Nationalists and Communists soon resumed. Realizing that American efforts short of large-scale armed intervention could not stop the war, the United States withdrew the American mission, headed by General George C. Marshall, in early 1947. The civil war, in which the United States aided the Nationalists with massive economic loans but no military support, became more widespread. Battles raged not only for territories but also for the allegiance of cross sections of the population.

Belatedly, the Nationalist government sought to enlist popular support through internal reforms. The effort was in vain, however, because of the rampant corruption in government and the accompanying political and economic chaos. By late 1948 the Nationalist position was bleak. The demoralized and undisciplined Nationalist troops proved no match for the People's Liberation Army (PLA). The Communists were well established in the north and northeast. Although the Nationalists had an advantage in numbers of men and weapons, controlled a much larger territory and population than their adversaries, and enjoyed considerable international support, they were exhausted by the long war with Japan and the attendant internal responsibilities. In January 1949 Beiping was taken by the Communists without a fight, and its name was changed back to Beijing. Between April and November, major cities passed from Guomindang to Communist control with minimal resistance. In most cases the surrounding countryside and small towns had come under Communist influence long before the cities. After Chiang Kai-shek and a few hundred thousand Nationalist troops fled from the mainland to the island of Taiwan, there remained only isolated pockets of resistance. In December 1949 Chiang proclaimed Taipei, Taiwan, the temporary capital of China.

The People's Republic of China

On October 1, 1949, the People's Republic of China was formally established, with its national capital at Beijing. "The Chinese people have stood up!" declared Mao as he announced the creation of a "people's democratic dictatorship." The *people* were defined as a coalition of four social classes: the workers, the peasants, the petite bourgeoisie, and the national-capitalists. The four classes were to be led by the CCP, as the vanguard of the working class. At that time the CCP claimed a membership of 4.5 million, of which members of peasant origin accounted for nearly 90 percent. The party was under Mao's chairmanship, and the government was headed by Zhou Enlai (1898–1976) as premier of the State Administrative Council (the predecessor of the State Council).

The Soviet Union recognized the People's Republic on October 2, 1949. Earlier in the year, Mao had proclaimed his policy of "leaning to one side" as a commitment to the socialist bloc. In February 1950, after months of hard bargaining, China and the Soviet Union signed the Treaty of Friendship, Alliance, and Mutual Assistance, valid until 1980. The pact also was intended to counter Japan or any power's joining Japan for the purpose of aggression.

For the first time in decades a Chinese government was met with peace, instead of massive military opposition, within its territory. The new leadership was highly disciplined and, having a decade of wartime administrative experience to draw on, was able to embark on a program of national integration and reform. In the first year of Communist administration, moderate social and economic policies were implemented with skill and effectiveness. The leadership realized that the overwhelming and multitudinous task of economic reconstruction and achievement of political and social stability required the goodwill and cooperation of all classes of people. Results were impressive by any standard, and popular support was widespread.

By 1950 international recognition of the Communist government had increased considerably, but it was slowed by China's involvement in the Korean War. In October 1950, sensing a threat to the industrial heartland in northeast China from the advancing United Nations (UN) forces in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea), units of the PLA—calling themselves the Chinese People's Volunteers—crossed the Yalü Jiang River into North Korea in response to a North Korean request for aid. Almost simultaneously the PLA forces also marched into Xizang to reassert Chinese sovereignty over a region that had been in effect independent of Chinese rule since the fall of the Qing dynasty in 1911. In 1951 the UN declared China to be an aggressor in Korea and sanctioned a global embargo on the shipment of arms and war matériel to China. This step foreclosed for the time being any possibility that the People's Republic might replace Nationalist China (on Taiwan) as a member of the UN and as a veto-holding member of the UN Security Council.

After China entered the Korean War, the initial moderation in Chinese domestic policies gave way to a massive campaign against the "enemies of the state," actual and potential. These enemies consisted of "war criminals, traitors, bureaucratic capitalists, and counterrevolutionaries." The campaign was combined with party-sponsored trials attended by huge numbers of people. The major targets in this drive were foreigners and Christian missionaries who

were branded as United States agents at these mass trials. The 1951–52 drive against political enemies was accompanied by land reform, which had actually begun under the Agrarian Reform Law of June 28, 1950. The redistribution of land was accelerated, and a class struggle (see Glossary) against landlords and wealthy peasants was launched. An ideological reform campaign requiring self-criticisms and public confessions by university faculty members, scientists, and other professional workers was given wide publicity. Artists and writers were soon the objects of similar treatment for failing to heed Mao's dictum that culture and literature must reflect the class interest of the working people, led by the CCP. These campaigns were accompanied in 1951 and 1952 by the *san fan* (''three anti'') and *wu fan* (''five anti'') movements. The former was directed ostensibly 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 *wu fan* movement aimed at eliminating recalcitrant and corrupt businessmen and industrialists, who were in effect the targets of the CCP's condemnation of ''tax evasion, bribery, cheating in government contracts, thefts of economic intelligence, and stealing of state assets.'' In the course of this campaign the party claimed to have uncovered a well-organized attempt by businessmen and industrialists to corrupt party and government officials. This charge was enlarged into an assault on the bourgeoisie as a whole. The number of people affected by the various punitive or reform campaigns was estimated in the millions.

The Transition to Socialism, 1953–57

The period of officially designated ''transition to socialism'' corresponded to China's First Five-Year Plan (1953–57). The period was characterized by efforts to achieve industrialization, collectivization of agriculture, and political centralization.

The First Five-Year Plan stressed the development of heavy industry on the Soviet model. Soviet economic and technical assistance was expected to play a significant part in the implementation of the plan, and technical agreements were signed with the Soviets in 1953 and 1954. For the purpose of economic planning, the first modern census was taken in 1953; the population of mainland China was shown to be 583 million, a figure far greater than had been anticipated.

Among China's most pressing needs in the early 1950s were food for its burgeoning population, domestic capital for investment, and purchase of Soviet-supplied technology, capital equipment, and

military hardware. To satisfy these needs, the government began to collectivize agriculture. Despite internal disagreement as to the speed of collectivization, which at least for the time being was resolved in Mao's favor, preliminary collectivization was 90 percent completed by the end of 1956. In addition, the government nationalized banking, industry, and trade. Private enterprise in mainland China was virtually abolished.

Major political developments included the centralization of party and government administration. Elections were held in 1953 for delegates to the First National People's Congress, China's national legislature, which met in 1954. The congress promulgated the state constitution of 1954 and formally elected Mao chairman (or president) of the People's Republic; it elected Liu Shaoqi (1898–1969) chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress and named Zhou Enlai premier of the new State Council.

In the midst of these major governmental changes, and helping to precipitate them, was a power struggle within the CCP leading to the 1954 purge of Political Bureau member Gao Gang and Party Organization Department head Rao Shushi, who were accused of illicitly trying to seize control of the party.

The process of national integration also was characterized by improvements in party organization under the administrative direction of the secretary general of the party, Deng Xiaoping (who served concurrently as vice premier of the State Council). There was a marked emphasis on recruiting intellectuals, who by 1956 constituted nearly 12 percent of the party's 10.8 million members. Peasant membership had decreased to 69 percent, while there was an increasing number of "experts" (see Glossary), who were needed for the party and governmental infrastructures, in the party ranks.

As part of the effort to encourage the participation of intellectuals in the new regime, in mid-1956 there began an official effort to liberalize the political climate (see Policy Toward Intellectuals, ch. 4). Cultural and intellectual figures were encouraged to speak their minds on the state of CCP rule and programs. Mao personally took the lead in the movement, which was launched under the classical slogan "Let a hundred flowers bloom, let the hundred schools of thought contend." At first the party's repeated invitation to air constructive views freely and openly was met with caution. By mid-1957, however, the movement unexpectedly mounted, bringing denunciation and criticism against the party in general and the excesses of its cadres in particular. Startled and embarrassed, leaders turned on the critics as "bourgeois rightists" and launched the Anti-Rightist Campaign. The Hundred Flowers Campaign (see Glossary),

Zhou Enlai, Liu Shaoqi, Zhu De, and Mao Zedong in 1957
Courtesy China Pictorial

sometimes called the Double Hundred Campaign, apparently had a sobering effect on the CCP leadership.

The Great Leap Forward, 1958–60

The antirightist drive was followed by a militant approach toward economic development. In 1958 the CCP launched the Great Leap Forward campaign under the new "General Line for Socialist Construction." The Great Leap Forward was aimed at accomplishing the economic and technical development of the country at a vastly faster pace and with greater results. The shift to the left that the new "General Line" represented was brought on by a combination of domestic and external factors. Although the party leaders appeared generally satisfied with the accomplishments of the First Five-Year Plan, they—Mao and his fellow radicals in particular—believed that more could be achieved in the Second Five-Year Plan (1958–62) if the people could be ideologically aroused and if domestic resources could be utilized more efficiently for the simultaneous development of industry and agriculture. These assumptions led the party to an intensified mobilization of the peasantry and mass organizations, stepped-up ideological guidance and indoctrination of technical experts, and efforts to build a more responsive political system. The last of these undertakings was to be accomplished through a new *xiafang* (down to the countryside) movement, under

which cadres inside and outside the party would be sent to factories, communes, mines, and public works projects for manual labor and firsthand familiarization with grass-roots conditions. Although evidence is sketchy, Mao's decision to embark on the Great Leap Forward was based in part on his uncertainty about the Soviet policy of economic, financial, and technical assistance to China. That policy, in Mao's view, not only fell far short of his expectations and needs but also made him wary of the political and economic dependence in which China might find itself (see Sino-Soviet Relations, ch. 12).

The Great Leap Forward centered on a new socioeconomic and political system created in the countryside and in a few urban areas—the people's communes (see Glossary). By the fall of 1958, some 750,000 agricultural producers' cooperatives, now designated as production brigades, had been amalgamated into about 23,500 communes, each averaging 5,000 households, or 22,000 people. The individual commune was placed in control of all the means of production and was to operate as the sole accounting unit; it was subdivided into production brigades (generally coterminous with traditional villages) and production teams. Each commune was planned as a self-supporting community for agriculture, small-scale local industry (for example, the famous backyard pig-iron furnaces), schooling, marketing, administration, and local security (maintained by militia organizations). Organized along paramilitary and laborsaving lines, the commune had communal kitchens, mess halls, and nurseries. In a way, the people's communes constituted a fundamental attack on the institution of the family, especially in a few model areas where radical experiments in communal living—large dormitories in place of the traditional nuclear-family housing—occurred. (These were quickly dropped.) The system also was based on the assumption that it would release additional manpower for such major projects as irrigation works and hydroelectric dams, which were seen as integral parts of the plan for the simultaneous development of industry and agriculture (see Agricultural Policies, ch. 6).

The Great Leap Forward was an economic failure. In early 1959, amid signs of rising popular restiveness, the CCP admitted that the favorable production report for 1958 had been exaggerated. Among the Great Leap Forward's economic consequences were a shortage of food (in which natural disasters also played a part); shortages of raw materials for industry; overproduction of poor-quality goods; deterioration of industrial plants through mismanagement; and exhaustion and demoralization of the peasantry and of the intellectuals, not to mention the party and government cadres

at all levels. Throughout 1959 efforts to modify the administration of the communes got under way; these were intended partly to restore some material incentives to the production brigades and teams, partly to decentralize control, and partly to house families that had been reunited as household units.

Political consequences were not inconsiderable. In April 1959 Mao, who bore the chief responsibility for the Great Leap Forward fiasco, stepped down from his position as chairman of the People's Republic. The National People's Congress elected Liu Shaoqi as Mao's successor, though Mao remained chairman of the CCP. Moreover, Mao's Great Leap Forward policy came under open criticism at a party conference at Lushan, Jiangxi Province. The attack was led by Minister of National Defense Peng Dehuai, who had become troubled by the potentially adverse effect Mao's policies would have on the modernization of the armed forces. Peng argued that "putting politics in command" was no substitute for economic laws and realistic economic policy; unnamed party leaders were also admonished for trying to "jump into communism in one step." After the Lushan showdown, Peng Dehuai, who allegedly had been encouraged by Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev to oppose Mao, was deposed. Peng was replaced by Lin Biao, a radical and opportunist Maoist. The new defense minister initiated a systematic purge of Peng's supporters from the military.

Militancy on the domestic front was echoed in external policies (see Evolution of Foreign Policy, ch. 12). The "soft" foreign policy based on the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence (see Glossary) to which China had subscribed in the mid-1950s gave way to a "hard" line in 1958. From August through October of that year, the Chinese resumed a massive artillery bombardment of the Nationalist-held offshore islands of Jinmen (Chin-men in Wade-Giles, but often referred to as Kinmen or Quemoy) and Mazu (Ma-tsu in Wade-Giles). This was accompanied by an aggressive propaganda assault on the United States and a declaration of intent to "liberate" Taiwan.

Chinese control over Xizang had been reasserted in 1950. The socialist revolution that took place thereafter increasingly became a process of sinicization for the Tibetans. Tension culminated in a revolt in 1958–59 and the flight to India by the Dalai Lama, the Tibetans' spiritual and de facto temporal leader. Relations with India—where sympathy for the rebels was aroused—deteriorated as thousands of Tibetan refugees crossed the Indian border. There were several border incidents in 1959, and a brief Sino-Indian border war erupted in October 1962 as China laid claim to Aksai Chin, nearly 103,600 square kilometers of territory that India

regarded as its own (see Physical Environment, ch. 2). The Soviet Union gave India its moral support in the dispute, thus contributing to the growing tension between Beijing and Moscow.

The Sino-Soviet dispute of the late 1950s was the most important development in Chinese foreign relations. The Soviet Union had been China's principal benefactor and ally, but relations between the two were cooling. The Soviet agreement in late 1957 to help China produce its own nuclear weapons and missiles was terminated by mid-1959 (see Defense Industry and the Economic Role of the People's Liberation Army, ch. 14). From that point until the mid-1960s, the Soviets recalled all of their technicians and advisers from China and reduced or canceled economic and technical aid to China. The discord was occasioned by several factors. The two countries differed in their interpretation of the nature of "peaceful coexistence." The Chinese took a more militant and unyielding position on the issue of anti-imperialist struggle, but the Soviets were unwilling, for example, to give their support on the Taiwan question. In addition, the two communist powers disagreed on doctrinal matters. The Chinese accused the Soviets of "revisionism"; the latter countered with charges of "dogmatism." Rivalry within the international communist movement also exacerbated Sino-Soviet relations. An additional complication was the history of suspicion each side had toward the other, especially the Chinese, who had lost a substantial part of territory to tsarist Russia in the mid-nineteenth century. Whatever the causes of the dispute, the Soviet suspension of aid was a blow to the Chinese scheme for developing industrial and high-level (including nuclear) technology.

Readjustment and Recovery, 1961–65

In 1961 the political tide at home began to swing to the right, as evidenced by the ascendancy of a more moderate leadership. In an effort to stabilize the economic front, for example, the party—still under Mao's titular leadership but under the dominant influence of Liu Shaoqi, Deng Xiaoping, Chen Yun, Peng Zhen, Bo Yibo, and others—initiated a series of corrective measures. Among these measures was the reorganization of the commune system, with the result that production brigades and teams had more say in their own administrative and economic planning. To gain more effective control from the center, the CCP reestablished its six regional bureaus and initiated steps aimed at tightening party discipline and encouraging the leading party cadres to develop populist-style leadership at all levels. The efforts were prompted by the party's realization that the arrogance of party and government

functionaries had engendered only public apathy. On the industrial front, much emphasis was now placed on realistic and efficient planning; ideological fervor and mass movements were no longer the controlling themes of industrial management. Production authority was restored to factory managers. Another notable emphasis after 1961 was the party's greater interest in strengthening the defense and internal security establishment. By early 1965 the country was well on its way to recovery under the direction of the party apparatus, or, to be more specific, the Central Committee's Secretariat headed by Secretary General Deng Xiaoping.

The Cultural Revolution Decade, 1966–76

In the early 1960s, Mao was on the political sidelines and in semiseclusion. By 1962, however, he began an offensive to purify the party, having grown increasingly uneasy about what he believed were the creeping "capitalist" and antisocialist tendencies in the country. As a hardened veteran revolutionary who had overcome the severest adversities, Mao continued to believe that the material incentives that had been restored to the peasants and others were corrupting the masses and were counterrevolutionary.

To arrest the so-called capitalist trend, Mao launched the Socialist Education Movement (1962–65; see Glossary), in which the primary emphasis was on restoring ideological purity, reinfusing revolutionary fervor into the party and government bureaucracies, and intensifying class struggle. There were internal disagreements, however, not on the aim of the movement but on the methods of carrying it out. Opposition came mainly from the moderates represented by Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping, who were unsympathetic to Mao's policies. The Socialist Education Movement was soon paired with another Mao campaign, the theme of which was "to learn from the People's Liberation Army." Minister of National Defense Lin Biao's rise to the center of power was increasingly conspicuous. It was accompanied by his call on the PLA and the CCP to accentuate Maoist thought as the guiding principle for the Socialist Education Movement and for all revolutionary undertakings in China.

In connection with the Socialist Education Movement, a thorough reform of the school system, which had been planned earlier to coincide with the Great Leap Forward, went into effect. The reform was intended as a work-study program—a new *xiafang* movement—in which schooling was slated to accommodate the work schedule of communes and factories. It had the dual purpose of providing mass education less expensively than previously and of re-educating intellectuals and scholars to accept the need for their own

participation in manual labor. The drafting of intellectuals for manual labor was part of the party's rectification campaign, publicized through the mass media as an effort to remove "bourgeois" influences from professional workers—particularly, their tendency to have greater regard for their own specialized fields than for the goals of the party. Official propaganda accused them of being more concerned with having "expertise" than being "red" (see Glossary).

The Militant Phase, 1966–68

By mid-1965 Mao had gradually but systematically regained control of the party with the support of Lin Biao, Jiang Qing (Mao's fourth wife), and Chen Boda, a leading theoretician. In late 1965 a leading member of Mao's "Shanghai Mafia," Yao Wenyuan, wrote a thinly veiled attack on the deputy mayor of Beijing, Wu Han. In the next six months, under the guise of upholding ideological purity, Mao and his supporters purged or attacked a wide variety of public figures, including State Chairman Liu Shaoqi and other party and state leaders. By mid-1966 Mao's campaign had erupted into what came to be known as the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, the first mass action to have emerged against the CCP apparatus itself.

Considerable intraparty opposition to the Cultural Revolution was evident. On the one side was the Mao-Lin Biao group, supported by the PLA; on the other side was a faction led by Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping, which had its strength in the regular party machine. Premier Zhou Enlai, while remaining personally loyal to Mao, tried to mediate or to reconcile the two factions.

Mao felt that he could no longer depend on the formal party organization, convinced that it had been permeated with the "capitalist" and bourgeois obstructionists. He turned to Lin Biao and the PLA to counteract the influence of those who were allegedly " 'left' in form but 'right' in essence." The PLA was widely extolled as a "great school" for the training of a new generation of revolutionary fighters and leaders. Maoists also turned to middle-school students for political demonstrations on their behalf. These students, joined also by some university students, came to be known as the Red Guards (see Glossary). Millions of Red Guards were encouraged by the Cultural Revolution group to become a "shock force" and to "bombard" with criticism both the regular party headquarters in Beijing and those at the regional and provincial levels. Red Guard activities were promoted as a reflection of Mao's policy of rekindling revolutionary enthusiasm and destroying "outdated," "counterrevolutionary" symbols and values. Mao's ideas,

popularized in the *Quotations from Chairman Mao,* became the standard by which all revolutionary efforts were to be judged. The "four big rights"—speaking out freely, airing views fully, holding great debates, and writing big-character posters (see Glossary)—became an important factor in encouraging Mao's youthful followers to criticize his intraparty rivals. The "four big rights" became such a major feature during the period that they were later institutionalized in the state constitution of 1975 (see Constitutional Framework, ch. 10). The result of the unfettered criticism of established organs of control by China's exuberant youth was massive civil disorder, punctuated also by clashes among rival Red Guard gangs and between the gangs and local security authorities. The party organization was shattered from top to bottom. (The Central Committee's Secretariat ceased functioning in late 1966.) The resources of the public security organs were severely strained. Faced with imminent anarchy, the PLA—the only organization whose ranks for the most part had not been radicalized by Red Guard-style activities—emerged as the principal guarantor of law and order and the de facto political authority. And, although the PLA was under Mao's rallying call to "support the left," PLA regional military commanders ordered their forces to restrain the leftist radicals, thus restoring order throughout much of China. The PLA also was responsible for the appearance in early 1967 of the revolutionary committees, a new form of local control that replaced local party committees and administrative bodies. The revolutionary committees were staffed with Cultural Revolution activists, trusted cadres, and military commanders, the latter frequently holding the greatest power.

The radical tide receded somewhat beginning in late 1967, but it was not until after mid-1968 that Mao came to realize the uselessness of further revolutionary violence. Liu Shaoqi, Deng Xiaoping, and their fellow "revisionists" and "capitalist roaders" had been purged from public life by early 1967, and the Maoist group had since been in full command of the political scene.

Viewed in larger perspective, the need for domestic calm and stability was occasioned perhaps even more by pressures emanating from outside China. The Chinese were alarmed in 1966–68 by steady Soviet military buildups along their common border. The Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 heightened Chinese apprehensions. In March 1969 Chinese and Soviet troops clashed on Zhenbao Island (known to the Soviets as Damanskiy Island) in the disputed Wusuli Jiang (Ussuri River) border area. The tension on the border had a sobering effect on the fractious Chinese political scene and provided the regime with a new and unifying rallying call (see The Soviet Union, ch. 14).

The Ninth National Party Congress to the Demise of Lin Biao, 1969–71

The activist phase of the Cultural Revolution—considered to be the first in a series of cultural revolutions—was brought to an end in April 1969. This end was formally signaled at the CCP's Ninth National Party Congress, which convened under the dominance of the Maoist group. Mao was confirmed as the supreme leader. Lin Biao was promoted to the post of CCP vice chairman and was named as Mao's successor. Others who had risen to power by means of Cultural Revolution machinations were rewarded with positions on the Political Bureau; a significant number of military commanders were appointed to the Central Committee. The party congress also marked the rising influence of two opposing forces, Mao's wife, Jiang Qing, and Premier Zhou Enlai.

The general emphasis after 1969 was on reconstruction through rebuilding of the party, economic stabilization, and greater sensitivity to foreign affairs. Pragmatism gained momentum as a central theme of the years following the Ninth National Party Congress, but this tendency was paralleled by efforts of the radical group to reassert itself. The radical group—Kang Sheng, Xie Fuzhi, Jiang Qing, Zhang Chunqiao, Yao Wenyuan, and Wang Hongwen—no longer had Mao's unqualified support. By 1970 Mao viewed his role more as that of the supreme elder statesman than of an activist in the policy-making process. This was probably the result as much of his declining health as of his view that a stabilizing influence should be brought to bear on a divided nation. As Mao saw it, China needed both pragmatism and revolutionary enthusiasm, each acting as a check on the other. Factional infighting would continue unabated through the mid-1970s, although an uneasy coexistence was maintained while Mao was alive.

The rebuilding of the CCP got under way in 1969. The process was difficult, however, given the pervasiveness of factional tensions and the discord carried over from the Cultural Revolution years. Differences persisted among the military, the party, and left-dominated mass organizations over a wide range of policy issues, to say nothing of the radical-moderate rivalry. It was not until December 1970 that a party committee could be reestablished at the provincial level. In political reconstruction two developments were noteworthy. As the only institution of power for the most part left unscathed by the Cultural Revolution, the PLA was particularly important in the politics of transition and reconstruction. The PLA was, however, not a homogeneous body. In 1970–71 Zhou Enlai was able to forge a centrist-rightist alliance with a group of

PLA regional military commanders who had taken exception to certain of Lin Biao's policies. This coalition paved the way for a more moderate party and government leadership in the late 1970s and 1980s (see The First Wave of Reform, 1979–84, ch. 11).

The PLA was divided largely on policy issues. On one side of the infighting was the Lin Biao faction, which continued to exhort the need for "politics in command" and for an unremitting struggle against both the Soviet Union and the United States. On the other side was a majority of the regional military commanders, who had become concerned about the effect Lin Biao's political ambitions would have on military modernization and economic development. These commanders' views generally were in tune with the positions taken by Zhou Enlai and his moderate associates. Specifically, the moderate groups within the civilian bureaucracy and the armed forces spoke for more material incentives for the peasantry, efficient economic planning, and a thorough reassessment of the Cultural Revolution. They also advocated improved relations with the West in general and the United States in particular—if for no other reason than to counter the perceived expansionist aims of the Soviet Union. Generally, the radicals' objection notwithstanding, the Chinese political tide shifted steadily toward the right of center. Among the notable achievements of the early 1970s was China's decision to seek rapprochement with the United States, as dramatized by President Richard M. Nixon's visit in February 1972. In September 1972 diplomatic relations were established with Japan.

Without question, the turning point in the decade of the Cultural Revolution was Lin Biao's abortive coup attempt and his subsequent death in a plane crash as he fled China in September 1971. The immediate consequence was a steady erosion of the fundamentalist influence of the left-wing radicals. Lin Biao's closest supporters were purged systematically. Efforts to depoliticize and promote professionalism were intensified within the PLA. These were also accompanied by the rehabilitation (see Glossary) of those persons who had been persecuted or fallen into disgrace in 1966–68.

End of the Era of Mao Zedong, 1972–76

Among the most prominent of those rehabilitated was Deng Xiaoping, who was reinstated as a vice premier in April 1973, ostensibly under the aegis of Premier Zhou Enlai but certainly with the concurrence of Mao Zedong. Together, Zhou Enlai and Deng Xiaoping came to exert strong influence. Their moderate line favoring modernization of all sectors of the economy was formally confirmed at the Tenth National Party Congress in August 1973, at

which time Deng Xiaoping was made a member of the party's Central Committee (but not yet of the Political Bureau).

The radical camp fought back by building an armed urban militia, but its mass base of support was limited to Shanghai and parts of northeastern China—hardly sufficient to arrest what it denounced as "revisionist" and "capitalist" tendencies. In January 1975 Zhou Enlai, speaking before the Fourth National People's Congress, outlined a program of what has come to be known as the Four Modernizations (see Glossary) for the four sectors of agriculture, industry, national defense, and science and technology (see Economic Policies, 1949–80, ch. 5). This program would be reaffirmed at the Eleventh National Party Congress, which convened in August 1977. Also in January 1975, Deng Xiaoping's position was solidified by his election as a vice chairman of the CCP and as a member of the Political Bureau and its Standing Committee. Deng also was installed as China's first civilian chief of the PLA General Staff Department.

The year 1976 saw the deaths of the three most senior officials in the CCP and the state apparatus: Zhou Enlai in January, Zhu De (then chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress and de jure head of state) in July, and Mao Zedong in September. In April of the same year, masses of demonstrators in Tiananmen Square in Beijing memorialized Zhou Enlai and criticized Mao's closest associates, Zhou's opponents. In June the government announced that Mao would no longer receive foreign visitors. In July an earthquake devastated the city of Tangshan in Hebei Province. These events, added to the deaths of the three Communist leaders, contributed to a popular sense that the "mandate of heaven" had been withdrawn from the ruling party. At best the nation was in a state of serious political uncertainty.

Deng Xiaoping, the logical successor as premier, received a temporary setback after Zhou's death, when radicals launched a major counterassault against him. In April 1976 Deng was once more removed from all his public posts, and a relative political unknown, Hua Guofeng, a Political Bureau member, vice premier, and minister of public security, was named acting premier and party first vice chairman.

Even though Mao Zedong's role in political life had been sporadic and shallow in his later years, it was crucial. Despite Mao's alleged lack of mental acuity, his influence in the months before his death remained such that his orders to dismiss Deng and appoint Hua Guofeng were accepted immediately by the Political Bureau. The political system had polarized in the years before Mao's death into increasingly bitter and irreconcilable factions. While Mao was

alive—and playing these factions off against each other—the contending forces were held in check. His death resolved only some of the problems inherent in the succession struggle.

The radical clique most closely associated with Mao and the Cultural Revolution became vulnerable after Mao died, as Deng had been after Zhou Enlai's demise. In October, less than a month after Mao's death, Jiang Qing and her three principal associates—denounced as the Gang of Four (see Glossary)—were arrested with the assistance of two senior Political Bureau members, Minister of National Defense Ye Jianying (1897–1986) and Wang Dongxing, commander of the CCP's elite bodyguard. Within days it was formally announced that Hua Guofeng had assumed the positions of party chairman, chairman of the party's Central Military Commission, and premier.

The Post-Mao Period, 1976–78

The jubilation following the incarceration of the Gang of Four and the popularity of the new ruling triumvirate (Hua Guofeng, Ye Jianying, and Li Xiannian, a temporary alliance of necessity) were succeeded by calls for the restoration to power of Deng Xiaoping and the elimination of leftist influence throughout the political system. By July 1977, at no small risk to undercutting Hua Guofeng's legitimacy as Mao's successor and seeming to contradict Mao's apparent will, the Central Committee exonerated Deng Xiaoping from responsibility for the Tiananmen Square incident. Deng admitted some shortcomings in the events of 1975, and finally, at a party Central Committee session, he resumed all the posts from which he had been removed in 1976.

The post-Mao political order was given its first vote of confidence at the Eleventh National Party Congress, held August 12–18, 1977. Hua was confirmed as party chairman, and Ye Jianying, Deng Xiaoping, Li Xiannian, and Wang Dongxing were elected vice chairmen. The congress proclaimed the formal end of the Cultural Revolution, blamed it entirely on the Gang of Four, and reiterated that "the fundamental task of the party in the new historical period is to build China into a modern, powerful socialist country by the end of the twentieth century." Many contradictions still were apparent, however, in regard to the Maoist legacy and the possibility of future cultural revolutions.

The new balance of power clearly was unsatisfactory to Deng, who sought genuine party reform and, soon after the National Party Congress, took the initiative to reorganize the bureaucracy and redirect policy. His longtime protégé Hu Yaobang replaced Hua supporter Wang Dongxing as head of the CCP Organization