6, no. 1 (April 1999): pp. 22.

¹⁴ Xing Lu, *The Rhetoric of Mao Zedong: Transforming China and Its People* (Columbia, SC: The University of South Carolina Press, 2017), 97.

¹⁵ 154

¹⁶ Roderick MacFarquhar and Michael Schoenhals, *Mao's Last Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), 39.

Politburo officials and claimed that China and its government had been infiltrated by reactionaries who sought to destroy the nation:

The whole party must follow Comrade Mao Tse-tung's instructions, hold high the great banner of the proletarian Cultural Revolution, thoroughly expose the reactionary bourgeois stand of those so-called 'academic authorities' who oppose the party and socialism, thoroughly criticize and repudiate the reactionary bourgeois ideas in the sphere of academic work, education, journalism, literature and art, and publishing, and seize the leadership in these cultural spheres. To achieve this, it is necessary at the same time to criticize and repudiate those representatives of the bourgeoisie who have sneaked into the party, the government, the army, and all spheres of culture, to clear them out or transfer some of them to other positions.¹⁷

Reactionary culture and reactionary thoughts or ideas were tied to reactionary actions, which were seen as destroying the nation. By stating that these elements were everywhere, not just in politics, the memo expanded Mao's condemnation of CCP political dissidents to civilians in various fields, who could be perceived as reactionary or bourgeois. At the end of the statement, he calls for criticism and reputation of all those who have these ideals in some fashion or another, and says that China must 'clear them out'. This memo, although an internal CCP document limited to the upper echelons of the CCP, can be seen as the beginning of the Cultural Revolution, started at the highest levels of China's government.

The ideas behind this memo were brought to the wider populace with the publication of a significant big character poster condemning several university leaders, significant within the

¹⁷ Circular of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China on the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (1966).

CCP.¹⁸ Mao's endorsement of the poster along with its widespread publication led to mass participation in criticizing and denouncing various university leaders considered to be reactionary. Groups of students, called 'Red Guards', soon rebelled against their teachers and launched massive protests and waves of violence throughout China.

The Red Guards were students and other young people who sought to purge China of reactionary and bourgeois ideas and individuals, in order to truly achieve a socialist nation. The main way they did this was through violence, targeting both high and low figures for criticism and reeducation, or execution. Utilizing Mao's Little Red Book as the basis for their ideology, they viewed Mao as a godlike figure and saw themselves as carrying out his will and the will of the people of China. Although there were some attempts by the CCP to constrain their activities in the early days of the Cultural Revolution, Mao later responded to these Red Guards, endorsing their mission and encouraging them to target certain officials, institutions, and ideologies within China. The Red Guards proclaimed, "Beat to a pulp any and all persons who go against Mao Zedong Thought—no matter who they are, what banner they fly, or how exalted their positions may be."¹⁹ For the next ten years, political violence would dominate China, with those accused of reactionary or bourgeois thought or action being humiliated, beaten, or killed.

Mao and other supporters of the Cultural Revolution promoted the movement to youth through propaganda. This took the form of both modern and traditional media, including the newspaper and magazines that had been so important to the New Culture Movement before. "Newspaper editorials, radio broadcasts, televisions, big character posters, and public

¹⁸ Roderick MacFarquhar and Michael Schoenhals, *Mao's Last Revolution*, 56.

¹⁹ Roderick MacFarquhar and Michael Schoenhals, *Mao's Last Revolution*, 104.

loudspeakers all carried the messages written by Mao and sent down from the Central Committee... The purpose of propaganda is on the one hand to rationalize the goal of the campaign and on the other to prepare people for the impending assault on the target group.”²⁰

‘Big character posters’, some of the most well-known images and phrases of the Cultural Revolution, coining popular slogans which people could rally around. Mao’s use of these elements to promote Maoism and participation in the Cultural Revolution created a sense of connection between him and the masses of the Red Guard, allowing him to control them to a certain extent. State created propaganda incensed the Red Guard to participate in revolutionary violence against reactionary groups, and Mao’s endorsement of the Red Guard’s actions turned them into an essential part of the state apparatus: the state formed the vanguard party while the Red Guards formed the revolutionary masses, which carried out the state’s policies.

Mao’s political opponents were purged from the CCP’s ranks, and those that remained toed the line of Maoist thought closely in order to preserve their own positions and lives, or to gain popularity with Mao and the masses. The goals of eliminating bourgeois influence were largely achieved, as anything considered reactionary or bourgeois in ideology was anathema. People were driven from ‘elitist’ careers such as academia, through criticism or outright violence. Old cultural institutions were eliminated; religious monuments and monasteries were destroyed, lessening the influence of the ‘Four Olds’²¹ upon Chinese society. In this way, the Cultural Revolution can be seen as achieving its goals of eliminating what Mao considered to be reactionary and bourgeois ideas and individuals.

²⁰ Wen-hui Tsai, “Mass Mobilization Campaigns in Mao's China,” pp. 40-41.

²¹ The Four Olds targeted during the Cultural Revolution: Old Ideas, Old Culture, Old Customs, and Old Habits.

Despite the success of the Cultural Revolution in changing Chinese culture and firmly cementing Maoist communism in China, the Cultural Revolution also caused widespread anarchy, lawlessness, and violence. At a certain point, Mao and other government officials could not control the actions of the Red Guard, who operated mostly independently. Though the Cultural Revolution was initiated by Mao and was influenced by him and the state, the Red Guards and the Cultural Revolution as a whole acted mostly independently, especially in the first few years of the Cultural Revolution. The Red Guards created their own ideologically-backed propaganda, making the movement fall further and further outside Mao's direct control, despite their dedication to him. People were targeted for violence without cause, or for not being sufficiently Maoist. Certain occupations such as intellectuals and educated professionals were targeted for violence, weakening China's economy and educational system. Elderly people and anyone seen to be a remnant of the 'four olds' were also blamed for China's ills and were victims of widespread violence. This has massive impacts on Chinese society, as "instead of pushing the country forward to be equal with the West, economic production and social life were disrupted. Individuals caught up in mass mobilization campaigns became irrational: those who held power began labeling others as deviants, while those who were powerless became victims of labeling."²² Targets were not always guilty of what they were accused of doing or thinking; personal grudges and opportunity played a large role in the violence.

Mao and other government officials eventually attempted to constrain the movement. Weakened and split by ideological and political disagreements, radical members of the Red Guard were suppressed by the Chinese military and Mao's new revolutionary committees. The

²² Wen-hui Tsai, "Mass Mobilization Campaigns in Mao's China," 39.

Red Guard's power was also quelled by the 'Down to the Countryside' movement, which forced millions of Red Guards and other urban youth to move to rural areas and farm.²³ This was both a method for controlling youth violence in the cities and as a way to educate urban youth on the peasant lifestyle, which was considered the fundamental basis for the CCP and Maoism. After the first few years of rampant violence, the Red Guard largely lost their power. The state monopoly on violence was reestablished as the power of the Red Guards was transferred back to the Chinese military, and the state was now completely controlled by Mao. Though state persecution continued, the overwhelming violence of its early days lessened after 1968. CCP leaders such as Zhou Enlai later moderated the Cultural Revolution.²⁴ However, the Cultural Revolution did not end until Mao's death in 1976 due to his continued governmental influence.

The Cultural Revolution was instrumental in establishing Maoist ideology and its importance throughout China, continuing into the present day. Mao's affinity for peasants, and his use of peasant experiences as an ideological growth mechanism entrenched the necessity of rural experiences in Chinese politics. Ideas such as the mass line and the vanguard were used by Mao and the CCP to justify their actions during the Cultural Revolution. The use of propaganda and ideological education proved extremely successful in regards to the Red Guard, incensing them to violence and linking them directly to Mao. However, the state apparatus proved unable and/or unwilling to limit the power of the Red Guard, resulting in widespread, uncontrolled violence.

²³ Edwin E. Moise, *Modern China*, 180-181.

²⁴ Roderick MacFarquhar and Michael Schoenhals, *Mao's Last Revolution*, 340-341.

The CCP took several lessons from the Cultural Revolution. First, mass movements are powerful, but dangerous. This resulted in a shift away from direct mass movements after the Maoist era. Second, ideology must be limited rather than expansive. An unlimited ideology without boundaries of action can easily result in uncontrollable political violence. This can be achieved through linking the ideology to the state or to the nation. Third, the state must retain a monopoly on violence, and must carry this violence out through some semblance of a rule of law. Unrestricted violence from paramilitary or civilian groups leads to disaster. Fourth, ideological propaganda is key to cultivating support for policies amongst the masses.

Overall, the Cultural Revolution shows both how a mass movement can achieve specific political objectives, and how mass movements have the potential to spiral out of control. Although the Cultural Revolution was initially started and supported by the government's highest leader, Mao Zedong, it eventually evolved beyond his and the CCP's oversight or control. The negative effects of the Cultural Revolution impacted China for many years after its conclusion, and the CCP took the events of the Cultural Revolution into account when creating and utilizing its ideology for movements in the future, in order to ensure they would remain in the government's influence.

Tiananmen Square and Patriotic Education Campaign

After Mao's death in 1976, the Chinese government shifted away from his tarnished legacy and towards a new model of society and economics. Deng Xiaoping came to power in 1978 after an inter-party struggle, and continued the trajectory of economic reforms started after Mao's death.²⁵ Deng had a massive impact on the creation of modern China; most notably, his economic reforms during the 'Reform and Opening' period led to massive improvements in the Chinese economy. China was opened to foreign investment and trade, linking the nation to the global economy.²⁶ The standard of living increased and poverty decreased throughout China, though economic inequality began to rise.²⁷ Limited political reforms relaxed many of the draconian policies created during the Mao era, such as violent struggle sessions and self-criticism. People now had increased economic freedom, if not political freedom.

However, despite these differences in policy, Deng's government still drew from the history of Chinese mass movements, and utilized many of the same ideological strategies to tie the public to the government's new policies. Though Deng moved away from Maoism, its tenets still formed the basis of the Chinese government and its ideological rhetoric. Additionally, Deng's reforms along with the long history of public mass movements throughout Chinese history created unforeseen consequences — a grassroots mass movement outside of the government's control.

²⁵ Ezra F. Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), 241.

²⁶ Ezra F. Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China*, 697.

²⁷ Ezra F. Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China*, 703-704.

The Tiananmen Square Protests were a series of mass protests in 1989 for political reform and democracy, led mostly by students in several different cities. The movement began over the death of Hu Yaobang, an official who was removed from office for leniency towards a previous pro-democracy protest.²⁸ They soon took on a more outright anti-government message, calling for the removal of officials and the implementation of democracy, but remained unorganized and lacked a central message. Previous economic and political reforms within China, such as the Reform and Opening movement, created widespread prosperity and the increased popularization of Western-style liberalism, especially in Chinese universities, who came into contact with such ideas more often. Despite these economic reforms, China still lacked political freedom and defined human rights, and political dissidents were subject to harsh punishment. The protests in Tiananmen Square were particularly significant due to their large size, along with the significance of the square throughout the Chinese history of mass movements. The May 4th Movement had occurred largely at Tiananmen Square, and Tiananmen protestors in 1989 claimed the legacy of democracy and equal rights that they saw the May 4th Movement as having fought for.

As the protests continued and grew, several high-level members of the CCP disagreed on what to do about the situation. Local police were unable to suppress the protests or stop them from growing, and the rule of law had broken down in areas the protestors controlled. Allowing the protests to continue would threaten the CCP's control of China, and even the government and state's existence. Deng and other leaders looked at the examples given by mass movements

²⁸ Randolph Kluver, "Rhetorical Trajectories of Tiananmen Square," *Diplomatic History* 34, no. 1 (January 2010): pp. 76.

against governments in Eastern Europe.²⁹ At around the same time as the Tiananmen Square protests in China, massive pro-democracy protests were also occurring throughout Eastern Europe. These protests led the governments of these countries to compromise with protestors, granting some of their demands. In other cases, it led to the abandonment of Communism within the government. Deng and other party members viewed compromise with protestors as untenable, as it could lead to the weakening of the nation's foundational principles, and more importantly to the CCP's loss of complete control over the nation.³⁰ Thus, another solution would have to be found.

First, attempts were made to communicate with protestors and convince them to back down. Once these attempts failed, Deng ordered martial law to be instated, moving the military in to quell the protests. The military was ordered not to use violence, but to instead peacefully quell the protests, enforce curfews, etc. and many military personnel were not armed. This was unsuccessful, as protestors were able to block the military from entering significant regions of Tiananmen Square.³¹ Eventually, Deng advocated for violent reprisal against the protestors. Armed troops were sent back to Tiananmen Square covertly, and managed to surround the area as well as stockpile arms without alerting the protestors. After utilizing tear gas and rubber bullets, the military began firing live rounds, and cleared the protests with decisive force. Hundreds died, thousands were wounded, and even more were arrested. The reaction from foreign countries was intense. China was criticized by many democratic nations, who viewed the

²⁹ M.E. Sarotte, "China's Fear of Contagion: Tiananmen Square and the Power of the European Example," *International Security* 37, no. 2 (2012), 156–82.

³⁰ Ezra F. Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China*, 626.

³¹ Ezra F. Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China*, 620.

protests with sympathy and condemned the bloodshed.³² Internally, although the government suppressed dissent regarding the protests, citizens were wary of the violence and destruction. Many placed blame on top officials for their handling of the protests.

To resolve this issue, Deng internally prepared a series of officials who would assume high-level positions after the protests had been fully resolved. This would quell criticism of the CCP by exchanging the officials who might be blamed for their handling of the conflict.³³ Deng Xiaoping also stepped down from the public eye, though he remained politically involved from behind the scenes. In order to improve the situation, the CCP stepped back on many of the political reforms undertaken during the previous years, although Deng remained firm on preserving and continuing China's economic changes.³⁴ But ultimately, the Tiananmen Square protests raised an essential question among high level CCP members: how could the Party control a mass movement that they had not started, one directly in opposition to the CCP's ideology? At Tiananmen Square, they resorted to violence to quell the protests, but how could such a situation be prevented from occurring again?

Deng Xiaoping viewed this question as a problem of both policy and ideology. Mao's mobilization campaigns moved the hearts and feet of millions, but Maoist fervor had been marred by the Cultural Revolution's legacy, and the mass state-led campaigns of the Maoist era had largely abated. Encouraged by Deng's own economic reforms, which had proven massively successful, protestors had turned to foreign democratic ideology. The answer Deng found was to

³² Randolph Kluver, "Rhetorical Trajectories of Tiananmen Square," pp. 90.

³³ Ezra F. Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China*, 621.

³⁴ Suisheng Zhao, "A State-Led Nationalism: The Patriotic Education Campaign in Post-Tiananmen China," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 31, no. 3 (1998): pp. 289.

utilize mass movement rhetoric to develop patriotism within China, a unifying force that would provide ideological backing to China's population. This sense of patriotism was couched in socialist terms in order to combine past ideas and modes of politics with China's turn away from Maoism and Marxism. "Patriotic "education" linked nationalism to the Communist Party, as the Communists in World War II appealed to patriotism and nationalism to rally support against the Japanese. Conversely, criticism of the Communist Party was ipso facto unpatriotic."³⁵ The Patriotic Education Campaign incorporated people ideologically into defense of the state through patriotism. Deng utilized patriotic education to further link the CCP to China as a whole, and to China's people. Thus, an attack on the CCP, whether from inside or outside China, was an attack on the Chinese state and the Chinese people. Foreign criticism of China's handling of the Tiananmen Square protests provided the perfect environment to engender support for the CCP, as Chinese people felt their nation was targeted globally.

The CCP issued orders to schools in order to encourage the display of patriotic films and TV. New educational guidelines were created, lessening the focus on Marxism in higher education, while replacing it with patriotic programs. The stated goal of this program was "to boost the nation's spirit, enhance its cohesion, foster its self-esteem and sense of pride, consolidate and develop a patriotic united front to the broadest extent, and direct and rally the masses' patriotic passions to the great cause of building socialism with Chinese characteristics".³⁶ This was an attempt to prevent other grassroots mass campaigns, like the Tiananmen Square protests, from occurring, returning to state-run campaigns directed from

³⁵ Ezra F. Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China*, 661.

³⁶ Suisheng Zhao, "A State-Led Nationalism: The Patriotic Education Campaign in Post-Tiananmen China," pp. 293.

above. Though it avoided mass mobilization, it utilized the rhetoric of the mass line, adapted to a new, non-Maoist political and ideological landscape. Deng aimed to replace the void left by China's turn from Maoism and Marxism with nationalism and patriotism. This campaign would also position the new party leadership as being connected to the people, free from the political scandal of Tiananmen Square.

Despite the deemphasize of Maoism and Marxism, the CCP continued to utilize specific Maoist concepts to bolster support for the state. The incorporation of the people into the state through patriotism was very similar to the incorporation of people into the state through the mass line and vanguard, two traditional Maoist concepts. The combination of these two similar concepts — Maoism in support of the state and patriotism in support of the state — allowed for ideological continuity to be maintained despite China's policy shifts and bolstered China's ailing ideology. Now, the CCP was not bound to Maoism in its policies, but instead had created an ideology combining elements of Maoism/Marxism with patriotism to create an ideology that purely supported itself. The continued use of specific Maoist concepts, such as the idea of the mass line and vanguard party, allowed the CCP to continue to claim its legacy of mass movements and public participation while changing the ideological basis of this participation. Since the CCP represented the Chinese people as a vanguard party, an attack on the party was thus an attack on the people. Likewise, an attack on the party was an attack on the nation. While more traditional ideological concepts would provide the means for the defense, patriotism would appeal to people's emotions and involve them in CCP ideology to a much greater extent.

Ultimately, the Patriotic Education Campaign largely succeeded in diverting domestic attention away from the Tiananmen Square protests and suppressing resistance to CCP rule. It

provided a strong basis for the CCP's future ideology — patriotism with socialist characteristics. By lessening ideologies not affiliated with the state, and providing an emotionally appealing alternative, the CCP removed much of the motivation behind potential non-government led mass movements and ideologies. In the future, a combination of government ideological education or 'soft power' with repression or 'hard power' would prevent any other major mass protests like the Tiananmen Square protests from occurring. The only outlet for ideological participation would be through state sanctioned policy.

Anti-Corruption, Rural Revitalization, and the Hong Kong Protests

Before and since Xi's rise to power in 2012, China has embraced more Maoist rhetoric than under his predecessors, and has implemented more policies influenced by Mao's campaigns. Specifically, Xi and the CCP have utilized mass line politics to encourage connection between the CCP and the people, in order to bolster support. Additionally, patriotism was firmly established as a central method for garnering popular support, and was further integrated into the education system.

Even before Xi, the CCP showed a remarkable shift in political messaging. The 'New Socialist Countryside' campaign, which began in 2008 before Xi's rise to power, aimed to strengthen China's rural areas through modernization of agriculture. The language used surrounding this campaign utilized Maoist ideas similar to that of the 'Down to the Countryside' campaign during the Cultural Revolution. Concerning the similarities between the movements, *Mao's Invisible Hand: The Political Foundations of Adaptive Governance in China* states:

Despite careful avoidance of the term "campaign" (yundong, 运动) and substitution of less politically charged terms such as "activity" (huodong, 活动) and "action" (xingdong, 行动), Maoist rhetoric and practices pervade the initiative. An ongoing "three down-to-the-countryside activity" to disseminate science, culture, and hygiene to backward villages is to be folded into a new "three strike-roots action" in which cadres are asked to "squat on a point" in order to institutionalize efforts in rural technology, education, and public health. Implementation is said to require the identification of

“breakthroughs” and the cultivation of “backbones.” The need for mass activism and struggle is constantly invoked.³⁷

Propaganda was used to promote this effort in various regions of China, both to spur rural participation in the project and to encourage urban residents to participate. Participation in the campaign was framed as a way of improving moral education and socialist values. The equation of labor with virtue within a socialist framework was central to Maoist China. These elements and the blatancy with which they referenced Maoist campaigns show the changing political environment in late-2000s China. When references to Maoist campaigns that had cost the lives of millions would have once been taboo, now they were emerging as a key strategy to mobilize support for government policies.

Xi has continued this effort, and likewise uses Maoist rhetoric in the CCP’s promotion of the ‘Rural Revitalization’ campaign in recent years. Recent CCP notices and future plans emphasize the importance of rural learning and experience for Chinese youth.³⁸ This includes similar references to the importance of youth learning about rural life and participating in the movement in order to strengthen rural areas and improve their own education. As such, the ideological experience of the peasant ‘masses’ continues to be prioritized, even in an increasingly urban China. This language also shows the extent to which Mao and Mao’s legacy have become increasingly popular within China and inside of the CCP.

³⁷ Elizabeth J. Perry, “From Mass Campaigns to Managed Campaigns: ‘Constructing a New Socialist Countryside,’” in *Mao’s Invisible Hand: The Political Foundations of Adaptive Governance in China*, ed. Sebastian Heilmann and Elizabeth J. Perry (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2011), pp. 39.

³⁸ “中共中央 国务院印发《中长期青年发展规划（2016 - 2025年）》”（中华人民共和国中央人民政府, April 13, 2017), http://www.gov.cn/zhengce/2017-04/13/content_5185555.htm#2.

Xi continued utilizing Maoist messaging with similar ideas of the mass line in other campaigns and reforms. Xi's anti-corruption campaign in his early years of party control provided a clear example of mass line rhetoric and popular policy. The campaign was undertaken in order to eliminate government corruption and inefficiency, as well as to bolster people's support of the government. It also provided Xi with a way to eliminate potential threats to his position in the early days of his leadership. When initiating this drive, Xi and the CCP as a whole have used Maoist language to compare Xi's actions and the campaign to those of Mao during his purging of the CCP during the Cultural Revolution. Xi advocated for CCP reform "by weeding out the "four undesirable work styles": formalism, bureaucratism, hedonism, and extravagance."³⁹ This phrasing called back to Mao's targeting of the 'four olds' during the Cultural Revolution. Additionally, Xi called for party members to engage in self-criticism, something that was required in Mao's era, with often violent or deadly consequences.

These references to the Maoist era and the Cultural Revolution utilized Maoist nostalgia within China to more firmly establish Xi's control of the CCP and China. Despite the violence and death of the Maoist era, some Chinese people craved the sense of public participation created during that era, along with the feeling of equality with their fellow citizens. Although people were poor, they were all equally poor, and the direct mass campaigns of the Maoist era involved people in the actions of the government, creating a sense of connection to Mao and their fellow citizens. Using familiar concepts and the language of past mass movements links Xi to a long line of mass campaigns, in word if not completely in action.

³⁹ Shannon Tiezzi, "The Mass Line Campaign in the 21st Century," *The Diplomat*, January 8, 2014, <https://thediplomat.com/2013/12/the-mass-line-campaign-in-the-21st-century/>.

Despite Xi's incorporation of Maoist rhetoric into the political landscape of the CCP, it is moderated by decades of separation from Mao. Xi wants to utilize the power of Maoist language, without invoking or creating its negative consequences. Because of this, mass movements under Xi are extremely limited and controlled by the state, and the ideological backing of these movements is likewise moderated. For example, Xi's anti-corruption campaign lacked the widespread violence and harsh criticism of the Cultural Revolution. Few officials faced harsh consequences, and the actions of the CCP were somewhat bound by the rule of law. Public accusations of CCP officials were investigated, limiting the power of the public and political enemies of these officials. In this way, although the same rhetoric of the mass line and self-criticism was used in both the Cultural Revolution and Xi's Anti-Corruption Campaign, it was extremely restricted in the latter. "The Mass Line Campaign in the 21st Century" states:

Xi wants to tackle corruption and is seeking to both do so and boost his own legitimacy by employing a tactic popularized by Mao Zedong himself. However, Xi and China's other leaders fear the actual return of a "mass dictatorship," which represents the mass line campaign taken to the extreme. So Xi and company coax officials to spend time with the people and practice self-criticisms and call it a mass line campaign. This modern version of Mao's mass line campaign avoids actually giving any power of criticism to the people themselves... Still, the Party also acknowledges that the masses are its greatest asset in truly weeding out corruption within the ranks.⁴⁰

While there are various understandings of Xi's sincerity in these measures, the extent to which he is embracing true Maoist rhetoric or intends to use Maoist methods to improve the

⁴⁰ Shannon Tiezzi, "The Mass Line Campaign in the 21st Century," *The Diplomat*, January 8, 2014.

Party is under debate. More likely, it is a method for securing his own position through comparison to China's greatest dictator, who remains a somewhat revered figure within the CCP, and to a certain extent China at large.

Xi's Anti-Corruption campaign also limits itself through the image of obedience to the rule of law. Although Xi and the CCP are able to make laws as they see fit, and are not bound to rule of law as in constitutional democracies, limited rule of law gives legitimacy to China's government. Rule of law additionally plays a role in urging the ideological compliance of citizens, such as in state education on laws and governance. China's educators blend patriotism and more traditional Marxist-Leninist thought, which reinforce the acceptable methods through which Chinese people can participate in political subjects. Textbooks utilize Party rhetoric in teaching about the law, using Maoist ideas to present justification for a lack of political participation. As "Law Does Not Come down from Heaven': Youth Legal Socialisation Approaches in Chinese Textbooks of the Xi Jinping Era" states:

Youth are also taught that they can "demand better implementation of national laws and policies by local government officials." Yet they are told that they must adhere to the leadership of the CCP. Laws are said to be an "embodiment of the will of the ruling class," and the books explain that in China, socialist state law "serves the people," who are "the masters of the country," yet the CCP acts as the vanguard of the people. The party ultimately "leads the people" in the formulation of the Constitution and other laws," directs "the legislation process," and ensures "law enforcement" ... While Chinese citizens – and minors in particular – are said to enjoy a range of rights, the textbooks

emphasize that these rights are only possible because the party is there to protect them.

There is little room for individuals' independent consideration of persistent issues within the political and legal system.⁴¹

The law is linked to the people through the Party, as the CCP is the vanguard of the people. Thus, despite Chinese people largely having no say in the creation or enforcement of laws, they are rhetorically linked to laws and are encouraged to obey them for this reason. Change to these laws is possible, but only through the CCP, which represents the people. The idea of patriotism and the mass line are thus instrumental in generating acceptance for CCP law within China. Law provides another means by which the CCP can secure its power — utilizing the idea of rule of law without actually ceding power to it, as Party will often supersede law, and targets offenders selectively. Individuals are deprived of the ability to exercise politics, but are represented through the Party, which represents the masses. Mass movements are thus able to be expressed only through legal participation in state-led policy efforts, which are extremely limited compared to past eras and closely regulated by the state.

Repression of opposing ideologies has always been necessary in order to maintain a dominant and unchallenged ideological backing within China. Throughout the 2000s before Xi's rise to power, more latitude was given to Chinese citizens in terms of expression, provided they did not overstep certain bounds. However, Xi's control over the CCP has led to massive ideological crackdowns and increased efforts to instill patriotism and Party ideology within citizens. Censorship has increased, as has the targeting of ideological and political opponents to

⁴¹ Orna Naftali, "Law Does Not Come down from Heaven': Youth Legal Socialisation Approaches in Chinese Textbooks of the Xi Jinping Era," *Journal of Current Chinese Affairs* 51, no. 2 (August 2022): pp. 265-291.

the CCP. Criticism of the government can result in censorship or imprisonment, depending on the severity of the offense and the motivation behind it. While censorship ensures less large-scale ideological opposition to the regime, it also causes chafing against the boundaries of these restrictions.

The Hong Kong protests of 2019 and 2020 show how Xi's government has responded to a larger scale of ideological and political challenge. In June of 2019, thousands began protesting against a proposed law allowing for the extradition of people from Hong Kong to the Chinese mainland.⁴² This was thought to endanger Hong Kong's freedom of speech, and infringe upon the 'one country, two systems' policy of governance in Hong Kong, which allowed for relative local control of Hong Kong.⁴³ Like previous protests in China, students were essential in the movement, and protestors adopted democratic ideology and rallying cries. Universities emerged as hotbeds of protest activity, and were quickly targeted by police. Protesters were initially successful in obtain the rejection of the law, but were harshly cracked down on by local police and mainland forces. Violent clashes between police and protestors ensued for the next several months, with several protestors dying and thousands being arrested. Despite this repression, pro-protest officials won local elections in landslide victories in late 2019.

Protests died down due to the Covid-19 pandemic in early 2020, and China further repressed protests by implementing a Hong Kong National Security Law in June 2020. This law created "four new criminal offenses: secession, subversion, terrorism, and colluding with foreign

⁴² "Hong Kong's Protests of 2019," CRS Reports (Congressional Research Service, December 18, 2019).

⁴³ Lindsay Maizland, "Hong Kong's Freedoms: What China Promised and How It's Cracking Down," Council on Foreign Relations (Council on Foreign Relations, May 19, 2022).

forces.”⁴⁴ The broad applicability and variation in sentencing of these charges allowed the Chinese government, in both the mainland and in Hong Kong, to arrest and charge protestors for a wide variety of activities. The National Security Law provided for the censorship of Hong Kong media and education, and undermined the previous elections of pro-protest officials, leading to their removal. Political parties supporting the protests were disbanded and members arrested or forbidden from running for election. Changes to Hong Kong’s electoral system led to a sweeping victory for pro-Beijing candidates in 2021. The law also set up a new government agency in Hong Kong, charged with ensuring ‘national security’ and directly appointed by Beijing.⁴⁵ Along with other changes to the structure of Hong Kong’s government, it disrupts the ‘one country, two systems’ policy previously present in Hong Kong’s interactions with Beijing, demolishing Hong Kong’s mostly independent rule of law. Ultimately, it gives Beijing and the CCP almost total control over Hong Kong.

In addition to an extension of mainland control over Hong Kong through law and politics, the CCP has increased its ideological and patriotic education within Hong Kong. New textbooks are being created for children’s education, deemphasizing the role of Western nations, such as Britain, in Hong Kong’s history, and emphasizing the history and influence of Mainland China. High school courses on ‘liberal studies’, which covers debates and the analysis of complex

⁴⁴ Antony Dapiran, “Hong Kong’s National Security Law,” In *Crisis*, ed. Jane Golley, Linda Jaivin, and Sharon Strange (ANU Press, 2021), 60.

⁴⁵ Antony Dapiran, “Hong Kong’s National Security Law,” 64.

topics, including CCP history, have been overhauled. Instruction time has been cut in half, as many officials worry that the class teaches students to ‘hate China’.⁴⁶

In the case of Hong Kong, Mainland China and the CCP under Xi have dealt with ideological challenge through repression and reeducation. An initial wave of repression, coupled with legal changes if necessary, is met with later ideological reinforcement through education. This aims to create ideological supporters for the regime and minimize ideological opponents, thus legitimizing its control over China through popular will.

⁴⁶ Sarah Wu, “China Wields Patriotic Education to Tame Hong Kong's Rebellious Youth,” Reuters (Thomson Reuters, November 26, 2020).

Discussion & Analysis

Over time, the CCP has developed an ideology and state practices that encourage state-led mass participation, while discouraging grassroots mass participation through both coercive and constructive means. The most important elements in the construction of the CCP's modern ideology are the mass line and patriotism. China's current political landscape is informed by various mass movements throughout Chinese history, both state-led and grassroots, which have shaped Party ideology and politics.

Maoist China emphasized Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought, forming China's ideological basis for the future. Mao justified control of China through the ideas of the vanguard party and the mass line, and utilized mass mobilization campaigns to achieve his political and social goals. The Cultural Revolution had a massive impact on Chinese society and politics, as one of the most deadly and violent events in modern Chinese history. Political repression during the Cultural Revolution resulted in the alienation of Chinese people from politics, while coercing them to toe the party line. Research shows that areas affected more by the Cultural Revolution have stronger occurrences of resistance to the CCP, potentially because of intergenerational transmission of anti-CCP political attitudes. In general, "citizens who live under these bad institutions develop hostile attitudes toward their political authorities, but are less likely to engage in contentious behavior due to the renewed threat of persecution."⁴⁷ While political repression is associated with hostility towards the leaders and regimes that perpetrated that political repression, this is largely not the case with China and the Cultural Revolution. One

⁴⁷ Yuhua Wang, "The Political Legacy of Violence during China's Cultural Revolution," *British Journal of Political Science* 51, no. 2 (2019): pp. 9.

reason for this is that China's censorship of the Cultural Revolution has affected how it has been remembered within China, lessening the hostility towards the event and thus the CCP by association. Additionally, continued political repression coerces individuals with anti-CCP opinions into compliance with the regime, and makes them less likely to participate in anti-CCP activities.

However, as the Cultural Revolution has become further removed from the modern day, through the passage of time and censorship of the event, the likelihood of political fallout from the Cultural Revolution likewise grows further removed. Those who were affected by it are dying out, and the events that affected them have been censored. People who had anti-CCP sentiments would be coerced through threats of repression and censorship to comply with the regime. In this way, the anti-CCP attitude that could have emerged from the Cultural Revolution was lessened. This provided a blueprint for dealing with negative sentiment towards the CCP over other negative events in the future.

Deng shifted China away from Maoism, but continued to utilize some ideas from the Maoist period to generate legitimacy. The Tiananmen Square Protests provided a challenge to CCP ideology and rule, resulting in violence and ideological change within the Party. The CCP relied on patriotism and nationalism to augment its ideology and provide a means by which to generate support for the state and the CCP. CCP ideology during the Patriotic Education Movement incorporated more cooperative elements into its ideology along with coercion. Opposition to the regime would be lessened through education, convincing people to support the CCP on their own. Opponents to the regime would be repressed, further encouraging people to comply. These two elements provided a strong backing to the CCP and its ideology, lessening

dissent and enabling the CCP to retain control of China and Chinese politics for decades. The economic growth achieved by China during and since Deng's rule additionally made it easier for Chinese people to support the state and the CCP, despite political repression.

Like his predecessors, Xi Jinping relies on the traditional rhetoric of the mass line and vanguard along with patriotism. However, Xi has shifted the CCP and China as a whole towards a more Maoist style of rhetoric, directly referencing Maoist ideas that were taboo just years before and implementing policies that compare him to Mao. Despite this turn, he has continued to moderate this rhetoric through carefully managed campaigns and policies. Xi has also continued to use patriotism to generate support, turning more and more to traditional Chinese culture as a means to do so. Ultimately, Xi and the CCP were massively impacted by the development of Chinese ideology throughout modern Chinese history, and are now taking steps to further structure that ideology to suit their own needs in order to retain control into the future. In an increasingly connected online era, it is proving harder to control the information available to the Chinese people concerning other nations, political systems, and ideologies. Xi's increased censorship and repression of dissent has led to less outright ideological challenge within China, but has resulted in some dissatisfaction and protests in regards to his policies. Some Chinese citizens use VPNs and other programs to circumvent Chinese censorship, exposing them to ideas and debates from outside China, and providing them the opportunity to engage in this themselves. As Chinese censorship and regulation gets stronger and more enforced, and affects more people more strongly, it is likely that there will be more pushback against these policies.

China's 'Zero Covid Policy' along with its censorship of issues regarding the policy have recently led to protests within mainland China, on a scale not seen since the Tiananmen Square

Protests in 1989. The circumstances regarding these protests are different, however; the Tiananmen Square protests were much larger and more explicitly ideologically driven, while the Zero Covid protests are mostly a response to specific policies carried out by the government. Some protestors have invoked similar ideas as the Tiananmen Square Protests, such as advocating for democracy, but mostly in the context of chants and slogans, rather than these ideas forming the base of the protest itself.

The Zero Covid policy had a massive impact on China and the Chinese people. Like many countries during the Covid-19 pandemic, the Chinese economy experienced an economic downturn. Unlike other countries, which lessened their Covid restrictions, China continued them well into 2022, which continued to hamper its economy.⁴⁸ This affected people's ability to work and make a living, leading to pushback against the policy and social conflict within China. Recently, Zero Covid protests played a role in the government's rollback of the Zero Covid policy. Covid mass testing and case tracking have been massively decreased, and Covid-positive patients are now allowed to quarantine at home rather than being bussed to a government-run quarantine facility. Most notably, it has ended the infamous city-wide lockdowns that Chinese cities were subject to for months at a time, a point of severe contention for protesters.⁴⁹ The CCP claimed that the policy was rolled back due to a decrease in the severity of current Covid strains, as well as the increase of vaccination within China, but the protests likely played a large role in

⁴⁸ Jason Douglas and Sha Hua, "China's Economy Struggled in Zero-Covid's Final Month," *The Wall Street Journal* (Dow Jones & Company, December 15, 2022), <https://www.wsj.com/articles/chinas-economy-struggled-in-zero-covids-final-month-11671083136>.

⁴⁹ Joe McDonald, "China Eases Anti-COVID Measures Following Protests," *AP NEWS* (Associated Press, December 7, 2022), <https://apnews.com/article/health-business-china-covid-economy-e5559f6062cf052a71ad6ba1ceece693>.

determining the government's actions and their timing. Economic concerns also likely played a role, as the Chinese economy continued to struggle during Zero Covid.⁵⁰ The protests against Zero Covid show the reciprocity of the relationship between the CCP and Chinese citizens. Economic success under the CCP since Deng's era led to people accepting their rule despite a lack of political rights, but when economic wellbeing is threatened, the people begin to come into increased conflict with the CCP.

The rollback of Zero Covid is an unprecedented shift in policy, and has signaled to Chinese citizens that CCP policy could be affected by mass protest. Although protests have died down recently after the end of the policy, it is quite possible that this rollback could lead to future protests of a similar or larger scale concerning different policies or topics.⁵¹ This could undo China's political and ideological messaging since the Tiananmen Square Protests, in which they have constructed state policy and ideology to be hostile towards non-state led mass movements. As Xi has linked himself publicly to the Zero Covid Policy, the protests and the policy's rollback represents a blow against him as the CCP's leader, potentially weakening his image within China. Additionally, the end of the Zero Covid Policy will lead to a massive rise in Covid cases within China, destroying the efforts that China has made to lessen Covid deaths and present themselves as a Covid-free state. This will cause a situation similar to that seen in most countries

⁵⁰ Kathy Huang and Mengyu Han, "Did China's Street Protests End Harsh COVID Policies?," Council on Foreign Relations (Council on Foreign Relations, December 14, 2022), <https://www.cfr.org/blog/did-chinas-street-protests-end-harsh-covid-policies>.

⁵¹ "Xi's Covid Retreat Shows China Masses They Have Real Power," Bloomberg.com (Bloomberg, December 7, 2022), <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-12-07/xi-s-swift-covid-retreat-shows-china-masses-they-have-real-power>.

during the early stages of the pandemic, with overcrowded hospitals and exhausted resources.⁵² The lack of efficacy of China's Covid vaccines may also lead to higher case numbers and death rates than in countries with more effective vaccines.

In the future, China will likely make policy changes in order to keep similar protests from happening. The CCP may take more steps to control or change the opinions of the masses, through increased coercive and consensual means. Socialist and patriotic education may be strengthened to encourage cooperation with government policies through an ideological lens, in order to further prevent potential ideological challenges from both within and outside the country. Censorship and other forms of coercion will likely become more prevalent, although Chinese citizens are already chafing under the current restrictions. Whether these changes will be effective in shoring up the CCP's ideology remains to be seen.

The idea of the mass line implies reciprocity — a party which takes the opinions of its people into consideration, which formulates policy to benefit its people, instead of for control or personal gain. A failure to uphold or ascertain the mass line can thus isolate the vanguard party from the masses which grant the party legitimacy. Likewise, patriotism or love for one's country can be turned against a ruling party that the people feel harms the nation. Increasingly the CCP seems to be overstepping the bounds of ideology and repression, creating a situation so untenable that Chinese citizens of varying ideological persuasions have resisted state control to protest it. While previously that did not prove to be a problem for the CCP's policy making, the people have made their voices heard on a large scale outside of the government's approved methods. In fact, citizens have used elements of CCP ideology in order to encourage an end to Covid

⁵² Thomas Mackintosh, "Coronavirus: China's Hospitals Seem to Be Filling up - WHO," BBC News (BBC, December 22, 2022), <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-64056549>.

lockdowns and other policy changes, such as Xi's resignation. By claiming to represent the people, and by promoting the strengthening of the people and the nation through various changes, protestors are utilizing some of the CCP's own rhetoric to challenge its policies and control. This shows the limits and failures of the CCP's ideology.

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