

**Institute of Distance and Open Learning
GAUHATI UNIVERSITY**

**MA in History
(Second Semester)**

**Paper V
HISTORY OF CHINA**



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Unit II : Popular and Reform Movements

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MA in History
Second Semester
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HISTORY OF CHINA (1849-1949)

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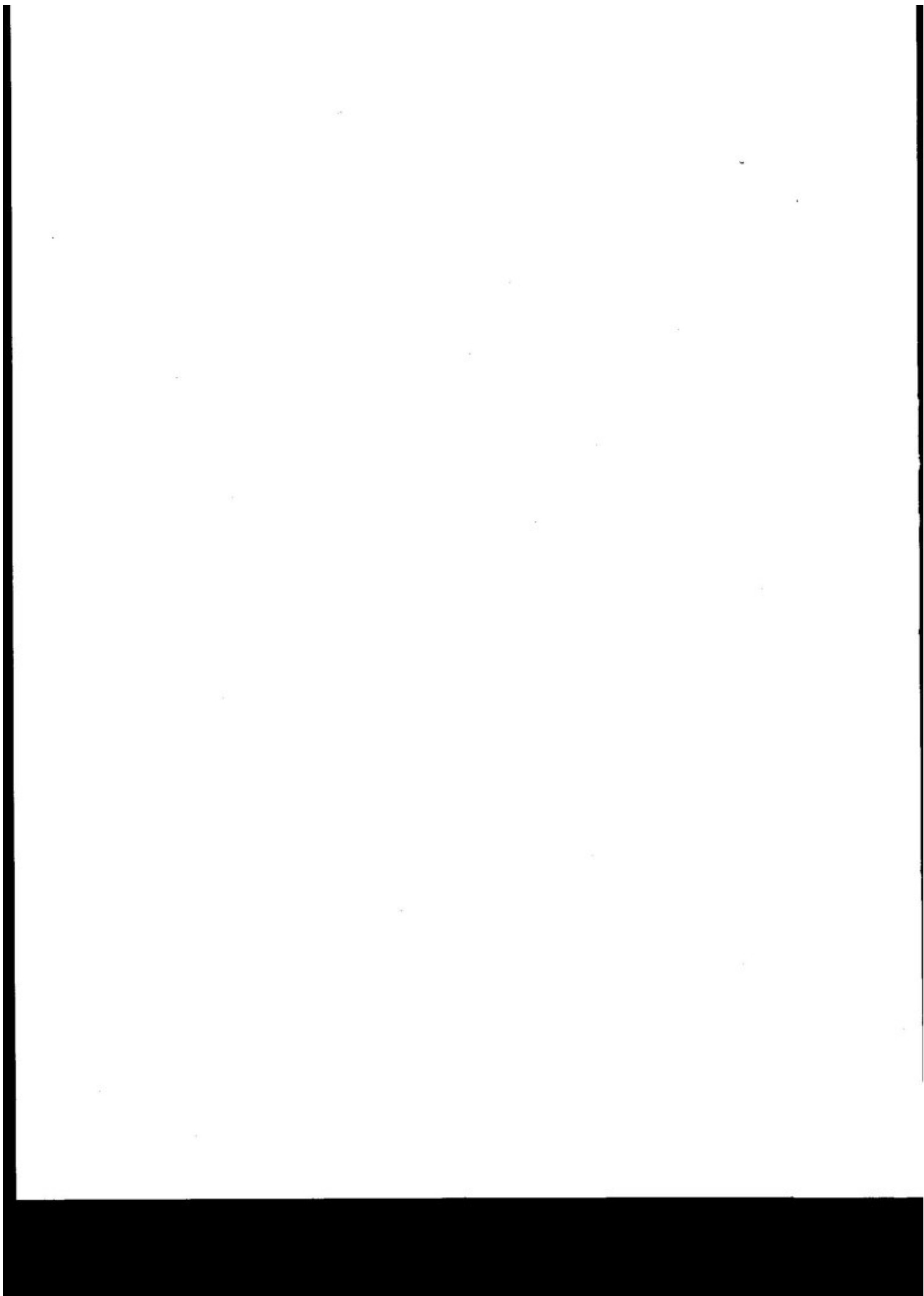
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HISTORY OF CHINA

Paper Introduction

In the 18th century China was the 'greatest empire on earth', an empire that was the product of centuries of development. The 'Celestial Empire', as the Chinese call their country, is the oldest empire in the world; and round 1840s it was the largest country both in area and population. The Chinese traditionally believed that they inhabited a land that was the centre of the universe, and 'the outer galaxies, except when it bothered China was of no concern to them'. Proud of their culture they despised all foreigners as barbarians, and hence were not willing to have any contact with the outside world. Although they were a highly civilized people and even preceded their European counterparts in the use of compass, porcelain and paper, to name a few, yet, the inevitable result of the unwillingness to change had its own problems in the long run.

By the end of the 19th century Peking, the Chinese capital had been occupied by foreign troops and the new Western empires had wrested privileges and territorial concessions from China. Scholars label the long history of China from the beginning of its civilization to the end of Manchu dynasty in 1912 as the 'Age of Old China' to distinguish it from Republican China (1912-1949), or Communist China of the post-1949 period. The Manchus came from Mongolia and established a long line of emperors which ruled China from 1644 to 1912. The Manchu period is of particular importance to China since it was during their rule that the country was faced with the impact of European, and later American expansion. In a sense, Manchu China lay between what was traditional and what is modern. The forcible entry of the West to China became more complex, when what began as a trading relation assumed political overtones. The political aggression of the Western powers which accompanied the commercial greed created a serious crisis in China. The humiliation faced by the Chinese was coupled with problems of degeneration of the society itself. 'Old China' came to be destroyed by internal rebellion and external humiliation.

The attempt by the European powers to partition China into respective 'spheres of influence' by direct or indirect policies of annexation brought

about new challenges in the history of the country. The increasing interest of various powers to trade with China and the 'unequal treaties signed with them as a result of defeat in wars exposed the weakness of the 'unchanging China'. Reforms were attempted to save the country but it failed to bring in the desired changes. Nationalism and Communism ushered in a new China, a product of the long drawn struggle that various sections of the society experienced – caught as they were between tradition and modernity.

This paper is organized into the following follows:

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Opening Up of China

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1.1 Introduction

Until the 19th century, China was practically closed to the outside world, particularly Europe. Proud of their ancient culture, they despised all foreigners as barbarians and was not keen to have any interaction, political or otherwise, with other countries. China, therefore, existed as a secluded civilization which was to have serious implications in the development and growth of the nation.

The political institution of supreme importance in China was the monarchy. The emperor was the 'Son of Heaven', and by 'Heaven's Mandate' maintained his rule. The Manchus ruled China during the period 1644 to 1912 and then followed the reign of the Chinese Ming dynasty (1368-1644). The practical ruler of China for several decades was Empress Tzu-Hsi. She seized power in 1861 after the death of her husband Emperor

Hsien Feng; having got herself designated as Empress Dowager. She was regent to her son who died in 1875, shortly after attaining maturity without leaving any heir. In spite of protests she raised another infant to the throne and continued to rule as the regent till her death in 1908. She has been fittingly called the last of the Manchus. Her policies were extremely reactionary and she failed to appreciate the significance of the new forces which were entering China from the outside world. Therefore, although she made some attempts at bringing about reforms and save the Manchu dynasty from disintegration, her policies in fact hastened its downfall. By her personal ambition she jeopardized the Manchu dynasty. The government failed to discharge the primary duties of maintaining peace, order and security against external aggression. The fact was that the traditional system of administration which Empress Dowager adhered to was not fit to stand the strain of the new changing times.

1.2 Objective

This Unit covers the period 1839 to 1900 and corresponds to the history of China from the outbreak of the First Opium War to the Open Door Policy of America. This Unit is designed to help you:

- *Understand* the factors that led to China's end of isolation
- *Gain insight* to the gradual opening up of China to the West
- *Examine* the reasons why China was defeated in the Opium Wars
- *Reflect on* increasing penetration of the West
- *Explore* the real motive of the Open Door Policy of America

1.3 Opening of China

Geographical discoveries of the 15th century led to opening up of the seas and European nations now began to make their presence felt in the East Asia. Along with Great Britain, the Portuguese and the Dutch also appeared on the shores of China. It was in the later part of the 18th century that Europe's cultural interest in China was replaced by a growing commercial interest—being slowly dominated by the English East India Company. It may be mentioned that Great Britain's victories in the colonial wars, her established position in India, and her primacy in the Industrial Revolution all served to stimulate her trade with East Asia. Thus during the period 1750-1834,

China's relations with Europe were essentially her relations with the East India Company. For most of this period, China's foreign trade was confined to the single South China port of Canton. Thus, this commerce came to be known as the Canton trade. The peculiar circumstance surrounding this trade, the attitude of the Chinese towards the foreigners and the attitude of the foreigners, in turn, to the Chinese - all combined to create a crisis in the relations between Great Britain and China. In fact, it was this crisis and the wars which followed that were to determine the relations of China with the West for the succeeding century (1840-1940).

Foundations of the Closed-door Policy:

The policy of partially closing the country arose mainly from the anxiety to protect the political and social regime. The dominant scholar-official class distrusted foreign merchants because it distrusted all merchants, since the Confucian scale of social values placed merchants at the bottom. In the same way, the officials distrusted Christianity because they distrusted all unorthodox cults. The closing of China can also be traced to a feeling which was more deeply rooted—a conviction that China had nothing to gain and much to lose by opening the door to Western traders and missionaries. The Chinese government thus, regarded the foreigners as unwelcome intruders, degraded them with indignities and hampered their trade with heavy taxes and restrictions. Europe had for a long time attempted to establish trading relations with China and eventually effected a forcible entry resulting in a situation of war—the First Opium War that broke out between China and Great Britain.

1.3.1 First Opium War

Under the growing pressure for trade, the purchases made by British and American companies in Canton were multiplying. But China showed almost no interest in Western products because their own output was so varied. This led to large-scale smuggling of opium by the foreigners, a product that was forbidden in China, except for medicinal use. The rise of opium trade presented the Peking government not only with a grave social problem but also with perplexing questions of regulations of the foreign trade, which was supposed to remain confined to Canton, between the Cohong and the foreign merchants. The dangers of opium had been long recognized by Peking and as early as 1729, importation and sale of the drug was prohibited. The fact was that Chinese officials from the highest to the lowest all sought

to be part of the trade for personal profit. Therefore, inspite of all the problems, the Canton system of trade had been a profitable business both for the English East India Company and the Chinese.

Causes:

Great Britain took the lead in exposing China to the world. The English East India Company carried on lucrative trade in opium with China. The Chinese government, to save people from the drug, prohibited importation but failed. The key issue of opium was that its smuggle to China by the British and Americans, together with other activities of the foreign companies in Canton, created a crisis of authority that challenged the ability of the State to rule. The unexplained excessive demand for opium could be met only with importation since there was no large scale cultivation of opium in China.

Opium trade was declared illegal in 1800 but the British merchants with the connivance of the local Chinese officials began to smuggle opium. This illegal trade continued and even increased in volume. When the monopoly of the English East India Company's trade was abolished, there was a rush of new competitors for share in this profitable trade. The motivation to the illegal opium traffic extended the business along the entire Southeastern China coast to the mutual benefit of both foreign and Chinese merchants and Chinese officials. This led to what came to be known as the Canton crisis of 1834-1840. In 1839 the Chinese government sent a special Commissioner Lin Tse-hsu to suppress smuggling and to exterminate the traffic in opium. Lin seized about 20, 000 chests of opium and destroyed them. He provoked a retaliation but since the situation could not be met successfully, he was replaced by Qi Shan. The acts of violence resulted in harsh measures which were taken to end opium traffic. This conflict with British traders resulted in military expeditions known as the First Opium War. The war broke out in 1840 and lasted for two years. It ended with the victory of Great Britain.

The war was brought to a close by the Treaty of Nanking signed on 29 August 1842. The following terms were agreed upon:

- China was to cede Hongkong to England.
- Five ports were to be opened, namely, Canton, Foochow, Ningpo, Amoy and Shanghai.
- China was to pay a huge war indemnity.

- British officials were to be treated as equals of the Chinese officials, that is, of equal rank.
- Foreign officials were to be permitted to reside and operate freely in the five newly opened ports.
- Custom duties were limited to 5%, which was to be increased by mutual agreement.
- In each treaty port, Westerners were to be granted 'extra territoriality', that is, subject to legal jurisdiction of their own consul.
- The Westerners could buy land and open schools.
- Warships of foreign powers also could anchor in the treaty ports and enter any Chinese port when the interest of trade demanded.

Curiously enough, the Treaty of Nanking left the opium question unsettled and thus smuggling began again, the opium trade flourishing more than ever. It must be noted that the Opium War, besides forcing a harmful drug upon China, also had other implications. The whole position of foreign commerce and the status of the foreign trade was bound up with the opium question. The war in fact was a 'European demand for legalization of external trade and for the recognition of the equality of foreigners'.

After the signing of the Treaty of Nanking in 1842, China was forced to sign a number of Unequal Treaties with the European powers. The Supplementary treaty signed in 1843 between China and Great Britain was followed by the Treaties of Brogue and Whampoa in 1844, signed between China on one side and France and United States of America on the other. There were many powers such as Belgium, Holland, Portugal and Prussia who shared the fruits of the British victory over China in the next decade, all of whom secured from China the privilege of trading at the five treaty ports.

1.3.2 Second Opium War

The First Opium War had revealed the weakness of China and this in turn emboldened the English to follow up the advantages secured by the Treaty of Nanking.

Causes:

The Western countries were dissatisfied with the treaties signed between 1842 and 1844. They had not achieved their aims in China locally in Canton

or in the country as a whole. The actual basis for the war was the Canton crisis. It may be remembered that Canton was the traditional base for foreign activities. The Westerners were annoyed by the refusal of the Chinese authorities to grant them access to the walled city-the political and commercial centre of the town. Britain raided Canton in 1847 after which China promised to open the city in 1849. The village and urban militia organized a mass mobilization in opposition to the opening of the city to the British. The new Governor General of the South gave a call for resistance to the West and the call to arms was approved. It was financed by the Canton merchants, the former Cohong who were deprived of the commercial privileges after the treaties of 1842. In 1854, Britain, France and United States of America demanded treaty revision but Peking refused. For the British, foreign trade with China had not developed as much as they had expected. The lucrative opium trade was still illegal. Their commercial greed, reinforced by the consciousness of superior strength produced an aggressive frame of mind which led England to engage in another war with China.

The Lorcha Arrow Incident:

The incident that was to precipitate hostilities between Great Britain and China found its origin in a system by which Chinese coasting vessels acquired temporary register under foreign flags. An ordinance permitted residents of colonies, including Chinese under prescribed conditions to use British flags on their vessels for limited purpose. In time this right came to be misused; some vessels using the British flag to engage in smuggling. Many of the vessels carried flags of foreign powers without any authority whatsoever. As a result it soon became difficult for the Chinese authorities to distinguish between the legitimate and illegitimate use of foreign flags by the vessels. The Lorcha Arrow was a ship owned by a Chinese who resided in Hongkong. Commanded by a British subject, it was boarded by Chinese police on 8 October 1858 while it was lying at anchor in the river at Canton. The English were annoyed because the Chinese official seized the crew of the ship on charges of piracy was not flying the British flag in the correct manner. This was looked upon as an insult to the British flag. The Second Opium War broke out, in which England was joined by France. Both powers were determined to impose their views on Peking, and made the most of minor incidents, such as the Lorcha Arrow Incident. France also joined the war on convenient pretexts- declaring that it wanted to avenge

the 'murder' of Abbe Chapedelaine, a French missionary. The Second Opium War was declared by the allied Anglo-French forces in 1856. The war began in the South with the bombarding of Canton and burning of British factories. In the North, the allied forces attacked Peking with the aim of forcing the emperor to ratify the treaty drawn up in 1858. The foreigners looted and captured the capital including the Summer Palace.

The Second Opium came to an end with the signing of the Treaty of Tientsin (1858) and Treaty of Peking or Peking Convention (1860). These treaties were a revision and enlargement of principles and practices set forth in the earlier treaties of 1842-1844. The terms of the new treaties were as follows:

- Eleven more ports were opened to the West including Tientsin and Hankou.
- Western vessels were allowed access to certain inland waterways
- Western missionaries and merchants were granted the right to travel about the country and to buy land
- France and Great Britain received a war indemnity of 8 million *taels*
- They also acquired the right to send permanent diplomatic missions to Peking
- Opium trade was made legal

Nature of Opium Wars:

There are three schools of thought regarding the nature of the Opium Wars which are as follows:

1. Trade War Perspective

It is believed by some scholars that the wars were a result of the commercial expansion of Great Britain. According to Victor Purcell, England in the 1840s was trade obsessed and this obsession was created by the quest for foreign markets due to Industrial Revolution. This school comes close to the Marxist framework which asserts that capitalist expansion of production leads to colonial wars. The Chinese economy was conditioned by its self-sufficiency and could not generate an unlimited market for British products. 'To the Chinese, the war was fought over the opium question, but to the British the issues were wider'. The proponents of the theory thus states: Had there been an alternative to opium, say, molasses or rice, the conflict might have been called molasses or rice war'.

2. Cultural War Perspective

The cultural war perspective emphasizes on the dichotomy between the conservatism of the extreme orient and the progressive spirit of the western world. The war was fought due to the conflict over the issue of international relations, trade and justice. E.H. Pritchard notes three cultural differences which affected the British traders. Firstly, the idea of equality; since the Chinese considered themselves superior to all foreigners. Secondly, the social status of the merchant class; whereas in China the merchants were placed at the lowest ranks as different in England where they were highly respected.

3. Opium War Perspective

This theory holds the contention that the war occurred due to China's seizure and destruction of British opium and the huge indemnity. China had to pay for the opium seized and destroyed. The proponents state that : 'attempt has been made by some scholars to show that the war was not properly termed as the Opium War, but evidence is overwhelming that it was with justice given that name'.

An analysis of the three schools of thought reveal that to accept one perspective only would imply that the other two factors were not important. However, each perspective has its own foundation on which the theories are based. Yet, the historical role of opium cannot be ignored. Thus, while trade and cultural factors were crucial issues in the outbreak of the war, the Opium War perspective has the advantage of conventional legitimacy since the war is termed the Opium War.

1.4 Treaties with Imperialist Powers; and Struggle for Concessions in China

China had been opened up and now there was a rush of the Europeans to extend their economic tentacles in China. After the Treaty of Nanking (1842), China was forced to sign a number of 'unequal treaties' with these powers. Great Britain, France and USA shared the fruits of the British victory at the First Opium War along with Belgium, Portugal, Holland and Persia, as they now enjoyed the privilege of trading at the five treaty ports opened by China. Some of the unequal treaties signed were as follows:

- Supplementary Treaty (1843), between China and Great Britain
- Treaty of Bogue (1844), between China and France

- Treaty of Whampoa (1844), between China and United States of America

The treaties mentioned above radically modified the West's conditions of access to China and the scope of Western activities there. Owing to the so-called 'most favoured nation' clause, the various advantages obtained by each power accumulated and formed the basis of the 'unequal treaties system', which gradually developed during the 19th and early 20th centuries.

The five Chinese ports *viz*; Canton, Shanghai, Ningpo, Amoy, and Foochow were declared as 'treaty ports'. In fact these ports became foreign enclaves exempt from Chinese authority. China was therefore 'open', and the Chinese government allowed foreign activities to develop, which strengthened its position inland after securing the concessions in the privileged zones. The treaty signed with America was significant from the view of its growing interest in China although as yet they did not have any political policy towards China. The French appeared as 'protectors' of the Catholics and requested for permission to establish Roman Catholic missions in the five treaty ports, which was granted by the emperor, though not as part of the treaty.

The Sino-Western treaties formed the beginnings of a new order for East Asia. These agreements called for treaty relations based on a theory of equality of states to replace the Confucian theory of relations between people that were unequal. In all the treaty ports, except for Canton the foreigner was a stranger, and to the vast population they were unknown. Of the five treaty ports, only two - Shanghai and Canton - were destined to develop as great centres of foreign trade. Shanghai was opened to foreign trade in 1843 and in 1854, the Foreign Inspectorate of Customs was set up, a very important development in the evolving Sino-Western system of the 19th century.

The treaty status under which the foreign merchants lived at the new ports was a peculiar, not to say, a unique system. At Canton and the many other ports opened subsequently, the treaty powers obtained from China - that is, from the emperor - grants of land known as 'concessions' where the traders could erect commercial structures and residences. The concessions were leased by China to the foreign powers concerned. In fact, at one time in Tientsin, there were as many as eight foreign 'concessions'. The foreign community of each concession provided, under authority of its home

government, its own municipal government. A Consul of the respective power presided over this municipal government. Thus, at the treaty port there came to exist, in adjoining concession areas, a number of municipal governments, each exercising independent authority.

The local Chinese authorities objected to the concession system. Shanghai met the problem in its own way in which the Chinese authorities set apart an area of land on the river bank where the foreign purchaser could reach an agreement with the Chinese owners. The foreign Consul would report it to the Chinese local authority, who will then issue a title in the form of a perpetual lease. The foreign buyer was to pay a nominal annual rent to the Chinese government, the theory being that all land belonged to the emperor. This peculiar system known as the Shanghai International Settlement was first restricted to British control and non-British nationality secured land through the British Consul. However, in time all foreigners got the right to lease and register land. When the Shanghai settlement was first established, it was supposed that the area would be inhabited exclusively by foreigners, and for some eight years it was the case. But in course of time the Chinese population increased and the character of the settlement changed. The Treaty Settlement was merely the beginning of a new order between China and the West.

Increasing Western Economic Interests

Within thirty years of the signing of the Treaty of Tientsin (1858), almost all the Europeans joined in the scramble for exploiting China having entered into trading relations with them. The main share was secured by Great Britain, who found an excuse in the incident of the murder of a British Counsel and forced an agreement upon China. Around 1870s there were about fifteen 'treaty ports'. The Chefoo Agreement (1876) signed between China and Great Britain led to the opening of five more ports. England consolidated her economic position on the Yangtze valley. In the North, Russia secured the province of maritime Manchuria by signing the Treaty of St. Petersburg (1881). In the South, France fought a war with China, the Sino-French War, over the autonomy of Tonkin. In 1885, by the Treaty of Tientsin, Vietnam became a French protectorate. This defeat came after 20 years effort at modernization and it severely damaged the prestige of China.

The Sino-Japanese War (1894-95) was a decisive event in the history of the East Asia. The struggle between Japan and China over control of Korea

ended with the defeat of China by Japan, the latter became a force which could no longer be ignored in international politics. The outcome of the war surprised all- and the Chinese were compelled to sue for peace. China's weakness was demonstrated beyond doubt and China's territories now faced threat of partition.

To prevent Japan's further encroachment, Western powers intervened on the side of China. The three self proclaimed friends of China were Germany, France and Russia . The 'Three Power Intervention' forced Japan to return Liaotung peninsular to China in return for 30 million *taels*. The loan was supplied by France and Russia to China. The number of ports opened now increased from thirty-four to forty-five between 1895-99. There were many treaties signed between China and the other powers such as Germany (1897), France (1898), Russia (1898) and Great Britain (1898).

The increasing Western presence in China was not limited only to trade but the concessions included the foreign law courts, the foreign postal service, and above all, the organization of the customs. In a number of important geographical and administrative sectors, foreign authority had replaced or was added to the authority of the China state. In line with the principle of extra-territoriality, consular courts were set up in the main ports which were opened to the West. These courts served not only the foreign powers with whom the unequal treaties were signed –France, Great Britain and USA, but also other countries to whom the same advantages were extended owing to the 'most-favoured nation clause'. In fact, nationals and countries who had not signed a treaty could declare themselves under the protection of a treaty power and take advantage of its consular court. Foreign post offices were also set up in the main ports to dispatch mail sent from Europe to foreign residents throughout China. This again was a *de facto* measure which had not been provided for by the treaties. At the beginning, foreign control over the Chinese customs was local and temporary. But as often the case in China's history of the times, the temporary measure turned into a permanent institution.

1.5 Open Door Policy

The international scramble for concessions and territory in China led to new developments which in the long run saved the 'celestial empire' from impending disintegration. The United States of America had not joined the scramble for concessions and although she had taken a full part in the opening

up of China to trade and commerce, her policy had been focused on trade and not empire. Until the 1890s, the United States, unlike the Europeans had never fought wars and seized colonies in Asia. However, as the European race for colonies developed, new expansionist tendencies together with certain incidents of history brought the USA also on to the East Asian scene as a great power. John Hay, the Secretary of State of the United States of America announced the Open Door Notes on September 1899.

America's first contact with China was in May 1895 when a ship called the Empress of China visited Canton. Her example was quickly followed and before long, 1800 dozens of American vessels were engaged in Chinese trade. America came to look upon China more and more as a future market for American manufactured goods.

There are various theories supporting and doubting the motives of the Open Door Policy. Some scholars opine that the policy was initially a British idea and not an American idea at all. Americans themselves declared that the Open Door Notes were a glorious chapter of human history and understanding among nations. They proclaimed that they were against any form of colonization, owing to their own experience under the British. However, the motivating factors behind the Notes were far more complex.

Americans in the 19th century believed in the 'endlessly receding frontier' theory, that is, that American frontier must go on expanding endlessly. After the natural boundaries of the continent had been reached, and USA was not satisfied with it and began to look abroad for the purpose of expansion. The expansion was triggered off by an accidental coincidence of war with Spain over Cuba in 1898-99, America's acquisition at that time outstripped those of any imperialist power in China and gave the USA potential naval bases at Pearl harbor, Guam, Pago Pago and Manila.

A conclusion was reached in America that continuing expansion in one form or the other was necessary if domestic freedom and economic prosperity were to be preserved. This step was taken early by America but widely and dramatically during the crisis of 1890s. Behind the crisis lay decades of dramatic domestic change and dislocation in the USA such as completion of railroads, merger of agriculture and industry, and tremendous expansion of production accompanied by panic and depression of 1873 and 1893. The piling up of surplus and growing labour unrest in the cities reached a climax with the closing of geographical frontiers. This could result in stagnation

and social turmoil. A common solution projected for this multi-faceted crisis was a policy of overseas economic expansion, under the strategy of the 'Open Door'. This policy was actually aimed at establishing the principle of 'free access for all' to Chinese markets.

The action taken in Hay's Notes of 1899 was limited to requesting concretely: first, that each power would not interfere with any 'treaty port', nor any vested interests within its sphere. Second, that only the Chinese government should collect duties in trade at such ports, and not according to treaty tariff; and third, that no preferential harbor dues or railroad charges should benefit the subjects of a power having a sphere. In short, these first Open Door Notes sought to reserve equality of trade in China and not the Chinese state. Britain, Germany, France, Italy and Japan, all agreed provided every power did so. The Russian reply, however, was negative as nothing was said about preferential rates on the railroads that Russia was building in Manchuria. Hay's success was limited but he made the best of it by simply notifying all concerned that their unanimous acceptance of his Notes had been 'final and definitive'.

As the Boxer uprising brought foreign armies into North China in the summer of 1900, China's survival as a state seemed more dubious. Thus Hay issued a second Note on 3 July 1900, which mentioned 'permanent safety and peace' to China, preservation of Chinese territorial and administrative entity, protection of all rights guaranteed to friendly powers by treaty and International Law and safeguard for the world the principle of equal, and impartial trade with all parts of Chinese empire. Everyone agreed and the 'Open Door' became publicly established as the traditional USA policy towards China.

Though the expression of the Notes sought to evoke the principles of fairplay, they were in reality only a means of 'opening the door to American capital in China. Initially, it was claimed that the Notes aimed at preventing the break-up of China. Economic expansion and domination in fact was the real motive behind this foreign policy of the USA. As can be seen from the fact that while the Open Door Notes were being declared on one hand; on the other, America was simultaneously acquiring colony in the Philippines. It is thus safe to say that the Open Door Policy was taken more seriously in the USA than anywhere else.

The question that arises is as to how much the policy accomplished or what its effects were. Though not far-reaching, A few short term effects must be

mentioned. One of them was that the Notes stopped temporarily, the creation of special sphere of influence. Otherwise, Hays policy was ineffectual. The effectiveness of the doctrine was largely on paper which was primarily due to its inherent weaknesses. Besides raising a number of moral considerations there was no specific clause for the protection of Chinese sovereignty through the use of force. None of the powers were bound to give military aid to China in the event of a threat to her integrity. The provision was purely voluntary.

The Open Door Notes had not invented or even promoted a co-operative policy. The strength of the Notes was undermined by America itself due to its record after 1900 in Phillipines and Samsah Bay in Fukein province. In 1905, President Roosevelt approved of Japanese designs on China and the unreasonable Twenty-one Demands of Japan (1915).

Thus the Open Door Notes were ambiguous promises which did not intend to preserve China's integrity. America wanted a foothold in China and start a new form of 'imperialism', viz; economic imperialism. It was only a 'Me Too' policy, the principal thought being to get their share of privilege and opportunity. The Open Door failed to achieve all that it claimed. In fact, it was never intended to achieve.

1.6 Summary

China was confronted with expansive policies and technological superiority of the West and the responses to this development exposed the weakness of the country. The Opium Wars had been fought due to trade, cultural and the factor of opium. The increasing economic interest by the Western powers were aimed at parceling out of the Chinese territories into 'spheres of interests'. A major problem with China was that the ruling Manchu dynasty failed to understand the need to modernize and adapt to changes with the outside world. The development therefore clearly demonstrated China's weakness. As a result China's territories were slowly seized by the foreign powers and they began to control tariff, customs and postal system etc. The Unequal treaties which were forced upon China from 1842, was completed by the end of the century. By the beginning of the 20th century, China had virtually become a semi-colony, exploited territorially and economically by Western powers and Japan.

1.7 Key Terms and Notes

Canton System:

Since the beginning of the 18th century, trade relations had been organized according to this system, since Canton was the only port open to Westerners. In that city, a group of Chinese firms known as Cohong had the monopoly of trade with the West. This system monopolized trade in China from 1757 to 1842.

Cohong:

The Cohong, officially authorized firms, were responsible for the activities of foreigners (both commercial and general), a position which brought this group large profits and made it a highly influential trading aristocracy in Canton. They fixed the prices and volume of trade. Every foreign vessel on arrival at Canton was 'secured', that is, assigned to one of the Cohong merchants, a group of twelve, who became responsible not only for the sale of the inbound cargo and provision for outbound cargo. They were also responsible for every operation connected with the arrival, stay, and departure of the ship.

Confucianism:

The national political system founded on a set of highly coherent philosophical and moral precepts. This term should not be considered synonymous with the personal contribution of Confucius himself, a minister of the kingdom of Lu, who lived in the 5th century BC.

Consul:

Official appointed by a State to protect the interests and citizens in a foreign city.

Extra Territoriality:

Exemption of the foreigners from the jurisdiction of the Chinese law courts.

Gentry:

People below the rank of nobility. The scholar-officials are sometimes called gentry, although the term is misleading because of its connection with 18th century England, who were the ruling class in the full sense of the term possessing power, knowledge, and land. In China, the gentry did not hold any of these resources.

Imperialism:

Extension of a country's influence over less powerful countries or states. The acquisition of colonies to build an empire in order to extend the global influence of the State, widely advocated in Western Europe on the eve of World War I, with Britain, France, Belgium, The Netherlands, Portugal, and Germany as the leading imperialist powers.

Manchu Dynasty:

Also known as the Chings, they ruled China after the fall of the Ming (1368-1644) dynasty. The Manchu period (1644-1912) is particularly significant since in this period the country was 'opened' to the West. This contact brought about profound changes in the traditional society which was to shape the history of modern China.

Most Favoured Nation Clause:

A clause inserted in treaties, by which each of the contracting nations binds itself to reciprocal bilateral relationship; a status or level of treatment accorded by one state to another in international trade.

Protectorate:

A small state under the direct or indirect control of a larger one.

Social Hierarchy:

The basic hierarchy of Chinese society consisted of the four occupational orders which reflected the political and moral values of Confucianism. The highest of all were the scholars (*shi*); next came the peasants (*nong*), then the artisans (*gong*), and last the merchants (*shang*). Excluded from the four orders were people in some occupations regarded as infamous such as actors, servants, soldiers, messengers etc.

Spheres of Influence:

A program for dividing Chinese territory into 'zones of influence' controlled by various rival powers, a policy which became generalized at the end of the 19th century.

Treaty Ports:

The Chinese ports-Canton, Shanghai, Ningpo, Amoy, and Foochow-were declared as 'treaty ports'. Foreign merchants and consuls were permitted to reside and operate freely in these places in fact became foreign enclaves exempt from Chinese authority.

Unequal Treaties:

A series of treaties that were forced upon China by Western powers particularly after the defeat of China in the First Opium War. The treaties were aimed at expansion of trade interests of the powers with the ultimate objective of 'cutting up the Chinese melon' or sharing the territories of China among themselves.

1.8 Questions and Exercises

1. Review Anglo-Chinese trade relations between 1839-1861 in the context of the Opium Wars.
2. 'Opium was the occasion, and not the cause of the war between the British and the Chinese'. Discuss the statement with reference to the First Anglo-Chinese War Account for the outbreak of the Second Opium War.
3. Critically examine how the Opium Wars were the result of a series of differences between the conservatism of China and the progressive spirit of the West.
4. Under what circumstances was the Open Door Policy of America formulated?
5. Write short notes on the following:
[a] The Cohongs [b] Lorcha Arrow Incident [c] John Hay

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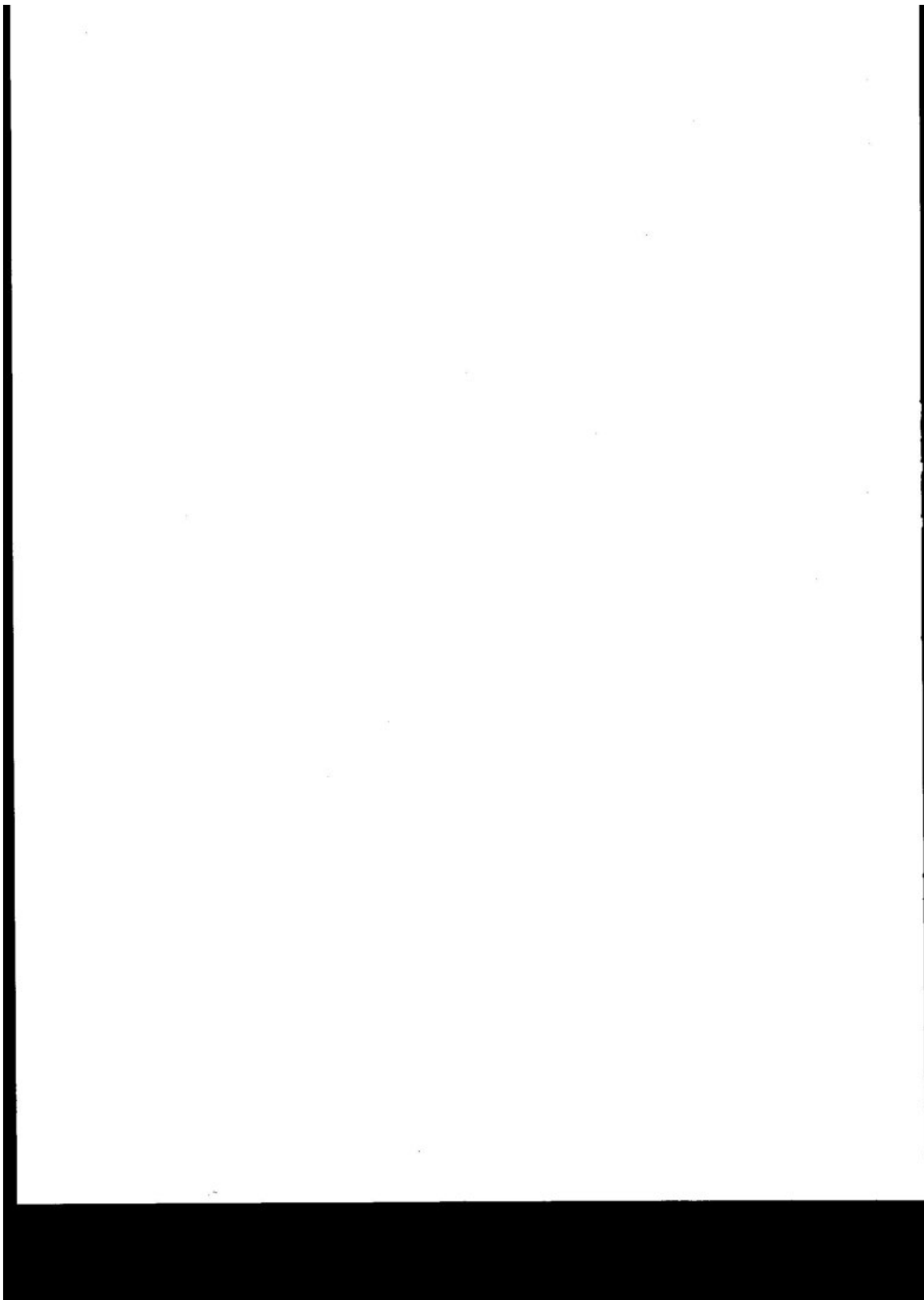
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Unit - II

Popular and Reform Movements

Contents :

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 - 2.4.1 Self-Strengthening Movement
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2.1 Introduction

Around the middle of the 19th century, the Chinese empire was severely shaken by a series of popular movements that were both political and social in nature. The movements were usually against the imperial authority and led by secret societies. Besides the Taipings, there were the Nian, Moslem, Hui and Miao rebellions in which several million soldiers and civilians perished. By 1860 each of the empire's eighteen provinces had been affected by at least one of the rebellions. They fitted into the cyclic phase of dynastic decline which China had entered at the beginning of the 19th century. They also belonged to a historical context heavily influenced by the two Opium Wars and the 'opening' of China although some continued until 1875. The nature of the movements expressed a diversity of local conditions and local discontents. From now on, these and other internal developments were tied up with the evolution of international affairs.

Some of the causes behind the popular movements were connected with weakness of the imperial regime when the government became ineffective

leading to great hardship suffered by the people. The poverty of the peasants due to economic crisis was a major factor that triggered the popular movements.

2.2 Objectives

This unit focuses on the Taiping Movement and attempts at bringing about changes in China through various reform programmes in the second half of the 19th century. After going through the unit, you will be able to :

- *Understand* the causes that led to the Taiping Movement.
- *Examine* the different phases of Self-Strengthening Reforms and why it failed.
- *Gain insight into* the Hundred Days' Reform and reflect on the inherent problems in intention and implementation of various programmes in China.

2.3 Taiping Movement : 1850-1864

The great tradition of China's two thousand years of Imperial history came to be challenged in the political, social and intellectual turmoil that prevailed in China from the later half of the 19th century to the revolution of 1911. In this period of crisis, the first major deviation from the past was brought on in the middle of the 19th century by the Taiping Movement, a vast uprising that though unsuccessful in the end, introduced in China the elements so alien to China's tradition that they indicate to us a serious crisis in Chinese traditional society. *Taiping-Tien-Kuo*, the 'Heavenly Kingdom of Great Peace' was to be a kingdom that secured a new kind of peace. 'Taiping' implied justice and equality for all.

Extent:

No single event in the 19th century shook China in such a scale as the Taiping Movement. A movement, which as late as 1849, the Ching government regarded as a local outburst; by 1853 it had occupied Nanking, much of central and south China, and threatened the Manchu court in Peking. Far from being one of China's perennial peasant uprisings, the Taiping Movement had ideology and organization, preaching the overthrow of the existing order, transformation of society, equality of all and sharing of national property. Originating in the south-western province of Kwangsi

and Kwangtung, its impact was felt in sixteen of the eighteen provinces of China. The population composition who settled in Kwangtung and Kwangsi were the Punti and Hakka peasants. Their distinct customs and traditions often led to communal rivalries and clashes. Added to the chaos were the numerous tribal rebellions, mainly the Miao rebellions. Thus the provincial history of this area from where the Taipings originated was one of smuggling, piracy, banditry, rebellious activities of secret societies, economic hardship and generally widespread discontent.

Causes:

The Taiping Movement had a peculiar dual combination of modernity and tradition. On one hand it was attached to traditional Chinese secret societies, and on the other hand was the China which was unwittingly opened up to the West already. This dual element is reflected and interplayed throughout in the causes of the Taiping movement. Even if the Taiping movement heralded a new phase in China's history, its origin lay in the setting that still contained the familiar elements characteristics of dynastic decline and peasant uprisings. Grave corruption in government, heavy taxation of farmers, high rents leading to desertion of land by the peasants, an increase in the roaming population, banditry and general insecurity, the increase in the importance of secret societies, the formation of local self defense units which took law into its own hands, and frequent small scale warfare which led to uprisings against governmental authority-these briefly were the causes of the Taiping Movement.

The great upheaval arose amidst a background of increasing population pressure, natural calamities such as floods and famines (1846-48), drought, diseases and epidemics. Added to this was the inefficient government with corrupt officials which had already lost its prestige due to the defeat in the Opium Wars. In late 18th century, population increase drastically reduced the per capita land holding which led to increased misery of the poor peasants, small tenant farmers, particularly numerous in South West China and the lower Yangtze valley. These areas were the earliest bases of the Taiping Movement, signifying the connection between the peasant problems and the movement.

The Manchus controlled the educated elite to prevent it working against its interests. This led to administrative system of mutual checks and overlapping, and vague definition of functions breeding jealousy and administrative rivalry. Effectively the discouraged initiative energy and ambition left little

room for any bold innovation. The result was stagnation, demoralization and degeneration—a condition that gave an impetus to corruption.

Over-taxation forced many small farmers to debt eventually losing land. The land was bought by officials and gentry who with their privileges carried a much lighter tax on it. Consequently the taxation burden was passed on to small farmers. With the tenant farmers having to pay high rents, the situation was further aggravated. Heavy taxes and high rent led to the dispossession and misery of many farmers. They left their land and joined roving bands of bandits. Insecurity arose and the appeal for troops to maintain law and order went unheeded, and where heeded the army itself had become ineffective and lost its strength since they were a demoralized organization. This breakdown of law and order further fuelled the Taiping Movement. Local self defence units were raised since the army and government could not provide security. However, these units fought for local causes and even fought over such issues as water rights, property, women, ethnic and religious issues.

Another problem which aided the Taipings was the currency and fiscal problems created by the impact of the West. Uneven trade balance mainly due to import of opium led to silver bullion flowing out of the country. The Chinese farmers had their tax and rent payments calculated in silver, whereas their incomes were based on the devalued copper coins. The opening of the new treaty ports, especially Shanghai affected the trade routes and existing transportation system. Canton lost much of its former pre-eminence resulting in thousands of porters and boatmen being deprived of their livelihood. The Western navy also attacked the pirates who fled upriver into the hinterland of Kwangtung and Kwangsi, thus adding a further element of insecurity to a region already suffering from economic dislocation and local conflict. Thus, the political, social and economic factors all combined to play crucial roles in bringing about the mass discontent leading to the Taiping movement.

The *immediate cause* of the Taiping movement can be found in the special locale expressions of the overall problems of the area known as Liang Kuang, that is, the two provinces of Kwangtung and Kwangsi. What set apart the region from other parts of China is its ethnic, political and economic complexities. This was aggravated by the general conditions of economic decline and breakdown of political order. Thus, the background of the movement can be understood against the decline of official authority,

rampant corruption, the ineffective and demoralized army, local organizations taking over charge of defending interests of people often for illegitimate issues etc. these problems were aggravated by factors such as population growth and the western impact on the society already reeling under chaotic conditions.

Nature:

The Taipings had clear and unified *ideology* for which they were prepared to fight a long struggle. Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, opium-smoking, gambling, a dynasty with corrupt officials and ruthless landlords- these the Taipings regarded as 'the devil's representatives on earth' who had to be wiped out. They saw as their divine task the creation of a heaven on earth for the blessing of all; this held them together and for this they risked their lives.

Initially the Taiping organization was similar to that of the secret societies in their social composition, anti-dynastic stand, egalitarian notion etc. The very name Taiping which means 'great peace' has been the slogan of secret societies from very old times. Initially, the Taiping organization was similar to that of secret societies. Both flourished and functioned in border regions as also underground. Both attacked the ruling dynasty. Their targets of attack were the officials, gentry and the landlords. They even had the same social composition, viz; peasants, smugglers, deserters from the army and sections of society who were frustrated. Both believed in establishment of an egalitarian society where women was to be given equal status as men.

There is a debate regarding the *ideology* of the Taipings-whether it is derived from Christianity or the old traditions of secret societies. The Taipings call themselves Christians and Bible is one of their texts. They attacked old traditional beliefs in the name of God and Christianity and had a modernistic element in their aim to change the whole social order. However, their type of Christianity was drawn from their own understanding of the faith and in fact their urge for equality and principles seem to have been more an influence of the traditions of the secret societies.

The basic economic document of the Taiping kingdom was called the 'Land System of Heavenly Kingdom', constituted in 1854 and aimed at putting an end to landlordism and land holdings. Agriculture and handicraft products were to be divided equally among men and women and children below the age of 16 years got half of the amount. Every individual could take from the harvest only that which was needed for his subsistence, and everything else went into the common granary.

The position of women in the Taiping society had greatly improved. Women could now take the state examinations, hold civil or military offices and there were also female contingents in the Taiping army. Women and girls who did not have protection of male family members were particularly taken care of. The Taipings regarded all people as equals, and this was due to the influence of Christian principles. The important fall-out of this was that the Chinese now no longer saw themselves as chosen people-superior to the foreigners. Yet, they were careful not to surrender any Chinese rights to the West. Such revolutionary changes was indeed unprecedented in the Chinese society.

The Taiping ideology was revolutionary and had modern ideas much ahead of its times; although it could not be implemented. One of the programmes which was to have far-reaching impact for China was that outlined by Hung Jen Kan, a modern programme based on Western lines, which was as follows:

- To bring missionaries and technicians to teach the Chinese the knowledge of the West
- To spread education through newspaper and avoid superstitions.
- All temples to be converted to schools and hospitals.
- To introduce Western institutions such as banks, insurance companies, ships and railways; and mining to be carried out methodically and run by private firms.
- The banks should give financial assistance to the new proposed enterprises.
- Employers and employees should each get 20% of the produce.
- The programme advocated urban capitalism which meant restoration of private property, a radical change from the earlier policies.

Taiping Movement: Rebellion or Revolution

The Taipings aimed to liberate China from Manchu rule. It was seen as a social crusade expressing the poor peasants' desire for equality, a national campaign against the foreign dynasty occupying the throne in Peking, and a modernist trend that developed in response to the challenge presented by the West through the Opium Wars.

There are two main schools of thought regarding the nature of the movement. Western scholars suggest that the uprising may be termed a rebellion and

the Chinese communists call it a revolution. Mao Tse-tung declared that the Taiping was one of the major eight events in China's hundred years history before the Chinese Revolution. A close study reveals that the Taipings attacked not only the ruling dynasty but also the traditional Confucian order itself. The ideology also had revolutionary ideas which were far ahead of its times. In fact the Taipings were determined to eradicate the most basic elements of Chinese society-the gentry, officials, scholars, landlords, and the Confucian ethos on which the authority rested. It may be noted, however, that the movement failed and as such could not bring about -'once and for all change' of the existing order. Hence it may be called a 'Great Rebellion' and not a revolution.

Causes of Failure:

Although the Taiping movement had an ideology and organization unlike many of the earlier movements in China, there are no reliable accounts to suggest that the system was ever implemented. There was some benefit in the lower Yangtze valley. However, considering the duration of the movement, it may be said they were not successful in implementing their goals. The Taiping movement failed on account of many factors such as follows:

- Weak leadership; and non-adherence to the Taiping ideology such as sharing of property, equality and justice for all etc.
- Taipings originated among the poor peasants. But the leaders themselves did not follow the tradition and started behaving like the Manchus by acquiring huge private property.
- Group rivalry and constant fighting among the leaders; this hampered implementation of the programmes.
- Rent was introduced and taxes became heavy again.
- The political strategy went back to bringing in the earlier form of absolute despotism for which they started the movement; and this perhaps was their greatest drawback.
- The Western powers gave military support to the Manchus which made Taipings a weak opponent.

Historical Significance:

Although the Taiping movement was a failure, it affected the future of China's history in many ways:

- It caused the passing of power from the Manchus to the local leaders
- Future peasant movements were inspired by memories of the Taipings- even Sun Yat-sen and Mao Tse-tung drew inspiration for Communism from the Taipings
- The Communists also followed the social, moral and military reforms put forward by the Taipings.
- The Communists learnt from the failure of the Taipings, and formed better and improved programme, thereby contributing to the success of the Communist movement.

2.4 Self-Strengthening Movement; and Reforms in the Chinese state, 1860 to 1898

2.4.1 Self Strengthening Movement

The Self Strengthening Movement (SSM) was probably the earliest Chinese attempt to find an alternative to the traditional set-up which was crumbling under various influences. Once the peace treaties were concluded with Britain and France in 1860 and the Taiping Rebellion was suppressed in 1864 the decline of Ching dynasty characterized by internal rebellion and external invasion was arrested. The fifteen years that followed the Peking Convention of 1860 witnessed apparent unity and order of the imperial regime.

Emperor Tung Chih:

The reign of Tung Chih (1862-1874) which saw a renewal of strength was the last show of brilliance before the ultimate ruin of the imperial regime. The new reform process was not merely a return to the old order, but involved creation of new programmes to meet the challenges raised by the rebellions. The architect of the reform process were a few senior officials who had the reputation of being efficient administrators. The traditional balance between the central and provincial authority was established where most of the senior officials in the centre also had posts in the provinces. The suppression of the popular movements have been traditionally credited to the reign of Tung Chih. The regional armies also played an important role in suppressing the uprisings. It may be noted that the relative peace and stability that China now enjoyed was mainly due to the sudden change in the policy of the foreign powers after the Second Opium War. The treaties signed after the

War had extended the privileges given to them and the foreigners were satisfied for the time that the Tsungli Yamen was created, the foreign ministry office through which they could carry on business with the Chinese.

Tung Chih Restoration:

For the next three decades, attempt was made to rejuvenate and restore the country to the youth, and to repair the ravages of foreign imperialism. The term 'restoration' is applied to this period of Tung Chih rule when the decline of China was temporarily halted. The endeavour manifested itself in the political reconstruction or 'rebirth' of the traditional Confucian order, government maintenance of peace with foreign powers and initiation of the Self-Strengthening Movement through adoption of western diplomatic practices and military and technological devices. This revival was referred to as *Tung Chih Chung Hsing* or Tung Chih restoration. The overall desire was of *Tsu Chiang* (self strengthening) to transform China into a country of *Fu Chiang* (economic affluence and military strength) in the face of imperialist bullying and crippling domestic rebellions. The first task of restoration was material reconstruction with a view to achieve economic recovery. This effort was partly successful which gave the country few years of stability.

The steps taken to strengthen the country included:

- Rendering help to peasants through reduction of taxes and distribution of tools for enhancement of agriculture etc.
- Re-opening of academics and libraries
- Resumption of government examination in which stress was to be laid on the practical problems of the day.
- Increase in quotas for reward in provinces for military and financial contributions
- Check corruption through stricter measures
- Maintenance of peace with foreign powers to help China in reconstruction

An important factor in the launching of SSM was the literary works by various enlightened scholars such as Feng Kue Fen, Liang Ting Nan and Ho-chi Sin Tao. Feng took the lead in advocating the movement and delivered a famous pronouncement: 'Learn the superior techniques of the barbarians

to control the barbarians'. He urged the countrymen to take part in western learning in order to strengthen themselves.

The Self Strengthening Movement can be divided into three phases:

- 1861-1872
- 1872-1885
- 1885-1895

There were two main motives of the Self Strengthening Movement:

- To equip the army with modern arms
- To bring China on equal footing with the outside world by introducing western learning and other advancements in science and technology

The *first* phase of SSM from 1861 to 1872 saw the establishment of Interpreters' College at Peking, a foreign language school, a small gun factory at Soochow, a dockyard at Foochow, military industries etc. Thirty teenage students were also sent to the United States for study and officers sent to Germany to gain knowledge from these countries. The first efforts also resulted in new Chinese institutions, such as the Tsungli Yamen (foreign affairs committee), and the expansion of the customs service to cope more effectively with foreign affairs.

The *second* phase from 1872 to 1885 was motivated by the dictum: 'Chinese chronic weakness stems from poverty'. The idea was to increase wealth as this was believed to be the basis for power. Along with military industries, greater emphasis was laid on profit oriented enterprises such as shipping, railways, mining, telegraph etc which were financed by merchants. Li Hung Chang was the leading proponent of modern industries and enterprises and under him 90% of the profit was launched. Some of the new introductions were the dispatch of students to study in France and the sending of officers to Germany, establishment of textile factory, naval academy, inauguration of imperial telegram administration and beginning of a harbor and shipyard at Port Arthur.

The *third* phase emphasized on light industries. On the organization front, there were two types of enterprise, viz a joint government and mercantile enterprise and the private enterprise. Some of the industries which were established include cotton mill, Iron mines at Canton and Wuchang, organization of two match companies in Hupeh province and establishment of Li Hung Chiang Paper Mill at Shanghai.

The SSM however, did not accomplish what it intended to achieve. The weakness of the programme was in fact exposed in the Sino-French War (1884-85) when after twenty years of reforms, the country was not able to defend the tributary state of Annam. Further, the Sino-Japanese War (1894-95) proved that the SSM failed since after years of effort at modernization, the tiny country of Japan defeated China.

The *limitations* of the SSM are as follows:

- The scope of activity was limited to fire arms, ships, machines, communication, mining and light industries. No attempt was made to assimilate western philosophy, arts and culture
- The efforts of SSM barely touched the surface of modernization, without achieving a breakthrough in industrialization.

The following points shed light on the unsuccessful performance of the SSM:

1. Lack of co-ordination between the provinces and central authority was one of the main weakness of the SSM. The decline of Ching dynasty after the Taiping rebellion led to a situation where modernization came to be carried out by provincial authorities without central direction planning and coordination. The provincial promoters of SSM rivaled with each other instead of co-operating. They regarded their achievements as the foundation of personal power. The sense of regionalism was so strong that in the French war of 1884, the Peiyang and Nanyang fleets refused to go to the rescue of Fukein fleet under enemy attack. In the Japanese War of 1894-95, the Nanyang fleet maintained 'neutrality' while the Peiyang fleet alone fought the Japanese navy. The result of both the wars were, of course, disastrous.
2. Limited vision of SSM to mainly resist enemies was itself a narrow outlook. The dual standard of Chinese learning *viz*; for fundamental principle and western learning for practical application did not go together. The Chinese could not shake off the old traditions.
3. Shortage of capital for SSM. China had a poor economy
4. Foreign imperialism coincided with SSM.
5. Technological backwardness and moral degradation. Western machines were alien to traditional Chinese mentality. Leaders of SSM and Empress Dowager were not noted for high moral character and did not set good examples.

6. Social and psychological attitude of the Chinese especially the majority of scholar official class who regarded foreign affairs and western style as 'vulgar and dirty'.

In spite of the shortcomings, the SSM had certain *repercussions* in the history of China which is as follows:

1. It sowed the seeds of industrialization and modern capitalism in China.
2. Most of the dockyards, schools, modern enterprises, machine factories etc. were located in the treaty ports and cities along the coast where foreign help was readily available. This in turn contributed to the development of great metropolises such as Shanghai, Nanking, Tientsin, Foochow, Canton and Hankow.
3. The increase in the number of cities gradually gave rise to the emergence of a new working class. The agriculturists also was slowly getting drawn to these cities who in turn became industrial workers.
4. New professionals *viz*; engineers, managers etc who studied abroad returned home to become leaders in the army, navy and other services thereby creating a new managerial class in China.

2.4.2 Reform Movement of 1898: Hundred Days' Reform

The shock of actual foreign aggression and defeat provided a stimulus to China's attempt at regeneration at the end of the 19th century. The ever widening tentacles of western and Japanese imperialism were threatening to divide China into spheres of influence and further dislocate economy and society. The frightful prospect of dismemberment precipitated a reform movement in China in 1898 highlighting the aspirations of the national bourgeoisie and intellectuals in collusion with the court faction. This movement had been gathering momentum for nearly a decade since the defeat in the Sino-French war of 1885. The defeat in the Sino-Japanese War of 1895 had made plain the failure of limited modernization of the Self Strengthening Movement. The later period of SSM (1885-1895) saw the transition of western imperialism to finance imperialism, i.e. from export of commodities to export of capital, a general widening of foreign network of economic exploitation which created a reaction in the newly emergent national bourgeoisie.

China's first heroic efforts towards radical reform are associated with Kang Yu-wei and others who influenced him. Disillusioned by the Self-

Strengthening philosophy, he emphasized not only the need to develop Chinese commerce, industry and agriculture, but also to find political solutions to China's ills. The fear of a break-up of China, led Kang Yu-wei and many intellectuals form an alliance with the Emperor who supported the reform movement with an indirect intention of overthrowing the Dowager Empress Tzu Hsi. Kang himself was a traditional scholar gentry and wanted to combine traditional and western concepts and advocated a new view of Confucius as a reformer as against the traditional view of Confucianism as a policy of inaction. The reformist drew inspiration from outside China seeing the successful modernization programme undertaken by Japan. The intelligentsia through Study Societies (for example, Society for the Study of the West) and the Press (for example, Current Movement Gazetteer and National News of Tientsin), helped publicise the movement.

The active regions were the lower Yangzte, Hunan, Kwangtung and Chili. The social foundations of the movement were the new emergent industrial and business bourgeoisie, which was constitutes of officials, compradores, merchants, gentry and land owners with a financial interest in modern enterprises. On 11 June, 1898, an edict from Emperor Kuang Hsu announced the decision on national affairs. This marked the beginning of the Hundred Days Reform. A flood of edicts were issued between June and September 1898. These decrees were in areas of education, government, administration, industry and international cultural exchange.

This political programme was however by no means a doctrine of radical opposition to conservatism. The new reformers reflected liberty, equality, and democracy and conceived of political participation restricted to an elite. It had no plans to change the agrarian structure and while seeking to repulse foreign imperialism actually sought its co-operation. The reformists sought to form a conditional government where a ruling elite could take part in crucial decisions. Hence, a proposal was made to frame a constitution, establish a national assembly in Peking, reorganize the bureaucratic structure so as to make it more efficient, and bring about the growth of local self government among others. Some of the proposals included a revision of the existing examination system and establishment of a governmental institution bureau, creation of twelve new bureaus to render useless the Grand Council, the six boards and other existing offices, growth of a local self government, creation of a parliament at Peking, establishment of a National Assembly along with a Constitution.

In education, the eight-legged essay was replaced by examination based on current affairs in the Civil Service Examinations. The old academics as well as temples which had fallen into disuse were to be transformed into schools. Peking university was founded and science and politics were to be included in the syllabus. Rewards were introduced to encourage literary works and inventions. Study societies were to be founded. In the political sphere, suggestions from private citizen were encouraged. In the economic reforms, two general offices similar to Ministries were formed viz; Office for railways and mining, and another office for trade, industry and agriculture etc. These were designed to regulate the economy in the provinces. Individuals were given permission to build arsenals (storage for ammunition). Plans were made to publish a budget and also the regular financial statements.

In assessing the Hundred Days' Reform, it must be admitted at the outset that the 1898 reform was a failure; yet the significance lay in the fact that it familiarized the educated people with political changes and new ideas. The Chinese also learnt a lesson that henceforth revolutionary change should come from below and not at the superficial outward level. It also marked a step further from the SSM.

The Hundred Days' Reform met with little success; and largely failed due to the following factors:

- Immanuel Hsu lists four reasons viz; inexperience of the reformers, ill-considered strategy of over-dependence on the emperor, unwillingness of Empress Tzu His to give up power and powerful conservative faction in court.
- Failure to build up a popular base. It ignored agriculture, the country's base for future development. The non-involvement of the peasantry in the movement clearly showed the limited popular base.
- The public in China was suspicious of the intention of the reforms since the reformers advocated resistance to foreign imperialism and yet co-operated with them
- The examination system was abolished and this meant closure of door to employment for many scholars.
- Inability of the Chinese intelligentsia to cast off Confucian ideas.
- Mao Tse-tung believed that the real cause of failure was western imperialism.

- Mary C. Wright opined that "There is no way in which an effective modern state can be grafted into a Confucian society". Immanuel Hsu blames the "inexperience of the reformers and their ill-conceived strategy, reluctance of Empress Dowager to give up power and the powerful conservative opposition within the court" as the principle cause of failure".

The *impact* of the Hundred Days' Reform was as follows:

- Transformation of the traditional elite had begun. Though businessmen and bankers supported the movement initially, the majority of its members were the scholars and officials. The officials took to industry and trade and merchants too became involved in politics. The rural scholars started to become urban intellectuals. However, the old traditional Confucian ethos still prevailed and none of them could shake themselves off from it.
- Non-involvement of the peasantry clearly showed a limited popular base.
- No national consciousness
- The 1898 Reform Movement was of, by and for the ruling elite and did not involve the masses in the least. The elite only aimed at reinvigorating China's existing socio-political system to extricate the ruling elite from the crisis it had fallen into.
- The Reform Movement of 1898 was not a popular protest or a radical change in the existing order. Its failure proved that progressive reforms from the top without popular base was impossible. Change should come from within; it cannot be grafted from the top.
- The importance of the movement lay in the fact that it was a precursor of other movements that were to follow-with greater social backing which was to transform the traditional Confucian order after a series of Revolutions. It initiated a process of modernization, however limited and constrained it might have been.

2.5 Summary

During the period 1850-1870, China witnessed a number of popular uprisings against the imperial authority. Most of the empire's eighteen provinces were affected by rebellions. Yet, they failed to overthrow the Manchu regime.

The significance lay in that it indicated signs of an immense political and social crisis. The peasants in particular were resentful of the land tax and the worsening condition of agriculture made their lives miserable. The Taiping Movement originated in a poverty-stricken province in South China, expressing the poor peasants desire for equality - a campaign against the imperial order with aim too build a new order in China. The high quality of their armies, their fanatical determination, the discipline which impressed the foreigners and the military leadership - all enabled the Taiping to hold their own against the imperial troops for many years. It must be remembered that the Taipings wanted to create a new power, symbolized by a new dynasty. Herein lay the main difference between them and the other peasant movements, such as the Nian, to whom the Taipings were in fact very close, both in time and geography.

The invasion of Peking by the British and the French troops in 1860 convinced at least a few Chinese and the Manchus the need of the country to usher in new changes to adjust itself to the aggressive West. The SSM was intended to bring about major changes in China. Yet, after three decades of the efforts at reform, it was not successful. The real cause for the failure was deep-rooted. Mary C. Wright opined that the Chinese were not good learners and that the problem lay not 'in the gadget but the man'. The reason, however, is more complex than it seems. There was a dichotomy between ideology and institution; that is, 'China wanting (ideology) to alter its instrument (institution) without touching the body'. In fact it was their inability to realize their potential and weakness which affected them in the long run.

2.6 Key Terms and Notes

Civil Service Examination:

Prescribed and conducted by the government, it encouraged exclusive reliance upon the wisdom of the past; discouraged freedom and independence of thought. There were four series of examinations and the 'palace examination' was held in the presence of the emperor. The examinations became the only way to public office, official distinction and a road to becoming wealthy. This wealth was usually invested in land. The landed gentry frequently controlled public opinion.

Kang Yu-wei (1858-1927):

A Cantonese belonging to the gentry class, perhaps the most significant aspect of his political philosophy was his interpretation of Confucius as a reformer. He thus concluded that all intelligent Confucians in times of trouble should become reformers.

Rebellion:

An anti-government protest with arms.

Revolution:

A 'once and for all change' bringing a new order, political or otherwise which is completely different from the existing system.

Secret Societies:

Organizations which opposed the established order, the Manchu dynasty. They were loyal to the Chinese Ming dynasty, dethroned in the 17th century. They were the spirit behind peasant movements and the members came primarily from the poor sections of the society, both town and countryside. They also functioned as dissenting religious groups. The societies fell into two large groups, viz; The White Lotus group in the North and the Triad group in the South. The Northern group was mainly religious and the Southern group chiefly political although this was not always the case.

Tsungli Yamen:

A special committee set up to deal with all matters related to Western powers.

2.7 Questions and Exercises

1. Analyse the factors and forces that led to the Taiping uprising and examine the nature of the movement.
2. Explain the historical significance of the Taiping Rebellion in the history of China.
3. Discuss the different phases of the Self Strengthening Movement. Why did it fail?
4. Examine the importance of the Hundred Days' Reform in the history of China.
5. Write short notes on the following:
[a] Tung Chih Restoration [b] Reform Movement of 1898

2.8 Reference and Suggested Readings

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Unit : III
Emergence of Nationalism in China

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3.1 Introduction

The first decade of the 20th century marked the end of the Ching dynasty as well as the ancient Chinese monarchy and empire which had been in existence for more than two thousand years. The forces of opposition to that empire had emerged during the preceding century and by 1911 they developed and became organized. This opposition to the traditional monarchy had emerged due to various social, political and economic factors accumulating over the years, and finally they exploded in 1911 bringing an end to the monarchy which ruled with a 'mandate from heaven' Simultaneously, 1911 also marked the beginning of a prolonged crisis of central power in the world's most ancient government.

The establishment of the New Republic saw Sun Yat-sen as the first Provisional President. Sun, however, soon resigned the presidency in favour of Yuan Shi-kai, who unfortunately disclosed a distaste for parliamentary government and was trying to use his powers to restore monarchy. In 1915 Yuan began to take steps for founding a new dynasty which led to strong protests and riots. The crisis was averted with Yuan's death in 1916. No sooner had this threat faded than the Japanese used World War I as an excuse to bully China. The reaction to this was seen in the May Fourth movement of 1919. Ironically, with the establishment of the republic, China did not enter an era of republicanism but rather one of militarism. The period 1916-1928 is referred to as an 'era of warlords'. Warlordism saw an era when local military governors attacked the central authority resulting in a state of political chaos. It were in these circumstances, of warlord politics, of intellectual strivings for a new order, and of student activism that the Kuomintang, China's first nationalist Party made its bid for power. It was this party, the Kuomintang, under the able leadership of Sun yat-sen, which was to formalize China's new nationalism.

3.2 Objectives

This unit attempts at reconstructing the political developments of China during the period 1900 to 1928. The year 1911 marked an important stage in the political history in that it witnessed the abdication of the last Manchu ruler and the end to the imperial regime. In 1912, China was proclaimed a Republic. The period under review also witnessed China's entry into World War I. The rise of nationalist sentiment brought a new wave in China's political history.

It is designed to help you:

- *Understand* the factors and forces that led to the Boxer uprising and its effects
- *Explore* the reasons why the Manchu dynasty came to an end
- *Examine* the success of the 1911 revolution and the establishment of the Republic in 1912
- *Gain Insight into* the emergence of the Warlords and their role in China's history
- *Comprehend* Sun Yat-sen's role in the emergence of nationalism in China and why he is referred to as the 'Father of modern China'.

3.3 Boxer Rebellion and its Consequences

Among the Chinese masses, the imperialist expansion that followed the Sino-Japanese War provoked a violent reaction, which crystallized into a movement much further removed from the elite than had been the case during the preceding period and this movement took the shape of the Boxer Uprising in 1900. Led by the secret societies, it was a peasant movement linked with the conditions of Chinese agriculture. In addition, the movement had nationalist overtones, directed against the foreigners- the main targets being the missionaries and the Chinese Christians.

Emergence of the Boxers :

The Boxers belonged to a Chinese secret society called the 'Righteous and Harmonious Fists', since members of the organization practiced a fitness exercise known as Callisthenics. The physical exercise such as boxing was central to their programme. In the 1890s this secret society took on an anti-foreign stance, vowing to 'kill foreigners and their collaborators'. From the year 1899, the organization changed its name to 'Righteous and Harmonious Militia'. The Boxers aimed at defeating the highly trained power of the government and to strengthen their morale they followed the regular fitness regime. The social composition of the Boxers were mainly boatmen, porters, monks and soldiers. Some gentry and officials also joined the movement at the later phase when the court at Peking took up the cause of the Boxers. It may be mentioned that the Boxer military organization was much more disciplined than the Manchu troops.

Causes:

Ingrained with the teachings of Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism, the Chinese resented the coming of Christianity, and the missionaries who were the agents of the new religion. The missionaries had slowly but surely encroached into the traditional spaces of the local people-acquiring the right to buy and rent land for construction of churches. This took place after the treaties of 1856-60, and China was to witness the beginning of disputes between the peasants who settled in the lands, and the missionaries who came to spread Christianity. What angered the local people was that the missionaries built churches, sometimes on the ruins of old Confucian temples. They also often attacked the traditional religion and customs in their preachings. This naturally hurt the sensibilities of the Chinese common people. The Boxers also hated the Chinese converts. The converts not only received monetary help and other preferential treatment from the

missionaries, but were helped and protected in case of disputes with non-Christians and against official interference. The Chinese converts tried to bully their fellowmen and evade the law with missionary influence. The gentry was especially anti-foreign regarding Christianity as a socially disruptive, delusive and heterodox sect. They saw in the foreign missionaries an alternative, rival source of power. Thus, the hatred towards Christianity became a basic cause for the anti-foreign stance of the Boxers Movement.

The public anger against foreign imperialism was a major cause of the Boxer uprising. As the pace of foreign interference accelerated by 1897-98, a sense of insecurity grew among the masses. Kang Yu Wei warned of the dangers of China becoming another Burma, India or Poland. The Progressives proposed national salvation through radical institutional reform, but the reactionaries and the ignorant simply yearned to vent their anger by killing the foreigners. The Big Sword Society of Shantung devoted itself to killing foreigners and the Christian converts.

The economic factors that led to the movement can be traced to the immense hardship suffered by the Chinese peasantry and many other sections of the population. During the last years of the 19th century, there was agrarian crisis arose on account of various factors such as population pressure (1873-93), increase of tenant farmers, increase in rent, lack of capital and technical developments, natural calamities and government indifference. The traditional economy suffered due to trade, industrialization, growth of large towns etc. Moreover, commercialization of agriculture led to more and more land being used for large scale production of commercial goods, taken care by rich peasants. The foreigners, especially missionaries and holders of railway concessions also disposed the peasants of their farms. All these developments led to harsher exploitation for the peasants.

In 1899, China suffered a trade deficit of 69 *taels* and a government budget imbalance of about 12 million *taels*. To meet the deficit, the government demanded taxes and the burden was to be borne by the people. When life became unbearable and too hard-pressed for survival, they turned towards the secret societies and many of them became bandits. In fact after 1890s, in the wake of the Sino-Japanese War, there was a reform in the Manchu Army in which many soldiers-able bodied-were removed. These unemployed ex-servicemen became anti-establishment and joined the secret societies.

By the end of the 19th century, the country was beset by bankruptcy, and the foreigners came to be blamed as the reason for the misfortune of the people.

It was in this atmosphere of superstition, economic depression, extreme deprivation of basic needs of survival, anger against foreigners and resentment of the missionaries that the Boxer Uprising broke out in 1900. All these factors that made up for public discontent and anti-foreign sentiment were present in Shantung and Chili and here the Boxer movement broke out.

Nature:

There is a debate regarding the nature of the Boxer movement-whether it was primarily anti- foreign or anti-missionary, i.e whether the fault lies with the Christians or with foreign imperialism? Let us consider these points:

- Missionary activities brought Western ideas and influences to China
- The attack on missionaries by the Boxers were followed by huge demand for indemnities by the foreign powers.

Hence, the above statements show that the missionaries were only one of the agents of foreign imperialism and that the central issue is Western imperialism. Indeed, the Boxer movement was primarily a product of strong anti-foreign sentiment which permeated not only the court under Empress Dowager, but also the scholars and the people at large. Half-a-century of foreign humiliation, in war as well as in peace, had deeply wounded their national pride. The growing sense of injustice found expression in the anti-foreign movement. Although the religious and political factors are interlinked, primarily, it was the Western penetration that created disturbances in the Chinese economy and the resultant hardship of the people.

The *failure* of the Boxer movement is attributed to its organizational weakness and inadequate ideology to carry forward an uprising of its kind.. Cheneaux opines that the Boxers ' not have enough time to draw up a complete political and social programme'. Scholars say that it had no programme remotely comparable even to the Taipings, a movement that sought to overthrow the social system. The Boxers condemned all modern innovations as '*yang*' (foreign) and the only force that kept the Boxers together was their common adherence to Taoist-Buddhist-Confucian ideology. Another factor was their dependence on Empress Tzu-Hsi; the movement collapsed once the Manchus withdrew their support.

The *importance* of the movement lay in the fact that it was 'a first clear expression of a peasant anti imperialist movement'.

Boxer Protocol:

The Boxers were crushed by the international troops consisting of soldiers from Japan, Russia, Great Britain, USA, Germany, France and Italy. The Boxer Protocol was signed on 7 September 1901 between the representatives of the foreign powers and Prince Qing. The terms of the agreement was as follows:

- The chief offenders of the Boxer uprising was to be punished by death or exile
- To penalize the scholars, the examinations were suspended for five years in forty-five districts where the Boxers had been active
- China forfeited the right to import arms for two years
- A permanent guard of foreign troops protected in Peking
- China had to pay a heavy indemnity

The immediate *impact* was the worsening of China's position. The suspension of the Civil Service Examination for five years in cities where Boxer uprising took place, as a punishment to the gentry class, was a blatant interference with the internal administration of China. The huge Boxer indemnity of 450 million *taels* and its interests made up a large sum, especially because it had to be paid in foreign currency. Yet, even though harsh settlements were imposed on China, the manifestation of such a wide-scale anti-foreign sentiment actually checked 'a full-scale partition of China' In spite of being a failure, the movement served as a danger signal to the Western powers. The Open Door policy of America had proclaimed that it would protect the integrity of China. A development which was a fall-out of the Boxers which prevented the break-up of China was the Anglo-Japanese Alliance of 1902. The fear was intensified by the attempt of Russia to exploit the disturbances caused by the Boxer riots to her own advantage.

After the Boxer movement petered out, the Manchu court, in a struggle for survival instituted some half-hearted, superficial reform towards a constitutional government. Many Chinese, witnessing the hopelessness of the Manchu leadership, turned to revolution as the only hope for their country. Sun Yat-sen's advocacy of a forceful overthrow of the Ching dynasty, hitherto regarded by respectable Chinese as an unlawful movement to eschew now received increasing sympathy and support. His image reversed from a disloyal rebel to a high minded, patriotic revolutionary. As a result, the

pulse of the revolution quickened, precipitating the ultimate downfall of the dynasty in 1911.

3.4 Reforms of 1901-1908

The failure of the Boxer Uprising and the defeat inflicted by the foreign troops left the imperial regime with no other choice but to initiate a reform process to restore imperial power and create a modern state. The various reforms launched by the Manchu dynasty focused on three fields: education, army, and administrative and institutional organization. The reform was based entirely on the authority of the government which began to waver after the death of Empress Tzu Hsi in November 1908. The opposition forces turned openly against the regime. The reform which had been devised by the dynasty as a way to salvation became instrumental in its downfall.

From 1901 to 1906 a series of edicts remodeled the system of education to follow the Japanese model. The educational reforms met with initial success, but instead of contributing to the restoration of government power led to increasing the ranks of the opposition.

- In 1906, a War Ministry was established but was unable to impose centralization in the absence of a central financial power.
- Institutional reforms which developed between 1905 and 1911 introduced parliamentary features into the Chinese political system. The death of Empress Tzu Hsi in 1908 and soon after that of Emperor Huang Hsu left few chances of success for the policy of reform. After 1908 both the weakening of the imperial power and the return to a reactionary policy undermined the experiment of a Meiji type of reform that had been attempted by Tzu Hsi and the statesman in her entourage.
- Chinese economic evolution between 1901 and 1911 was closely linked with the development of international capitalism, for the growth of the modern sector in the Chinese economy went hand in hand with the progress of imperialist penetrator. Foreigners controlled all transportation. Within China they made every effort to develop direct contact with inland markets, thus encroaching on the activities of Chinese merchants. Foreign imperialism stimulated the Chinese desire to modernize the economy and to a certain extent provided the Chinese with the example, the funds and the technical knowledge to become a modern country. But at the same time the state of dependence imposed

on China and the exploitation suffered by the Chinese condemned the country to the condition of under-development.

- New social groups emerged as a result of the partial transformation of the state and the economy; viz; business bourgeoisie, brokers, bankers, industrialists and compradors (the intermediaries between the Chinese public and western or Japanese businessmen) and overseas businessmen. Perhaps the important section comprised of the numerous students of the new schools. The education they received estranged them from Confucian values and freed them from the network of duties weighing down the old scholars. The best of them did have a sense of duty, but not towards the real situation in China. They were concerned for a brilliantly imagined national future and thereby gave birth to revolutionary radicalism. The social group which emerged with the beginning of modernization were potential enemies of the established regime. Their opposition would probably have carried little weight had it not been combined with widespread discontent throughout Chinese society.
- At the beginning of the 20th century, the elite felt less and less loyal to Peking. This decline in loyalty went hand in hand with the decentralization which had begun in the 19th century. The discontent of the privileged classes corresponded with the agitation among the lower classes.

The reforms of 1901-1908 failed due to China's historical circumstances such as the death of Empress Tzu Hsi in 1908 and later the succession by a child-emperor. The insincere measures of reform led to discontentment which led to increasing the forces of opposition against the Manchus. In fact, the assemblies, both provincial and national, that were meant to strengthen the Manchu dynasty became centres of opposition to the imperial regime. These measures only proved to be the last attempt to revive itself before the abdication and fall of the Manchu regime.

3.5 Revolution of 1911

3.5.1 Role of Social Classes

The 1911 Revolution has often enough been seen as a purely military and political event. However, contemporary observers were in no doubt about the profound socio-economic crisis in which the old regime was plunged.

The precarious situation of the huge rural population living at or below subsistence levels were aggravated by the abuse of supplementary taxes and adhoc levies, by the running-down of commercial granaries intended to alleviate local food shortages, by the neglect of irrigation systems, canals and the like and by the flight of gentry to the towns leading to the deterioration of their mediatory role between officials and people. Respect for authority was becoming fragile, at the very moment when implementation of the New Policy of Modernization was demanding large sums of money that ultimately had to come from the rural and urban lower classes.

Against the background of the socio-economic and political discontent, there emerged the powerful groups of reformists and revolutionaries. They were mainly organized abroad, particularly in Japan. Their leaders were Chinese in exile and the members overseas or students enrolled in foreign universities. Reformists and revolutionaries such as Liang Chi Chao and Sun Yat-sen emerged to lead the discontented forces towards a republican revolution. They founded parties such as the Political Culture Association (founded by Liang Chi-chao in 1907), and the *Tung Meng Hui* of Sun Yat-sen founded in 1905. Sen put forward his Three People's Principles, viz; *Min Tsu* (nationalism), *Min Chuan* (democracy) and *Min Shang* (People's Livelihood). All these ideas appealed to the minds of the discontented people which finally became a major force behind the revolution.

Factors and Forces:

Herein we may analyze a few *causes* of the Revolution of 1911. Firstly, the Szechwan railway problem provided the base and a prelude. The decree of 9 May 1911 nationalizing the railways which was accompanied by a foreign loan of 6 million dollars turned the provincial gentry against the government. Public opinion was mobilized by people whose financial interests were injured; patriots who felt outraged by the dependence on foreign funds and provincialists who regarded intervention by the imperial government as a threat. A violent campaign was led by the gentry whose interests were directly involved. They founded a Railway Protection League on 21 June 1911, circulated petitions and organized demonstrations. Shareholders in Chertu on 24 August decided to close shops and schools refused to pay taxes and form local militia. On 7 September leaders of the league were arrested and when several thousand people demonstrated for their release, 40 members were killed by the police. Until then the leaders of the movement were constitutionalist nor revolutionaries. With the advent of violence, other social forces entered the conflict. The railway movement provided a

suitable opportunity for the outbreak of violence rather than actually causing them.

Meanwhile, on 10 October 1911, a rebellion broke out in Wuchang. This was the final factor in the revolution. This overthrew the Manchu as well as the monarchy. The investigators of the movement were members of the New Army who were anti-Manchu. On 9 October, a bomb accidentally exploded at the headquarters of the Common Advancement Association (United League and New Army) and when police moved in, many militant members were arrested and executed. In retaliation four battalions of the New Army mutinied on the eve of 10 October 1911. Panic-stricken, the Governor General and the Commander-in-Chief of the army abandoned the town. A provincial military government of the Chinese Republic was established under constitutionalist Teng Hua Lung. The revolt was prepared by the revolutionaries, was carried out by the New Army, and gave power to the gentry of moderate to conservative opinions. Soon, the Manchu emperor abdicated and the imperial regime came to an end.

Thus, we see that the factors and forces responsible for the Revolution of 1911 were manifold and were directly the result of various social, political and economic causes. The forces involved included 'movements from below' such as the secret societies and the peasantry and the modern republican movement led by nationalists and revolutionaries, gentry, a new intelligentsia, student class and the modern New Army. The factors responsible ranged from mainly economic causes like financial imperialism of the foreigners and internal imperial apathy towards indigenous development of the economy to counter this imperialism. It was also a sequel to population rise, draughts, floods and resulting famines. Politically, the late Ching reforms instead of strengthening Manchu position undermined it. All of them combined and culminated in the Revolution of 1911. Thus bringing down the world's oldest government. It thus ushered in a period of instability in which rebellions followed uprisings and culminated finally in the establishment of Communism in China by 1949.

Assessing the Revolution:

A judgement on a revolution's success or failure involves a comparison between its aims and what it actually achieves. In the case of 1911 revolution this judgement is less than simple in view of the complexities involved and is a controversial issue among scholars. No doubt the 2000 year old feudal monarchy of the Manchus was uprooted but the speed with which the

imperial government was succeeded by a conservative reactionary republican government makes one believe that it was not any different from earlier dynastic changes. This was more so because nothing substantial had changed in the basic structure of the Chinese society. The who advocate the view that the Revolution was a failure say that it left China under the imperialists and the anti-feudal revolutionary task remained unaccomplished.

No doubt the 1911 Revolution had its shortcomings but taken in its totality it was a success. It is true that the Manchus met with the same fate that had befallen earlier dynasties, but this time there was no empire or no dynasty to succeed. Instead, for the first time in Chinese history a republican system of government was established. Mary C. Wright observes; "The importance lies both in its actual achievements and in the hopes that it raised and the new consciousness that it provoked". The 1911 Revolution was a landmark in the process of modernization of China which finally exploded in May 1919. The revolution was in essence anti-Manchu, anti-monarchic and anti-Confucian which automatically made it an advocate of nationalism, republicanism and modernization.

The year 1911 marked the beginning of a new phase where the old system could never be revived inspite of a futile attempt by Yuan Shi-kai. Though the democratic system could not be implanted in all its concreteness still it brings out the fact that the new ideas and institutions had come up with enough strength to stay in china through the Revolution. This was no mean achievement. There was also a boost in the economic life of the people as well.

Of the *weakness* that can be pointed out, one was the lack of coherent and acceptable philosophy beyond the overthrowing of the Manchus and the establishment of the Republic. Another factor was the failure of leadership where the power went by default to the conservative local nobles who certainly were not revolutionary. Another feature of the 1911 revolution was the crucial role played by the army in the revolution. And once the army had the power it was not willing to give it up once the revolution was over. The power fell into the hands of the arch militant Yuan Shi-kai leading to ruinous warlordism. A very important factor for the revolution having failed was the lack of mass base or popular participation which alone could have prevented the revolution from regression. This was because the revolution was carried out mainly through secret societies as a result of which mass mobilization was difficult. Besides the mass consciousness had not been aroused and they remained passive.

Whatever the shortcomings, the revolution in no way can be dismissed simply as a 'dynastic change'. It was far too significant for that and the changes it brought about paved the way for a 'New China'.

3.6 Sun Yat-sen: Principles and Policies

Sun Yat-sen (1866-1925) is recognized as the 'father of modern China'. He was not only a republican statesman but also a dynamic political personality who was not tied down to the tradition of the old scholars. His foreign education at Hongkong and Honolulu enabled him to follow a relatively simple path in breaking away from Chinese tradition. It was his personal background which was conducive to make him the active revolutionary that he was. In Honolulu he first got his view of political democracy of America. After Indo-China was wrested from China by France, Sun returned to his native land and started his active career of furthering revolution in accordance with the principles that went far beyond the advocacy of reform movement. In 1905 Sun's political philosophy was translated into an organized political movement. Till the establishment of the Republic, Sun had many followers. But the number decreased considerably after the Republic was established. In this situation other forces got the better of him and political power passed into the hands of Yuan Shi-kai. Sun himself had to flee to Tokyo to come back only in 1916.

3.6.1 The Three Peoples' Principles

The genesis of *San Man Chu I* or the Three Peoples' Principles, i.e. Nationalism, Democracy and Peoples' Livelihood lay in Sun's philosophy of land nationalization and amelioration of the peasants. It included a four-point programme viz; expulsion of China, establishment of a Republic and equalization of land.

The theory of nationalism as developed by Sun demanded emancipation of the Chinese people by self determination. He meant unification of the country including Mongolia, Tibet and Turkestan under a strong centralized government. Later, the meaning was extended to include opposition against all forms of imperialism, especially against foreign economic exploitation. He focused on Chinese tradition and mentioned five major virtues viz; loyalty, a devoted sense of duty, benevolence, honesty and love of peace. He contended that if any two of the virtues were universally accepted by the

people, the country would become strong and prosperous. On Democracy, the second principle, Sun believed that the theory of 'natural rights' had no place in the system since such a theory when carried in its extremes uphold special interests detrimental to the revolution and to political democracy. As he said, " by democracy, we mean the right to vote, the right of initiative and referendum. The formula for guaranteeing these rights ought to be definitely embodied in the constitution which in turn should be based on five dimensions of power viz; legislature, judicial, executive, examinatory and controlling. Our democracy is quite different from the traditionally accepted one based on the theory of national rights-we rather seek to develop a democratic system to meet the special needs of a reconstruction period with regard to the actual form of government to be adopted. Sun Yat-sen did not believe in the Anglo American theory of constitutional law but rather advocated the Swiss form of government in which the direct popular rights of initiative, referendum and recall rests with the people. He believed that there must be a distinction between political power and ability to of proper use of the knowledge. The people as a whole should be given sovereign power but the ruling authority should be given to those who are able to do it.

Sun Yat-sen succeeded in establishing a five power government but in the process he neglected the importance of popular democratic control by the people over the government thrugh their representatives in the legislature and thus he undermined the very democracy that he wanted to see prevail in China. The third principle . i.e. Socialism or peoples' Livelihood should be based on equalization of landownership and the regulation of capital. Sun was opposed to Marx's historical materialism. He accepted the idea that livelihood is the central frce in history, hence the struggle for living and not material forces determine history. In china, the problem of Marxist class struggle and proletariat dictatorship does not arise since industry was not yet developed. Although he never formulated a well thought out economic theory or a well planned economic programme, it must be admitted that his economic thinking was progressive.

An analysis of Sun's political views reveal that he drew inspiration from many quarters without being able to fuse into a consistent whole. The result was neither the British parliamentary type or American Congressional type. It was neither Swiss nor Soviet tpe-but a product of his own- a 'political potpourrie'.

Sun Yat-sen was always keen to see things work fast. When he saw that Chinese parliamentary group after 1911 did not work out as expected, he tried to substitute something else for it immediately. He advocated an all powerful government based on two assumptions viz; that people are ignorant and must allow able men to run the government and that men running the government should have no limitations placed upon their powers. He called his theory a distinction between sovereignty and ability. Sun passed away in 1925. After his death his lectures on the Three People's Principles and his plans for reconstruction became the theoretical problem of Kuomintang. Sun himself became worshipped as the hero of the revolution. The life and work of Sun Yat-sen is a relevant and significant field of the study in order to form a clear conception of Chinese political developments after World war I or during the post-1925 period up to the present times.

3.6.2 Kuomintang: Its Rise and Reorganization

At the time of its establishment, the Kuomintang (KMT) had raised high hopes among the progressive minded people in China. A new era of peace and prosperity was expected to follow the period of corruption and national humiliation associated with the Manchu regime which it supplanted. In the absence of either a dynastic succession or a party election, the key issue was-how was an administration to be legitimized? Just at the moment when nationalism had triumphed in theory, the Chinese republic suffered a decline of central power. In addition to the continued burden of China's semi-colonial status under the unequal treaties, it now had to bear the further humiliation of political chaos. First, the attempt at parliamentary democracy failed and then the state degenerated into warlordism. The entire system of national economy was in disorder and the political and intellectual leaders were stagnant as never before.

[For detailed account of the KMT turn to Unit IV: 4.5 Kuomintang and the First United Front]

3.7 Emergence of the Republic and Yuan Shi-kai

The reform process started by the imperial regime as an urgent means to uphold the tottering fortunes of the dynasty developed into an anti-Manchu agitation. Among the reformers, division appeared where the south with Canton as the centre was more radical than the north. The radicals wanted

to establish a republic in China by overthrowing the Manchu dynasty. Revolutionary societies, hostile to the Manchu dynasty, began to spring up and Sun Yat-sen, a doctor of medicine and a Christian Cantonese skillfully turned the anti-Manchu agitation into a republican movement. Alarmed at the progress of revolutionary propaganda, the imperial government called a National Assembly in 1911 and offered sweeping concessions including the grant to constitutional government of the parliament type. But the followers of Sun Yat-sen would agree to no compromise with the Manchu autocracy. In 1911 they took up arms against the Manchus, captured Nanking and made it the capital of the provisional republic which they set up, with Sun Yat-sen as President. In 1912 China was proclaimed a republic and the dynastic rule came to an end. Sun Yat-sen stepped down from the presidency and at his suggestion the Nanking Convention elected Yuan Shi-kai the first provisional president of the Republic of China. Sun had hoped that the Republic would be consolidated under the influence of a strong man. But to his great disappointment Sun found that Yuan Shi-kai soon disclosed a distaste for parliamentary government and was turning his power to his own advantage. He was not a republican and did not believe in 1911 that republicanism was the answer to China's ills, in which view he was by means not alone.

Yuan sought to strengthen his position with the help of foreign powers by offering to guarantee the 'unequal treaties'. He negotiated a big loan with five foreign powers and agreed that these powers should superintend Chinese finances. This, coupled with his increasingly autocratic tendencies, angered the patriotic radicals who feared that China was swinging back to monarchical absolutism. In 1915 Yuan caused an active propaganda to be set up in favour of restoration of monarchy and began to take steps to found a new dynasty. This led to protests, riots and insurrections in the southern provinces where, the republican sentiment was strong/ matters were heading towards a crisis which however, was averted by the death of Yuan Shi-kai. He was succeeded by the Vice president Li Yuan-hung, who was generally considered more loyal to republican principles.

End of the Imperial Regime

The crowning success of the Revolution was achieved in February 1912 when the boy-emperor, the last of the Manchus abdicated the throne and republic was proclaimed over the whole of China. The Chinese republic was to have a Presidential government, and Sun Yat-sen was made its leader by an almost unanimous vote. 1912 became the first year of the Chinese

Republic. It may be mentioned that in 1911, the Manchu dynasty had ruled China for 267 years. The dynasty had recognized the superior cultural attainments of the conquered people, and it had associated Chinese with Manchus in government. By mid-19th century, however, the Manchus faced economic dislocation and bureaucratic ineptitude at home and the impact of the Western world of ideas and power on their seaboard. These conditions called for radical adjustments in China's political, economic and social structure/ this was not taken care of by the political hierarchy. In the face of impending disaster, the aging and opportunistic Empress Dowager Tzu His had sought refuge in reform, but it was too late. It failed to halt the decline of the imperial regime.

An important point to note is the fact that the Manchus rule was a foreign, though Asiatic rule in China and so it never struck deep roots in the soil. It was discredited by its failure to prevent Western penetration. Repeated defeats at the hands of the foreigners brought home to the Chinese the ineffectiveness of the Manchu government in the face of the changed conditions of life. The Taiping rebellion, the Japanese aggression etc. had further revealed the inefficiency of the government which produced revulsion of feeling against the Manchu dynasty. This led to a movement for reform which eventually developed into anti-Manchu agitation. To make matters worse there was a succession of minor or weak emperors and the real ruler of China in the latter part of the 19th century was an ambitious woman, Dowager Empress. The old system of administration was unable and unfitted to stand the strain of the new times. With a weak and corrupt government, discontent of various social groups and the natural calamities, the Manchu government failed to discharge its primary obligations viz; maintenance of internal peace and order, and security against external aggression. This state of things at the time when the young Chinese were being leavened by the infiltration of new ideas from outside led to agitations for a thorough change of the existing system. Pressed from within and without the Manchus rule succumbed to the forces of new ideas and fell by the weight of its own ineffectiveness.

3.8 Warlordism: 1916-1928

The China that emerged from the catastrophe of World War I was a paradox of indescribable chaos and of magnificent rebirth. The death of Yuan Shikai was followed by a period of warlordism. There was no strong leader

with military power and popular backing to take the reins of administration in the hands and rule in an autocratic manner. The rise of militarism in China was divided among a number of warlords newly swollen and modern armed, using new railways and river streams could now dominate more easily the terrains, yet they could not create a new party. The warlords had to possess strong personality and their problem was first to train the subordinate officers and troops, win their personal loyalty, then feed them and supply them all. The typical warlord had no roots among the local people but were scourge upon them, exacting taxes from them. The warlords often allied themselves with civil governors to set up autonomous governments and some even declared their defacto independence from Peking.

The *origins* of warlordism can be traced as far as the Taiping movement. The imperial army with bad organization and control had proved to be no match for these rebels. Its impotency necessitated the breeding of private armies with better discipline, control and armaments to suppress the rebellions. From then onwards this practice of developing and maintaining private armies took firm roots in China. These private armies scored over the national soldiers because of expert training, good service conditions and their being in constant requirement by the weak and unstable Manchus to keep growing uprisings in check. It was in fact the powerful personal army of Yuan Shi-kai which was requisitioned by the Manchus to meet the successful revolt of 1911. It would not be exaggerating to label Yuan Shi-kai as the 'father of warlordism'. The warlords were greatly interested in money and they supported or betrayed the government for money. They fought with each other to secure richer revenues. They organized the opium trade, sold the official ports, taxed the people years in advance and finally when immensely rich, they retired to the safety and ease of the foreign concessions in Shanghai or the British colony of Hongkong.

The nature of warlord politics seemed partly confusing to everyone initially partly because they were too treacherous and so given to sudden shifts of allegiance and wily strategems. The ultimate aim of the warlords was political power and they sought all manners of institutional assemblies, even convoking conferences of military governors. However, being deficient in their capacity for modern political organization, the competing warlord groups could not rise above the regional level. Nonetheless, they always acknowledged the existence of the Chinese states. The struggle between the warlords and the politicians in parliaments and outside it went through a sequence of phases with a general trend towards the weakening of the

parliament and fragmentation of the country. The warlord period was one which witnessed the rise of centrifugal forces threatening the unification of China. It was an era of political bankruptcy with no fixed form of government in ascendency. The general scramble for the possession of all parts of China by the warlords weakened China socially, economically and politically.

Throughout the period of *warlord rule*, conditions steadily deteriorated in China. The situation of the rapid decline of China allowed Japan to continue her slow penetration into China, and thus prepared for swifter and more decisive strokes. The significance of this period of confusion cannot be minimized. Out of this warlord period and in reaction to it there emerged forces and institutions which were to shape the destiny of China till modern times. In the decade after 1916, all sorts of ideas and practices and experiments bubbled forth unrestrained by authority. This era was both 'chaotic and creative'. With political decline came a pluralism of intellectual, economic and social developments. Underlying the intellectual ferment were processes of economic growth in the cities and of general social change. The warlord period consummated the destruction of two main pillars of the old order. Firstly, the civil service which more or less remained intact when the empire fell, now perished in the age of confusion. The older officials withdrew to retirement. The younger officials either joined the hangers-on of some general or tried to obtain a post at one of the many new universities. Secondly, during the warlord period, the scholar class—at least the best elements of it withdrew from government services and took up academic pursuits. This aspect may be linked to the May Fourth movement which was to be spearheaded by the intellectual community. The government and administration were left to ignorant soldiers and self seeking careerists.

The warlord taxation and conscription stimulated migration to cities. Urban life and factory work broke the bonds of the old family system. Sons and womenfolk finally became independent and the family ceased to be a self-contained economic and social unit controlling the individual. However, the main event of this decade of warlords was the apparent growth of nationalism resulting out of chaotic Chinese conditions in every sphere of national life. Moreover, the Japanese intrusion in the Chinese territory considerably excited the people giving birth to a national jingoism in the country. The period was helpful to the growth of nationalism and publication of revolutionary literature. This age saw the exploitation and hardship for the peasants. The military rule had alienated both the scholars and peasants. In short, there was disorder in all fields of national life. The second phase

of Chinese revolution (1922) was the birth of circumstances created by this period of warlord politics. Indeed, it is a paradox that this chapter in Chinese history proved to be so creative and helped in the development of situations, the reactions and counter-reactions of which placed China under a form of government and ideology to which it still adheres to-Communism.

3.9 New Intellectual Ideas and May Fourth Movement: Its Nature and Significance

In 1919-20 many Chinese politicians and observers of Chinese affairs were unaware of the radical changes taking place just beyond their view. The political and military cliques were in conflict over the possession of central government, a ludicrous fiction of a republic increasingly subject to intrigues and desires of the great powers. So, the outbreak of anger among the students on May Fourth 1919 and the subsequent movement of solidarity caught them unawares totally off guard. This was a sign of deep cleavage which set in from then on between the two levels of political life- the new social forces on the one hand and the defacto and demure authorities on the other.

The May Fourth Movement was the climax of the intellectual ferment which had begun in 1915 or even earlier. It was also the start of growing political awareness which affected intellectuals, workers, merchants and other social groups. Chinese contemporary historians consider 1915 as a turning point between modern and contemporary history of China. Though both China and Japan had fought on the side of the Allies in World War I, it was evident by the Shantung settlement that the victorious powers viz; U.S.A, France and Britain, preferred giving Japan satisfaction thinking they might need an ally willing to bar the way to communism in Asia. Besides, they refused to create a breach in the unequal treaty system by returning even a small part of advantage they had gained since the Opium wars. Further, in 1919 the Chinese government itself was believed to have secretly accepted Japanese special position in Shantung. All this was seen as a betrayal both of the home and foreign governments. On 4 May several thousand students marched through Peking and vented their anger, especially against pro-Japanese Chinese politicians indulging in arson and violence. On 5 May, the Peking students Union was officially founded to organize and spread the movement. It was supported by the press and moderate section of the bourgeoisie. During the following weeks student demonstrations spread

throughout China. Students all over the country started organizing into unions and launched a general boycott of Japanese goods. The Chancellor of Peking University who sympathized with the student cause, was forced by the authorities to resign and a large number of people were arrested and the police were arrested and the police put down the student movement. With greater severity on 19 May, the Peking students went on a strike and were supported elsewhere also.

The nationalist aspect of the movement, which should be seen in a broader time span, 1915-21, was clearly evident. The most popular slogan of the time was 'save the country'. It was a manner of patriotic protest but the most original aspect of this natural upheaval was that its targets perhaps for the first time in modern Chinese history concerned both home and foreign affairs. The demonstrators in Peking stated that their aims were 'externally struggle for sovereignty and internally throw out the traitors. In other words, the May Fourth political struggle focused simultaneously on denouncing the power polity in China and the unequal treaty system and on utilizing the conservative sections of society which had given to foreign greed. Another aspect of the movement was its virtually spontaneous political nature which brought hundreds of thousands of people into action without the benefit of an organized political apparatus. Disappointment and bitterness, the aftermath of the failure of the 1911 Revolution spread skepticism about the political capability of political organizations and parties.

Nature:

The May Fourth movement was also a generational movement. Students demonstrated against the government, fought against the police, distributed anti-Japanese tracts and formed 'groups of ten' for national salvation which urged tradesmen and workers to strike and applied the boycott instructions. It was the students who played a crucial role with other social groups like bourgeoisie, proletariat etc. lending support to it making the movement a combined expression of national and class interests. The Chinese bourgeoisie had developed due to capital accumulation especially by the comprador and the Chinese overseas mercantile community. During World War I when foreign economic activity was directed towards military productivity, the Chinese bourgeoisie not only managed to dominate the home market but also were able to correct the unfavourable trade balance to some extent as was created demands for Chinese goods. All this resulted in large scale industries under Chinese auspices. The return of peace brought new transport facilities to China, while the rise in price of silver facilitated the importing

of machinery and other durable goods. But the end of the war also saw a return to foreign competition especially Japanese penetration into the Chinese economy. Obviously the Chinese bourgeoisie was in no mood to submit to the old constraints and when the May Fourth movement broke out, it felt sufficiently strong and confident to lend support to it.

Apart from the bourgeoisie, an industrial force had slowly emerged in the cities due to the combined efforts of population increase, warlord taxation and natural calamities in the countryside. Labour unions were remarkable in the sense that they could make their presence felt only a year after their being set up. Also large concentration in foreign factories under very poor condition promoted anti-foreign feelings. Meanwhile war accelerated economic misery and political development because prices rose while wages remained static. As a result of the monetary crisis, since their wages were paid in copper, whereas 'goods' had to be paid silver, their economic position deteriorated. War also created a shortage of manpower in Europe resulting in the influx of large-scale Chinese workers to Paris and other European cities. They acquired some knowledge of working class struggles here and also came into contact with Chinese students studying abroad, resulting in the creation of political consciousness.

Thus, the student class felt uniquely qualified by their studies to modernize and save the nation. The motives and ideas of this student leadership sprang increasingly from their foreign contact. Japan took the largest number of students abroad. France, too, became a source of political movements and doctrines among the returned students in China. Students returning from Japan were more active nationalists; whereas those who returned from Europe especially France were more familiar with the working class struggle. This new intelligentsia was different from the old. After the abolition of the old type of Confucian service examinations, the link between the bureaucracy and intelligentsia was snapped. The classical system of education being abolished even students in Chinese institutions were much more independent of old thought patterns and new hopes, aspirations, and visions which clashed bitterly with the current realities in China where the warlords were trying to revive monarchy and old Confucian values and the country was in fact losing its sovereignty. This 'intellectual movement' was centred in Peking National University. In the ferment of their discussion and writings, all the social and philosophical theories then current in the western world and Japan were given expression, whether or not fully grasped: realism, liberalism, socialism, Darwinism, materialism etc.

The May Fourth Movement was a composite one which included nationalism, radicalism and social debate. While strengthening radical influence, it widened students contact, strengthened the bourgeoisie and industrial work force. The peasants, however, were conspicuous by their absence even though they played an important part in the 1911 revolution as boycott, strike and such forms of protests only suited the urbanites.

The movement had repercussions in many ways. Some scholars, especially the liberals felt that the chief merit of the movement lay in the fact that it symbolized a renaissance on European lines. They stated that it was a movement of reason versus tradition, freedom versus authority and glorification of life and human value versus a humanist movement. Among the features of the movement, several aspects may be found which resemble those of European renaissance, semi-medieval society and economic conditions, the vernacular problem and the need to emancipate the individual from the bondage of traditional ideas and institutions. However the differences were more glaring. Europe in the late middle ages was the scene of commercial revolution, whereas china after World War I was a transition from an agrarian to an infant industrial economy which faced a fully industrialized capitalistic West and also Japan. As a result her economy had become semi-colonial rather than expansive. This difference actually put the May Fourth Movement in an economic setting unlike that of the European renaissance. In Europe, while most of the great literary works in the vernacular were written during and after the renaissance movement, in China a number of novels in vernacular languages existed several hundred years before the May Fourth Movement. The movement created a new literature chiefly in the sense that the vernacular was thereafter recognized as a major medium for all literature and as a national language and that the subject matter of literature changed.

Mao Tse-tung, the Chairman of the Chinese Communist Party described the movement as laying bare the fact that the anti-imperialists and anti-feudal bourgeois democratic revolution had developed into a new stage. The initiation of the May Fourth movement as a cultural reform movement was but a form of expression of China's anti-imperialist and anti-feudal bourgeois democratic revolution. With it, there were several hundred thousand students bravely standing at the head of the movement. This means that the May Fourth movement advanced one step further than the 1911 revolution.

The movement saw for the first time the Chinese intellectuals recognizing the need for a complete transformation of traditional Chinese civilization.

The adoption of the vernacular as a medium for writing, rapid development of the press and popular education were followed up by the basic social transformation. Marriage based on love became more frequent, social status of women began to rise, co-education was established, women began to be emancipated from traditional ethnic, social and political shackles and there was a tendency towards a larger social cohesion as a substitute for the family and clan bonds.

With the accelerating collapse of the old political structure and the agricultural economy and with the rise of new native industry and commerce, the traditional alliance of the gentry, landlords and bureaucracy in support of their mutual interests started to breakdown and be succeeded by the formation of a new alliance which launched a revolt against the feudal alliance. The bourgeois by their participation in the movement gained by the setting up of new industries, which stimulated their class associations, eg; Chamber of Commerce. The industrial proletariat became a major national force and remained so till the twenties. The revival of the tradition of student nationalist protests of 1915 on a much wider scale was the major step forward for the intelligentsia.

The movement had shown what student youth could accomplish when organized for political action. The intellectual appeal of Marxism which explained that progress was by virtue of 'class struggle; between the rulers and the ruled, for control of means of production appealed to the students. Furthermore, Marxism capped by Lenin's concept of revolutionary vanguard seemed to offer an all embracing solution to China's problems at all levels.

On the intellectual level, it enabled the rejection of the imperialist West and explain China's humiliating backwardness as due to her bondage to 'capitalist imperialism'. Though this aspect was to grow with time, it first made its appearance when the nationalist fervor of 1919 had been aroused and was seeking organized expression. China's betrayal at Versailles offered a dramatic proof to many that the national enemy was 'imperialism' and henceforth nationalism and anti-imperialism became interlinked just as Lenin had explained. Thus it is not surprising that the founders of the Communist Party, viz; Chen Tu-hsiu, Mao Tse-tung, Chao En-lai and others were active leaders of the movement.

Finally the movement was a logical outcome of the failure of the 1911 revolution to attack and thwart foreign imperialism and domestic feudal institutions, which still plagued the Chinese socio-political and economic

life. The revolutionaries had united on the question of overthrow of the Manchus, but they did not process and unified thinking on the question of the new system which was to replace the dynastic order, leading to bloody chaos unleashed by warlords. This was repugnant to the new intellectuals returning from foreign universities who raised the cry of 'save China' by attempting to replace the entire confusing order with a new one.

The May Fourth Movement combined nationalism, radicalism and intellectual fervor. Thus, although it was characterized by a great literary revival, it was actually a clear form of protest against Japanese as well as European imperialism. It can also be regarded as a sequel to 1911 revolution and the precursor of the Communist movement.

3.10 Summary

Historians generally consider the Opium War to be the first milestone in the history of modern China. Indeed, the Nanking Treaty (1842) signed at the conclusion of the war represented China's point of no return, hereafter, the tide of foreign penetration could not be reversed. At the time when the commercial, and later the political pressure applied by the West was becoming urgent, the Chinese imperial order was facing many internal forces of opposition and a number of serious domestic crisis. The secret societies, which in imperial China were the Classic form of opposition to the established order were extremely active during this period. The various movements expressed a diversity of local conditions and local discontents. It revealed the outward signs of an immense political and social crisis. The forces of opposition to the Manchu empire which had emerged during the second half of the 19th century now developed and became organized. Reforms were introduced to check the fall of the empire. The development of imperialism and nationalism during the period gave a new meaning to the disturbances. By 1912, China came to witness a momentous event with the fall of the Manchu dynasty and with it the fall of the imperial regime as well.

3.11 Key Terms and Notes

Bourgeois:

Conventionally, refers to middle-class

Callisthenics:

Exercises designed to promote general fitness.

Capitalism:

Economic and political system dependent on private capital and profit-making.

Kuomintang:

The Chinese National People's Party, founded by Sun Yat-sen and run along democratic principles. Suppressed by Yuan Shi-kai in 1913, it was reformed in 1920 with Soviet advice. In 1923 it established links with the Comintern in Moscow and in 1924 adopted the Three Peoples' Principles. When the Communist Party was founded in 1921, many of its members joined the Kuomintang. Sun Yat-sen died in 1925 and Chiang Kai-shek emerged as the leader and Commander of its military arm, the National Revolutionary Army. After the successful Northern Expedition the party became internationally recognized, establishing the National government at Nanking. It united temporarily with the Communist with the sole aim of fighting the Japanese. In 1946, when civil war with the Communists re-commenced, the Kuomintang was defeated inspite of massive aid from USA.

Nationalism:

The sentiment of attachment to a nation in terms of territory, language, customs, and culture. Before, during and after World War II, it was the emergence of strong nationalist sentiments in Asia which powerfully contributed to the process of decolonization, which resulted in successful establishment of Communist regimes in countries such as China.

Proletariat:

Working class

3.12 Questions and Exercises

1. Can the Boxer Uprising be described as a 'peasant anti-imperialist' movement?
2. The hatred towards Christianity became a basic cause for the anti-foreign stance of the Boxer Movement. Discuss
3. Review the reforms of 1901-1908 and assess its impact in the outbreak of the 1911 Revolution.

4. What were the factors and circumstances that led to 1911 Revolution? What were its results?
5. Explain Sun Yat-sen's Three People's Principles and estimate his contribution to China.
6. Evaluate the achievement of Yuan Shi-kai to the history of China.
7. What is Warlordism? Discuss Warlord politics between 1916-1925.
8. What was the role of the May Fourth Movement in China's national awakening?
9. Write short notes on the following:
 [a] Boxer Protocol (1901) [b] End of Manchu Dynasty [c] Intellectual Movement (1919)

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Unit : IV
Nationalism and Communism in China

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4.1 Introduction

During the half century, between the Sino-French war and the founding of the Chinese Communist Party, the Chinese people were often averse to the political activities engaged by small elites; viz, the Confucian scholars of the former monarchy, the warlords who followed the failure of 1911 revolution; and to a certain extent, the republican intellectuals. On several occasions, however, the ordinary people became a collective force with a determinative role in the evolution of Chinese history: the Boxer Uprising, the fall of the Manchu dynasty, and the May Fourth Movement saw hundreds of thousands and sometimes millions of people enter into action and prove their ability, although temporary, to profoundly influence their destiny.

The 1917 Russian Revolution which brought the Bolshevik wing of the Communists to power came to be looked upon by some Chinese intellectuals as a chance to study Marxism and its possible application to China. Believing that China cannot afford to remain traditional they formed societies and

encouraged the Comintern agents of Russia. The Communist Party was founded in 1921 and the prominent leaders were Mao Tse-tung and Li Li-san. The party laid down three aims viz; eliminations of warlords, resistance to foreign imperialism, and Chinese unity. Between 1921 and 1949 the balance of social and political forces in China was completely upset. The Chinese Communist Party took power over the largest country in the world in the space of twenty-eight years. This rapid advance of the Chinese revolution was possible only because its leaders were able to fuse together two fundamental struggles which both preceded the Communist movement: the national struggle against foreign domination and the peasant struggle against the old 'feudal regime'.

4.2 Objectives

The emergence of nationalist forces and the founding of Communism shaped the history of modern China; a decisive period which was to culminate in the establishment of the Peoples Republic of China in 1949. The process was not a smooth one and China was to experience political alliances and break-ups, particularly between the Kuomintang and the Chinese Communist Party. New social forces which were closely associated with the development of modern industries brought to fore the mass base of the Communist movement. Mao Tse-tung emerged as a towering personality who steered China to a victory for the Communists by the mid 20th century. After going through this unit you will be able to:

- *Examine* and critically analyze the party and politics of KMT and CCP
- *Understand* the historical context of the Communist movement and the emergence of Mao Tse-tung as a leader of the masses
- *Gain Insight* into the long struggle of the Chinese, and the reasons why China ultimately came to adhere to Communist ideology in 1949

4.3 Political Crisis in the 1920s

Theoretically, China was a republic ruled by the constitution of 1912. However, in 1920, the republican institutions were no more than a façade. The Anfu clique which was re-elected in parliament in 1918, now lost its power in 1920 after a brief civil war. They were ousted by a coalition

known as Zhili group which was influential in North and Central China, and the Fengtian group, which was established in the Northeast. The militarists of the Fengtian and Zhili groups relied upon a civilian group known as the Communications Clique, which was led by conservative bankers. It may be mentioned that to separate the political and military struggles in Peking from the intrigues of the foreign powers in China is almost impossible. Hence, the ousting of the Anfu and the rise of the Zhili corresponded to the break between the British and the Japanese. But the Japanese remained present in Peking because of the Fengtian, whose area of control was actually a Japanese protectorate. The Zhili were not strong enough to seize power by themselves and had to form an alliance.

The political and military factions that came to power in Peking were each recognized by the diplomatic corps, which meant that these factions would be assured of receiving the customs surplus. The recognition by the foreign powers gave the ruling faction an important edge against their domestic rivals. In the provinces as well the real power belonged to the feudal militarists. The warlords who were independent were constantly at war with each other. Thus the republic which had been the object of so many hopes in 1911 turned out to be meaningless. Public opinion turned against it. The Western model proved to be inadequate.

The power of the state, therefore, declined considerably in all areas. The central ministers usually lost contact with the provincial agencies they were supposed to administer. The monetary system was thrown into disarray by the inflationary practices of Peking, by the instability of the relationship between copper and the silver money, and by the appearance of provincial money (the warlords issued paper money and minted coins in order to have ready cash). The disintegration of the state apparatus was evidenced also by the frequency of military mutinies (the city of Yichang, for example, was sacked in June 1921) and by the increase in banditry. China in 1921 remained heavily indebted to the West and Japan; the result of various loans contracted by China from the end of the nineteenth century and the colonial imbalance of its foreign trade. In the same year, the Chinese Communist Party was founded with only about hundred members, most of them being intellectuals. But it had already been in contact with the workers, having set up a Trade Union Secretariat, which would play an important role in the developing workers' struggles of 1921 to 1923.

4.4 Nature of Industrialization and Changing Social Structure

Modern intellectuals emerged as a new force in China along with modern institutions of learning, the press, publishing houses, medicine and the modern courts. They sought contact with the working class and the workers' movement and by 1921 many of them had begun to participate in Communist activities. The industrial proletariat was a natural outcome of the establishment of the modern industries. In 1921 there were about 1 ½ million workers engaged in major capitalist production, of which a third were employed by foreign companies. They were mostly cotton workers, tobacco workers, naval construction workers, coal miner, railwaymen, seamen and coolies in large ports. These workers (excluding the railwaymen and miners) were concentrated in a small number of industrial centers spread out along the coast: Shanghai, Tientsin, Canton, Hongkong, Hankou etc. They were in a position to influence local events actively, especially where political struggles were concerned. But on the national level they remained a minority.

The conditions for a merger of the workers' and peasant movements were nevertheless favourable. The great majority of workers were peasants who had recently come to the cities. Women and children formed a large part of this unskilled proletariat. They were recruited according to the quasi-feudal system in which they were in effect under the personal control of an agent who received their salary and guaranteed them no more than a miserable lodging and tiny wage. A work day of twelve or fourteen hours, brutal foremen, wages barely sufficient for subsistence, and unstable employment made up the almost unbearable working conditions. There were forty-six strikes in 1920 and fifty in 1921 and beginnings of class consciousness could already be seen in the letters sent by workers to leftist periodicals. 1 May 1921 was celebrated in Shanghai as a way of consciously participating in the struggles of the international workers' movement.

4.5 Kuomintang and the First United Front

The mission of the Kuomintang (KMT) and the Chinese revolution as interpreted by Sun Yat-sen was to achieve fundamental reconstruction of China, but everything seemed to be against it as there was no unity of purpose, no concerted effort among the party members. There was too much emphasis on military action and too little on political propaganda. The masses were not taken into confidence. Sun forced affiliation with elements basically opposed to his ideals which resulted in compromises that were little

conducive to his political standing in the country. Added to the internal difficulties were the foreign obstacles. An informal alliance was established between native militarism and foreign imperialism, both aiming at the permanent enslavement of the Chinese people. Sun Yat-sen who had till now advocated co-operation with the western powers at last began to realize that the fight of the Koumintang should be two-fold; internally against militarism and externally against imperialism. To liberate China it was necessary that both should be overthrown and to achieve this objective a well organized party based on popular support was the first necessity.

Another factor in fastening the reorganization of the party on a popular basis was Sun Yat-sen's disappointment with the results of the Versailles Peace Conference and his subsequent relations with Soviet Russia which was then an outcast in Europe. Sun had viewed with interest the experiments carried out in Russia after the success of the Russian Soviet revolution in 1917. The September 27, 1920 statement declared 'void of force all the treaties concluded with China by the former government, renounced all seizures of Chinese territory without compensation and forever, all that had been predatorily seized from her by the Tzar's government and the Russian bourgeois' could be interpreted as a friendly gesture. Sun Yat-sen, the leader of Kuomintang with its power entered at Canton depended to a large extent upon the support which he received from the southern militarists. To free himself from this dependence he sought to find a new basis of power by a radical by a radical reorganization of the Kuomintang. On the ideological plane, there was the necessity of the party to keep pace with the changing times. The impetus was provided by contact with Soviet Russia. Around this time the Chinese working class began to overthrow the capitalists. This developing communist movement was strengthened by the coming of Viotensky in 1920 and 1921.

The *Chinese Communist Party* (CCP) was formally launched under the auspices of the Comintern in Shanghai in 1921 which was in turn dominated by Moscow. Interest in Communism was stimulated in China by the Russian renunciation of privileges previously held by Tzarist Russia following its Revolution (1917), and by the May Fourth Movement (1919). Under the Comintern direction, CCP members at first joined the Kuomintang and worked in it for national liberation. Early activities concentrated on trade union organization in Shanghai and other large cities. But a peasant movement was already being developed and the CCP had to rely on the vast massive peasant population for its revolutionary base. It was set up in

Yangsi Soviet, in Southern China in 1931. Marxism, now polished by Lenin's anti-imperialist gloss' had widespread appeal not only among the young intellectuals but also Sun Yat-sen himself.

As early as 1922, the Comintern and CCP began to explore the possibility of forming a national United Front with the KMT - a policy which for a relatively short period was destined to bring enormous prestige to both the CCP and KMT-although in 1927, it had led to a serious rupture between the two groups. Maring, the first delegate of the Comintern was convinced that in Sun yat-sen's group there was the nucleus of a kind of revolutionary movement to which Lenin had referred to; and hence proposed an alliance of the CCP with the KMT. According to him, the KMT was a multi-class party having the support of the bourgeois, workers and the peasants. Since it also represented the last two groups, the Communists should form a block within the multi-party organization. This cooperation however did not mean surrender to bourgeois elements. At the same time communists were to develop the independent proletarian movement and prepare the working class for the ultimate struggle against the bourgeois with the aim of establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The CCP had a large number of its members attending the Petrograd Congress in Russia in 1922. Here, an outline was worked out for the working of the CCP. It was also laid down that the CCP and KMT should cooperate to form the United Front. On 10 June the CCP called for a United Front from the dual yoke of imperialism as well as the warlords. Apart from theoretical considerations, certain political reasons lay behind the cooperation. The CCP was only a party of four hundred men. It had little chance of effecting socialist revolution by its independent strength or of leading a bourgeois democratic revolution to success. On the other hand although KMT was not properly organized and had many defects, its leader Sun Yat-sen enjoyed enormous popular support. So, the CCP by collaborating with KMT could use the platform of the nationalist revolution or at least become known to the people of China.

In December 1922 at Shanghai, Adolfe Joffe, the Soviet Special envoy had an interview with Sun and a joint manifesto was issued on 26 January 1923, which became the foundation of the KMT-Soviet Entente. Sun grew quite receptive to the Soviet idea of reorganizing the KMT in order to accommodate the Communists. The famous Sun-Joffe declaration stated that Russia pledged to assist KMT in its fight against imperialism. Further

both believed that priority was to be given to the struggle for reunification of the nation and that at that point in time China was not ready for Communism.

In October 1923 Michael Borodin arrived at cantón as a member of the Soviet and Military mission. He is specially important as it was he who pointed out the shortcomings of KMT such as issues of corrupt bureaucracy, organizational inefficiency, lack of popular support and involvement of masses in the organization etc. Borodin convinced Sun Yat-sen that what the KMT needed was a disciplined party organization with a mass base. Sun Yat-sen appointed Borodin as advisor to the KMT with the special task of assisting him in its reorganization- a role which earned him worldwide recognition. Sun was inspired by the progress of CCP from 1921-23 and KMT wanted to use the labour base of the CCP to their advantage. In the labour conference of 1922, more than 270,000 labourers were represented by 360 delegates. The first big industrial strike took place in 1923 in Yunan. The United Front was thus aimed at taking advantage of the labour base of the CCP and the revolutionary aspects of KMT. In 1923, Chiang Kai-shek visited Moscow for a revolutionary training and returned in 1924 to become Commander-in-Chief of the Whampoa Academy near canton. An important development was the formation of the National Revolutionary Army under the leadership of Chiang Kai-shek.

On 1 Jan 1924, the first National Congress of the KMT was held to decide on the new party constitution and the party programme with Liao Chung Kai, Hu Hen Min, Tai Chi Tao and Borodin. The Draft provided for a small nuclei as the basic unit of reorganization. Absolute democracy was to prevail in the sense that authority was to be concentrated in the meeting of the members to be held fortnightly. The members were to elect two committees, an executive committee in charge of organization, discipline and propaganda and a supervisory committee to audit accounts and exercise general control. Each nuclei was to be subject to the control of the sub-district party branch. These were to be conferences of delegates from the nuclei, meeting once a month. The next unit in the organizational hierarchy was the provincial organization with half yearly delegates conference until it reached the central party organization with its annual national congress and its central executive and supervisory committees.

The supreme authority in the party lay with the National Congress which however, met only once a year only for two or three weeks. During the time

it was not in session, the authority was exercised by the central executive committee. this committee was to be representative of the whole party. A standing committee dealt with the day to day works while the central executive committee met at least every six months to deliberate on important issues involving determination of policy. The right of appeal was given to the lower organizations and the National Congress was the final arbiter. The proposed Constitution instituted a true revolution within the party. The supremacy of Sun Yat-sen was brought to an end. The reorganization reconciled the principle of democracy with the needs of effective and centralized leadership and created a coherent organization. It was decided that since elections were not possible everywhere some of the representatives would be designated by Sun Yat-sen. For the first time women were permitted to become members of the party. All opinions were represented in the Congress. The proposed Constitution instituted a veritable revolution within the party.

The manifesto of the First National Congress in an official pronouncement by the party recognized the role played by foreign countries in the chaos in China. The only way out for China was the establishment of a genuine people's government by the realization of the Three Peoples' Principles, through the National Revolution. These principles of Sun Yat-sen contained in the second part of the manifesto underwent considerable changes in intent and scope. It concluded by emphasizing the need of party discipline, political training, energetic propaganda and good leadership.

The reorganized KMT was transformed into a rough copy of the Russian Bolshevik party. Bolshevik methods of agitation and propaganda were introduced. The KMT-CCP alliance or the *First United Front (1924-27)* was forged in order to solve China's problem of reconstruction. The CCP was not dissolved but each member of the CCP was admitted into the central committee of KMT, not as members of the politburo but as individual members. Thus, the CCP lost its identity. The CCP never presented programme of their own but in essence in their work became in fact the left-wing appendage of the KMT.

The reorganized KMT was supposed to reflect the interests of the Chinese bourgeois as well as peasants and workers, the main binding form being the struggle against the imperialist forces. But by the time the KMT was reorganized in 1924, workers in China had already begun to organize themselves in a movement marked by its independent spirit and militancy.

A clash of interest between the bourgeoisie and the workers was evident. The peasants, too, like the workers had begun to stir and group themselves into organizations. The clash between the propertied classes and workers and peasants became more manifest after Sun Yat-sen's death in 1925. There emerged two factions of the KMT. Chiang Kai-shek took advantage of the warring factions and by 1926, the United Front had come to stay under Chiang's leadership accepted by the Comintern.

As far as the achievements of the United Front was concerned, they had attempted at the Unification of China by undertaking two campaigns viz; Northern and Eastern march. By the Northern expedition in July 1926, the whole province of Hunan was captured. Chiang played one warlord against the other to defeat them. In the upper Yangtze Valley, the whole area was liberated and later the Kiangsi province. However, under the KMT, China was never fully united. Not more than two-thirds of China was ever united under Chiang Kai-shek. Manchuria and Hupei always remained free. Chiang Kai-shek thus gave China only some semblance of unity. Whatever was achieved by the Northern expedition was the only achievement of the United Front.

As the Northern expedition was taking place, mass support was mobilized by the Communists in the area where the National Revolutionary Army was to come even before the expedition. In 1927, the Shanghai strike took place which was unsuccessful. Nine weeks later, the 'White Terror' incident saw disarming of the workers and massacre of many of them. Even after thirty-six hours of the news having reached Moscow, Comintern issued no statement. Many of the Communists including Mao Tse-tung began to doubt the use of a United Front and advocated the start of an armed insurrection. But they continued to follow the Comintern's directives.

On 1 May 1927, Stalin issued his famous directive asking the CCP to continue in the United Front but to cooperate with the left-wing of the KMT against the right-wing. Stalin asked for immediate agrarian reforms and the CCP was to organize an army of twenty-thousand workers-exclusive of the United Front forces. He also asked for fresh elections to the Central Committee. Stalin advised progressive opposition at a time when the rightists had already taken up arms against the left. A series of events followed after which in December 1927, a Communist revolt led by Chang Tai-wei led to canton workers ruling the city for four days. However, the final break between KMT and CCP came when the Soviet consulate in Peking was

ordered to be closed down. All links with Comintern and Russia were broken and the United Front split completely.

The roots of the failure of the First United Front lay in the foundation itself. The United Front strategy of the Comintern (Communist International) was designed particularly for Europe with reference to liberal social democratic parties which were just not available in Asia. The Russian analysis of KMT was intrinsically wrong. The semi-feudal, semi-colonial character of China and the compradore character of its bourgeois were not fully understood. However, the United Front was perhaps the only strategy available of the CCP if it was to increase its foothold amongst the masses. In conclusion we may derive that conditions were not ripe for the new social forces—the intellectuals and the workers—to challenge the feudal military compradore ruling alliance. The United Front should not be dismissed completely when the new peasant-workers alliance was strong. The CCP actually made a devastatingly successful use of the strategy.

The nature of the Front was such that it was a loss of identity for the CCP, being virtually a KMT government. There were three achievements of the United Front in its attempt at unification of China viz; political organization, mass mobilization and building of a labour force. The First United Front failed. All through the alliance, the break was inherent in it. It was only a matter of time till the break finally came in August 1927.

4.6 Communist Movement: 1928 to 1949;

4.6.1 Rise of Mao Tse-tung; Making of the Red Army

Mao Tse-tung is regarded as the 'father of Chinese Communism' and undoubtedly a towering personality of China. Born in 1893, Mao was one of the 12 founding members of the Chinese Communist Party. In 1911 he joined the Hunan revolutionary Army. The Bolshevik revolution of Russia in 1917 was the turning point for people like Mao who were attracted to the ideas and principles of the Communist ideology. Along with his close associates, Mao founded the Chinese Communist party in 1921. He played an important role in the May Fourth movement of 1919. He organized an armed band with the Chinese peasantry, being assisted in his endeavour by Chu Teh, an educated and well-trained army personnel. Mao thus established the Red Army with which he captured many provinces of China and brought them under the influence of the Communists.

Mao Tse-tung, unlike many young men of his generation was not attracted to the services. Rather, he was imbued with the spirit of rebellion, at a very early stage. He believed that military war was the only way to ensure success of a revolution. According to Mao, revolution could be brought about only through the 'barrel of a gun'. He systematized the 'revolutionary war' and later set up as a universal model. Mao's starting point of military experience was The Autumn Harvest Uprising. After being badly defeated due to poor organization, he realized his faults and from this handful of surviving insurgents, he built the military fortune of his party. Mao worked out the characteristics of the strategy which was as such: 1. to create base areas 2. To develop expansion of regular armies 3. To organize and work with the local population. Although Chu Teh with his classical military training inspired Mao, yet it was Mao who put the theory into practice, the application of which was seen in the Sino-Japanese War (1937-45) and Civil War (1946-49). His documents clearly defined the principles of guerilla warfare.

The Sino-Japanese War had taught Mao that frontal attack was wrong strategy since they did not have enough military strength.

The two essential features of Mao's military strategy were:

- War must only be a guerrilla war
- War must necessarily be long-drawn.

This strategy gave rise to two requirements :

- To set up a base where population could be mobilized and resources utilized
- Gradually to change the detachments waging guerilla war into regular units which when the time was right could wage a mobile war.

It is significant to note that *Mao's strategy* is not just a doctrine but one that stems from his personal experience although Mao's fundamental strategic thinking were formed very early on and were scarcely more than enriched by events. The masses (peasants) were to be mobilized through various agrarian measures (political and social) capable of winning over the greatest number of them. Since 1927, Mao had gradually shaped a regular army- the Red Army- whose numbers were reduced considerably in the Long March; the survivors later formed the Peoples Liberation Army in 1927, which marked the beginning of a new chapter in military history. Warfare had to be mobile and the general conception of attack includes among others- surprise, speed, flexibility, secrecy and initiative. The early co-operation

between KMT and Communists broke in 1927 and the strong anti-Communist activities led the Communists to take shelter in mountainous regions of Southern Kiangsi. But it was Mao Tse-tung and Chu Teh who established a Chinese Soviet Government at Kiangsi where the former became the Chairman and latter the Commander-in-Chief. In the Sovietized area, land was distributed among peasants, irrigation and flood prevention works were undertaken. In the industrial towns under the Soviet system of government wages of labour were raised and the hours of work shortened. In China as contrast to Russia, the Communist control; was mostly agricultural rather than proletarian dictatorship. The area of Kiangsi and neighbouring provinces served to popularize communism in this face of opposition of Chiang Kai-shek's government.

Mao inaugurated his ideas of New Democracy while he was in Senshi. He urged that China was not economically developed enough for a complete social reformation. For him, a peasant dominated country like China could not imagine a society with class existence. He supported the state-owned economy and re-distribution of land. He supported a coalition of government which included peasants, proletariat and bourgeoisie to implement his New Democracy. He respected the principles of Sun Yat-sen and tried to introduce socialism by 1949. This was definitely a new beginning towards the reorganization of modern China and in which Mao Tse-tung rises as the towering personality. Mao Tse-tung's dominant position in the shaping of China's politics and society is beyond doubt. His thoughts possessed its own unique theoretical unity making significant innovations. Scholars opine that the fact that Mao's policies vary greatly over time and yet are successful implies a very sophisticated unity. The thread that unifies Mao's thoughts is his notion of the relationships between theory and practice. He did not advocate a substitute of practice for theory but rather he was against dogmatism and emphasized the danger of loyalty to old policies in new situations. The point to note is that the CCP was founded with the guidance of a Comintern agent and they therefore held a position of intermediate leadership subordinate to the Comintern. This led to irresponsibility and obvious and costly mistakes. The Comintern agents on the other hand due to ignorance of Chinese conditions and pressure of conflicting interests abused its authority.

Mao himself gained firsthand knowledge of these conditions as organizers of peasants movements. To a great extent his theory assumed a framework of the more unifying and centralizing theories of Marx and Lenin. But his

style and emphasis differ greatly from the Communist classics. The origin of the theoretical views characteristic of Mao is in the type of practical guerilla experience. The applicability of guerilla or mobile war techniques depends on the current military situation whereas the art of determining which strategy is applicable is important as long as the war lasts.

Mao's success of the revolution was essentially due to his ability to grasp the peculiar and diverse situations of China. It was due to the number of timely politics and practical innovations that were not within the normal Marxist patterns of action. According to Mao Tse-tung, the real power rests on the peasants and the army. The specific methodology for avoiding mistakes in political affairs is the principle of the 'Mass Line' which is as thus: "... In all the practical work of our party, all correct leadership is necessarily from the masses to the masses. This meanstake the ideas of the masses...and concentrate them..then go to the masses and propogate and explain these ideas until the masses embrace them as their own."

4.6.2 Second United Front; Civil War

The Nationalist party or Kuomintang soon began to be threatened by the expansion of the Communists, the masses supporting Mao Tse-tung which led to clashes between CCP and KMT. What made Mao popular was the fact that he utilized the pitiful condition of the peasants to propogate his ideas. He believed that it was the peasants who run the nation by their production and therefore, it was the duty of every government to improve the condition of the peasants. This was significant because the Nationalist government under Chiang Kai-shek was devoted to creation of a society dominated by the landlords. The popularity of Mao and the Communist Party led to the Nationalist government ordering the suppression of his activities and also attacked areas where the Communists were strong. Thus, in October 1934, Mao Tse-tung and Chu Teh undertook a memorable *Long March* of more than six thousand miles to join the Communists of North West China, in the region of Shensi-Kansu border. They crossed 18 mountain ranges and 25 rivers and fought more than a dozen pitched battles with Chiang's troops. In 1934, the Communists were handicapped by their internal problems; the Kuomintang on the other hand had much greater resources; they had hundreds and thousands of men who were well trained and well equipped.

In the meantime Japan had conquered Manchuria and pushed on to Jehol, the south of the Great Wall. The Communists were eager to unite with the KMT to fight the Japanese. But Chiang was only too eager to exterminate the Communists. In the march to Shensi against the Communists, Chiang was dramatically arrested in Sian by his own immediate subordinates. This was done to convince Chiang that a United front was the only way to resist Japan. In 1937, a United Front was proposed by the Communists and even in official declaration it was clear that the political orientation of the central government was changing. On 19 February 1937, the Central Executive Committee of the Kuomintang also officially called for the re-establishment of cooperation with the Soviet Union and the Communists. The relations between the KMT and CCP between 1937 and 1941 worked fairly well for sometime till it was able to emphasizing the priority of the struggle against Japan. In 1938, the Communists even reacted mildly to the anti-Communist measures taken by the KMT. A far more serious incident took place at the beginning of 1941 in Anhui when the KMT accused the Communists of violating its agreements and expanding its base in lower Yangtze. The Communist headquarters was suddenly surrounded and many leaders were killed or captured.

Thus, the common danger against Japan had united the Communists and Kuomintang for a time.

This proved to be of help to the image of the Communists and Mao as they emerged as a strong and confident party capable of improving the conditions of the Chinese. Mao took the chance to pressurize Chiang Kai-shek to make a double party government which was refused by Chiang. The major fighting was done by the KMT, but the Communists rendered valuable help by carrying on an effective guerilla warfare. The KMT being suspicious of the Communists sought to limit their effective participation in the war only in the north-western region. This attitude resulted in friction and local fight between the KMT and Communists in 1941 in Kiangsi and Fukein. It was the mediation of Chiang Kai-shek which averted a civil war, but relations between the two parties were essentially those as an armed truce. With the collapse of Japan in the World War II the conflict between KMT and CCP came to a head. In August 1945 the KMT and CCP both got ready to capture power since the Japanese invaders had surrendered unconditionally. The struggle was one for power and it began in Manchuria in 1946. The size and scope of the military offensives undertaken by the nationalist forces in the summer of 1946 confirmed how long they had been wanting to go to war.

Civil War:

The civil war that broke out in 1947 and continued till 1949 was a result of the failure of the Nationalists and the Communists to effect a political solution. Spreading over thousands of square miles and involving millions of men on both sides, the civil war was in fact an aggregation of small battles. The Nationalists attempted to settle their score with the Communists once and for all, by liquidating them militarily. About close to two million men attacked the Communist bases in North and Central China and even seized Yanan in 1947, the symbol of CCP since the Long March. The Communists did not try to defend the territories but resorted to guerilla warfare which proved fruitful.

Major reverses for the Nationalists came first in Manchuria and they were forced to evacuate the major Manchurian cities. A large number of troops and their American equipment were taken by the Communists. The whole Manchurian fiasco was a disaster from which the Nationalist armies never recovered. The responsibility for this military failure has been attributed to incompetent army administration and supply, high officers who lacked ability, unimaginative strategy and tactics, which could not see beyond the holding of major economic program in support of military action. In North China, too, the Nationalist forces, surrendered Peking to the Communists. The Nationalist armies in Central and Eastern China were destroyed by the Communists in 1948. The demand of the Communists on the Nationalists for unconditional surrender could not be ignored any longer.

4.6.3 Chinese Revolution: Ideology, Causes and Significance

The entry of the USA in World War II ensured that Japan would be defeated. It did not mean, however, that the KMT would return because year after year the Communists grew stronger. Their policy was a calculated one. They took little part in the Japanese War and rarely risked a big battle. Their organization was efficiently run by fanatical followers. By contrast the KMT grew weaker as it tried to fight both enemies at once. Cut off from the more freedom-loving merchants and traders of the coast, it was forced to rely upon un-progressive landowners. This turned the peasants against Chiang. At the same time dishonesty spread amongst his officials and money began to lose value. After the war the USA sent General Marshall to try to patch them up but it was of no avail. In 1946 the war against Japan turned into a civil war. To everyone's surprise the war was all over quickly. The KMT was too corrupt

and demoralized to put up a fight. Although given ample help and support by America, Chiang's men retreated without offering genuine battle. American equipment was traded to the enemy and in most villages the peasants welcomed the disciplined Communist soldiers just as they had accepted Chiang in 1926 because he brought in peace and order in China. With the remnants of the Nationalist armies, Chiang Kai-shek escaped to Formosa -- an island off the Chinese mainland. The Nationalist government had collapsed. On 1 October 1949, Mao Tse-tung took office as the Chairman of the Peoples' Republic of China, and Communist philosophy replaced Confucianism.

Causes of Communist Success:

Though the Nationalist government had greater resources and a better equipped army, the Communists came out successful due to the following factors:

- Progressive weakening of the power of KMT. The Japanese invasion drained them of their resources and strength
- The depletion of effective military power of KMT meant increase in relative strength of the Communist armies
- Corruption and inefficiency of the officers of KMT and nationalist government
- Significant is the KMT and distrust of the masses and their dependence on propertied class. The Communists on the other hand gathered massive support from the masses 9peasantry and common people because of their focus in improving their conditions.
- Zeal and sincerity of the Communists. Their troops were disciplined and people in general had no complain against them.

All in all it was not so much the Communists having positive principles as much as the weakness of the KMT itself that led to the strength and popularity and ultimately the victory of the Communists.

4.7 Summary

The period 1912-1927 may be described as the most turbulent in China's history. The 1911 revolution did not usher in an era of republicanism but one of warlords fighting amongst themselves and against the central

authority. The World War I and May Fourth Movement further created chaos in the political scene. However, the period also saw the emergence of nationalistic feelings among the people which was to have far-reaching consequences in the political development of China. The intellectual ferment which ensued as a result of the May Fourth Movement made the ideology of change, the most potent force in China of the time. While the warlord militarists held sway in the North, a revolutionary centre had been formed in the South with Canton as its headquarter and Sun Yat-sen as its leader. Also, as if to mark the uninterrupted leftward movement of the Chinese intelligentsia in the post-May Fourth period, the Chinese Communist party was founded in Shanghai in 1921. The Kuomintang which was heir to the party of the 1911 revolution although started with great hopes for the future of China, soon fell into trouble. Sun Yat-sen, the leader evolved his own political philosophy summed up in his Three People's principles. However, these were not distinguished by their clarity since they could be interpreted in various possible ways. Thus, on the ideological plane a certain degree of reorganization was necessary if the party was to keep pace with the changing times. The impetus was provided by the contact with Soviet Russia. The First United Front between the KMT and the CCP was to be based on anti-imperialist struggle. The alliance failed due to the clash between the propertied classes which compromised with the foreigners and the workers and the peasants. The reorganization of the KMT which was supposed to reflect the aspirations of the Chinese bourgeois as well as peasants and workers could not fulfil its intentions. This became manifest after the death of Sun Yat-sen in 1925 and crystal clear when Chiang Kai-shek's government openly sided with the bourgeois and imposed severe restrictions on the peasants and workers movements.

Within the CCP, there was sharp disagreement concerning methods of political activity. In 1934, the Communists were weighed down by their internal problems and the Nationalists on the other hand seemed to be gaining more support and strength. In 1935, relative peace reigned in China; though the Nationalists had not completely eliminated the red bases from South China. The Second United Front and the Civil War that followed revealed the struggle for power between the KMT and CCP. Mao Tse-tung emerged as a leader who carried the masses with him in the Communist movement; his guerilla tactics having served as the military strategy that carried his ideology to its logical conclusion - the establishment of the Peoples' Republic of China in 1949, which marked a triumph of communism over capitalism in China.

4.8 Key Terms and Notes

Comintern:

An organization of all national Communist parties with the purpose of bringing about world revolution. It was established by Lenin in Moscow in 1919 at the Congress of the Third International.

Communism:

A 19th century ideology which advocated that all property and authority be vested in the community, where all are regarded as equal and work for the common benefit. The aim was to establish a 'classless society'.

Long March :

The Yangtze Soviet was close to collapse by 1934, after repeated attacks by the Kuomintang army and against this onslaught Mao Tse-tung and Chu Teh developed their successful guerilla method of warfare. The Communists felt the need to retreat and about 1 lac people evacuated the area and embarked on a Long March. For nine months they struggled through mountainous terrain and several major rivers. On 20 October 1935 Mao Tse-tung and some 6000 survivors had marched some 9600 kms and finally reached their new base at Yanan.

Manchukuo:

Japanese-occupied Manchuria.

Mao Tse-tung:

Founder of the People's Republic of China. Son of a Hunan peasant farmer, his schooling was interrupted in 1911 when he volunteered to take part in the Revolution. In 1918 he went to Beijing where he obtained work in the University Library. He supported the May Fourth Movement, but was disillusioned with Western liberalism. He went to Shanghai in June 1921 as a founder member of the Chinese Communist Party, returned to Hunan to build a party branch and in 1927 along with Chou En-lai established a base on the border of Hunan, which became Yangtze Soviet.

Maoism:

A political theory developed from the writings of Mao Tse-tung which placed great emphasis on peasant communities. Mao believed that it was possible for a people to transform itself in a revolutionary direction without adopting a programme of industrialization.

Marxism:

The body of thought derived from the writings of Karl Marx. As a young man he developed Hegelian thought, seeing human nature itself as subject to change within historical time, as a result of social and economic conditions. In his main work *Das Kapital* (1897), he developed his theory of the 'historical essence of man'. According to him, History itself is propelled by material forces but because the existing system of capitalism 'of necessity' is a system of exploitation of human nature, eventually and inevitably that system will collapse. 'A classless proletariat will inherit the earth and man will be free and restored to his dignity'.

Red Army:

The Chinese revolutionary army. It is also the name of the army of the Soviet Union, developed from the Red Guards or the armed workers who took part in the Russian Revolution of 1917.

Yangtze Soviet:

From 1927 onwards it was the determination of the Kuomintang to exterminate Communism in China. Due to continuous harassment, many Communists moved to the countryside, maintaining their strength through guerilla warfare in remote mountain regions. Four campaigns by the National Revolutionary Army of the Kuomintang were thwarted by guerilla tactics between December 1931 and early 1933; but a fifth, beginning in October 1933, forced the evacuation of the Soviet, and the commencement of the Long March. A year later. Many Communist policies, including land reform were first tried out in the Yangtze Soviet.

4.9 Questions and Exercises

1. Discuss the nature of industrialization in China in the early 20th century. To what extent did it impact the social structure?
2. What led to the First United Front (1924-27). Why did it fail?
3. Trace the history of the Communist movement in China.
4. Critically analyse the struggle between the Nationalists and the Communists. What were the reasons for the success of the Communists?
5. Explain the circumstances under which the Second United Front was forged between the KMT and the CCP.

6. Evaluate the contribution of Mao Tse-tung to the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949.
7. Write short notes on the following:
 - [a] KMT-CCP Alliance
 - [b] Chiang Kai-shek
 - [c] The Red Army

4.10 Reference and Suggested Readings

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