**Three Views of Chinese Communism**

The Evolution of Chinese Communism from Mao Tse-Tung through Today

From: Are Bad Guys Ever Good?, 2009

**History Standards: 10.9.4**

Analyze the Chinese Civil War, the rise of Mao Tse-tung, and the subsequent political and economic upheavals in China (e.g., the Great Leap Forward, the Cultural Revolution, and the Tiananmen Square uprising).

**CCSS Standards: Reading, Grades 9-10**2.Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.
5. Analyze how a text uses structure to emphasize key points or advance an explanation or analysis.

6. Compare the point of view of two or more authors for how they treat the same or similar topics, including which details they include and emphasize in their respective accounts.

**Guiding Question:**

How has China’s political economy changed over time and stayed the same?

What do you think China of the 21st century will look like?

Will it resemble a more traditional, dictatorial communist regime or will leaders embrace a more democratic, economically progressive regime in this global economy? Or something else?

**Overview of Lesson:**

This lesson is comprised of three sources from different point in the 20th century. After each source, there are several discussion questions, suitable for partners, small groups, or whole class discussion. They could also be used as writing prompts. After reviewing all three sources (with necessary scaffolding at the teacher’s discretion), students should be able to address the Guiding Questions orally or in writing.

**Three Views of Chinese Communism**

**Viewpoint 1**

***Background***

*The Constitution of China states that only under the guidance of the Chinese Communist party will China develop and become strong. Only a small percentage of the population is believed to possess the qualifications to be party members and thus play a guiding role in China's development.*

**Quotations from Chairman Mao on Being a Communist in China**

At no time and in no circumstances should a Communist place his personal interests first; he should subordinate them to the interests of the nation and of the masses. Hence, selfishness, slacking, corruption, seeking the limelight, and so on, are most contemptible, while selflessness, working with all one's energy, whole-hearted devotion to public duty, and quiet hard work will command respect.
**— "The Role of the Chinese Communist Party in the National War," October 1938.**

Communists should set an example in being practical as well as far-sighted. For only by being practical can they fulfill the appointed tasks, and only far-sightedness can prevent them from losing their bearings in the march forward.
**— "The Role of the Chinese Communist Party in the National War," October 1938.**

Communists should be the most far-sighted, the most self-sacrificing, the most resolute, and the least prejudiced in sizing up situations, and should rely on the majority of the masses and win their support.
**— "The Tasks of the Chinese Communist Party in the Period of Resistance to Japan," May 3, 1937.**

Taken from: *The Little Red Book: Quotations From Chairman Mao*. Beijing Foreign Languages Press, 1972.

**How to be a Good Communist, by Liu Shaoqi**

A good Communist Party member is one who combines the great and lofty ideals of Communism with practical work and the spirit of searching for the truth from concrete facts.

What is the most fundamental and common duty of us Communist Party members? As everybody knows, it is to establish Communism, to transform the present world into a Communist world. Is a Communist world good or not? We all know that it is very good. In such a world there will be no exploiters, oppressors, landlords, capitalists, imperialists, or fascists. There will be no oppressed and exploited people, no darkness, ignorance, backwardness, etc. In such a society all human beings will become unselfish and intelligent Communists with a high level of culture and technique. The spirit of mutual assistance and mutual love will prevail among mankind. There will be no such irrational things as mutual deception, mutual antagonism, mutual slaughter and war, etc. Such a society will, of course, be the best, the most beautiful, and the most advanced society in the history of mankind. Who will say that such a society is not good?

At all times and on all questions, a Communist Party member should take into account the interests of the Party as a whole, and place the Party's interests above his personal problems and interests. It is the highest principle of our Party members that the Party's interests are supreme.

A Communist Party member should possess all the greatest and noblest virtues of mankind. He should also possess the strict and clear-cut standpoint of the Party and of the proletariat (that is, Party spirit and class character). Our ethics are great precisely because they are the ethics of Communism and of the proletariat. Such ethics are not built upon the backward basis of safeguarding the interest of individuals or a small number of exploiters. They are built, on the contrary, upon the progressive basis of the interests of the proletariat, of the ultimate emancipation of mankind as a whole, of saving the world from destruction and of building a happy and beautiful Communist world.

**Discussion Questions:**

* What type of sources are these two excerpts, primary or secondary? How do you know?
* List some of the qualities Mao Zedong and Liu Shaoqi thought were important for Communist Party members to have.
* List some of the qualities Communists see as negative.
* What is the general viewpoint or feeling about the Communist party that is expressed in these excerpts?

**Viewpoint 2**

***Background***

*In 1978, Deng Xiaoping began efforts to reform China and called on people to boost their incomes through involvement in economic activities on the side, saying that making money is not all bad. The motto "To Get Rich is Glorious" became popular because getting rich would help raise a person's standard of living, contribute to the overall development of China, and provide the population with greater incentives to work hard. Deng argued that if people had the freedom to produce what they wanted and to sell their surpluses, China would develop faster and more efficiently. It was not clear, however, how Deng's reforms could be reconciled with the ideological basis of "being a good party member."*

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| Deng Xiaoping: The Economic Reformer | SmallLogo |

Born in 1904, Deng was one of the first generation of Chinese Communist Party leaders. He held prominent positions in the government in the 1950s and 1960s, but he was removed from office and imprisoned during the years of the Cultural Revolution, 1966-76. His family was persecuted. Deng Xiaoping reemerged as China's paramount leader shortly after the death of Mao in 1976.

Deng Xiaoping's goal in 1976 was to set China back on the course of economic development that had been badly interrupted during the final years of Mao's leadership. Deng's rallying cry became the "Four Modernizations," articulated by Zhou Enlai in 1975, which entailed the development of industry, agriculture, defense, and science and technology. He set the course of reform by dismantling the communes set up under Mao and replaced them with the Household Responsibility System (HRS), within which each household must be held accountable to the state for only what it agrees to produce, and is free to keep surplus output for private use. In addition to this program, which was an incentive for households to produce more, Deng encouraged farmers to engage in private entrepreneurship and sideline businesses in order to supplement their incomes.

Deng Xiaoping said that "practice is the sole criterion of truth," and believed that only by experimenting with alternative forms of production and entrepreneurial activity would China find the best path for economic development. Thus began China's experiments with capitalist methods of production. As Deng said, "it does not matter if a cat is black or white so long as it catches the mouse;" it no longer matters if an economic policy is capitalist or socialist, in other words, as long as it results in economic growth.

Deng also wanted to set up an arrangement whereby leadership succession would take place according to legal guidelines rather than personality struggles. In general, he hoped to establish a social and political order governed by "rule by law, not by man." Even after he had retired from his formal positions, Deng encouraged his aging comrades to follow this example. Deng's commitment to replacing the aging leaders suffered a setback, however. When faced with demands for political reforms by students and citizens throughout China in 1989, Deng ordered the military to move in and clear Tiananmen Square, where they were demonstrating for greater freedom of speech and press, and greater accountability on the party of government. Pro-reform leaders like Zhao Ziyang were removed from office and many of the retired leaders, many of whom did not support Zhao's reform effort, returned to power after June 4, 1989.

Economically, China has entered a very difficult period characterized by unemployment and general uncertainty.

**Composed by** **Catherine H. Keyser**

**Discussion Questions:**

* What type of source is this, primary or secondary? How do you know?
* Describe the economic changes made to Chinese Communism under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping.
* Did the author of this excerpt see these changes as positive or negative? In your answer, explain the author’s perspective.
* Describe Deng Xiaoping’s leadership style.
	+ What was his stance on granting more democratic rights to Chinese citizens?
	+ How did he react to those who challenged his authority?
	+ Was his style similar to Mao’s? Explain your answer.

**Viewpoint 3**

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| 0524Shanghai200xx**Photo #1 - Shanghai Waterfront** | StarbucksShanghai360crop **Photo #2 - Shanghai Starbucks** |

**Discussion Questions:**

* What type of sources are these, primary or secondary? How do you know?
* Describe what you see in photo #1:
* Describe what you see in photo #2:
* Do these images reflect the ideas from Viewpoint 1 or Viewpoint 2 more? Explain your answer.
* Do these images reflect Chinese Communism? Can you have both communism and capitalism working together to meet one goal?