PART 2

Bullet 1

The Government of the People’s Republic of China

Mao’s Authority

- Mao was the undisputed leader of the People’s Republic of China. He was President of China and also Chairman of the CCP
- Mao’s political ideas were based on Marx, but he interpreted those in his own way
- Marx and Soviet leaders had believed that the proletariat (urban working class) had been the key to communist success. Mao followed the Chinese tradition of relying on peasants
- Mao also believed in the human will; that difficulties could be overcome through sheer persistence. This led him to rely on mass manual labour as a means of achieving economic progress
- In China, human labour was plentiful but technology was in short supply
- Despite differences, China immediately became a one party state. All other parties were suppressed in a series of purges from 1950 to 1952
- From 1949 to 1976, all rivals who attempted to challenge Mao came to an end
- Maoist slogans began to appear on walls all over China for the first time.
- 65,000 people were killed in Guangzhou and 28,000 in Shanghai. All organisations were closed down e.g. churches
- The Danwei (neighbourhood unit) became the chief means of repression and control. People were expected to spy on each other. 700,000 were killed and 1.5 million arrested
- All people aged 15+ needed official residence certified from the police and permission to move
- Mao used this hysteria to whip up anti-western feeling. Foreign businesses were taken over and foreigners were attacked
- New Democratic Youth League – 9 million members by 1953

China’s governing

- China was governed by the CCP - Central Committee, from which was appointed the Politburo. This in turn had a five man standing committee, which took all major decisions - five members were, Mao, Liu Shaoqi, Zhou Enlai, Zhu De and Chen Yun.
- Liu controlled the CCP and, with Deng Xiaoping, was the most important organiser in the party. Liu was expected to become leader of China after Mao, but he fell from power in the Cultural Revolution.
- Zhou Enlai was the prime minister and foreign minister and ran the government. He was a smooth talking bureaucrat, who managed to survive, virtually unscathed, all of the changes under Mao. He died just a few months before Mao in 1976.
Zhu De was the most important figure in the PLA (People’s Liberation Army) and took overall command during the Korean War. He was dismissed in 1966, but returned in 1971.

Chen Yun was an economist who was responsible for many of the changes in industry in the 1950s. He was the figure behind the reforms of Liu and Deng in the early 1960s, but was dismissed in 1966.

Control of China was divided up between the main leaders. The country was split into six 'bureaus', or districts.

The three most important were Manchuria in the north-east controlled Gao Gang; the south-west run by Deng Xiaoping; the south where Lin Biao was in charge.

The creation of the bureaus resulted in a high degree of centralisation. In fact, final decisions were in the hands of the CCP because all bureaus were controlled by senior party figures.

Other important figures

Lin Biao, a general, was seen as a possible successor to Mao but was killed in a plane crash in 1971 after an attempted coup.

Gao Gang, a former general, took over central planning after 1950, but was dismissed for supporting the Soviet Union and for sexual scandals. He committed suicide in 1954.

Peng Duhai was the senior general during the Korean War and later became Minister of Defence. He fell from power after criticising the Great Leap Forward in 1959.

3 + 5 anti’s

These campaigns were accompanied in 1951 and 1952 by the ‘three anti’s’ and ‘five anti’s’ movements respectively.

The former was supposedly directed against the evils of ‘corruption, waste, and bureaucratism’

Its real aim was to eliminate incompetent and politically unreliable public officials and to bring about an efficient, disciplined, and responsive bureaucratic system.

The five ‘anti’s’ movement aimed at eliminating corrupt businessmen and industrialists, who were in effect the targets of the CCP’s condemnation of ‘tax evasion, bribery, cheating, thefts of economic intelligence, and theft of state property’

The Hundred Flowers Campaign

Mao had travelled widely throughout China during the early 1950s and had always been received very warmly. He appears to have believed that it was now possible to allow greater freedom of expression in China.

Mao had also heard that local CCP officials had been accused of acting heavy-handedly and wanted to hear other opinions.

The success of the First Five Year Plan created huge problems. Food and housing were in very short supply and there was a great deal of criticism of the Plan.