

GLOSSARY

Agrarian Of or relating to land, its ownership or its cultivation.

Allies The countries that fought together against Germany in the First and Second World Wars (see below). In the First World War, the main Allies were Britain, France, Russia and the USA (from 1917), but China and Japan also fought alongside them. In the Second World War, the main Allies were Britain, the USSR and the USA (from 1941). This time Japan was on the opposing side and invaded China.

armistice An official agreement between opposing sides to stop the fighting in a war.

Bolshevism Russian Communism; Bolsheviks were the radical members of the Russian Social Democratic Party who advocated revolution and took power in 1917.

bourgeois (in Marxist theory) Capitalist and therefore hostile to the working class.

Boxer A member of a secret society that opposed, and in 1900 rebelled unsuccessfully against, foreign influence in China. The English name 'Boxer' is a rough translation of the Chinese name, which literally means 'righteous harmonious fist'.

bride price Money or goods given by a groom to his future wife's family in order to 'buy' his bride and rights over her.

cadre A Communist Party official and activist.

capitalism An economic system in which businesses are owned and run by private individuals for their own profit, rather than by the state.

capitalist (noun) A person who supports capitalism and often also owns one or more businesses for personal profit.

capitalist (adjective) Of or relating to capitalism.

cell Any one of the smallest units into which an organization, and especially a Communist Party, is divided.

character Any of the approximately 2,000 symbols used to write the Chinese language. Chinese characters represent ideas, not sounds. They are pronounced in different ways in different parts of China.

coalition A government containing members of more than one political party.

collective (noun) A farm under the joint control of a large number of people rather than a single individual or family.

collective (adjective) Of, shared or carried out by people acting together rather than individually.

Comintern An international Communist organization that was established by Vladimir Lenin in Russia in 1919, and remained active until 1943. The word is short for 'Communist International'.

commune Any of the large units of up to 40,000 Chinese established by Mao Zedong during the Great Leap Forward (1958-62). People in communes did not live as individual families, but shared dormitories, dining rooms and other facilities, and worked together in brigades.

Communism A political and economic system that aims to create a classless society. Communist countries are ruled by members of only one political party, who are not elected. Communist businesses are owned by the state rather than private individuals.

Communist (noun) A person who supports Communism and who may also be a member of an official Communist Party.

Communist (adjective) Of or relating to Communism.

counter-revolutionary A revolutionary who tries to overthrow the government or ruling group established by a previous revolution.

courtyard house A typical style of single-storey Chinese house in which rooms are grouped around one or more open central courtyards.

despotism Rule by a person with absolute power, especially one who misuses that power; tyranny.

dynasty A family that rules a country for generations.

feudalism A political and social system in which a monarch owns all the land and loans it to nobles in return for military service. Nobles in turn loan land to knights, knights to peasants and so on, in return for services or goods. In this way, a hierarchy of rights and duties is established. Feudalism began in Europe during the 8th century AD and continued for centuries. Similar systems also operated in China and elsewhere.

First World War A major war fought between 1914 and 1918. The main participants on one side were Germany, Austria-Hungary and Turkey (the Central Powers), and on the other Britain, France, Russia and the USA (the Allies). China and Japan also fought on the side of the Allies, who won the war in November 1918.

Forbidden City The Beijing palace complex built for China's emperors in the 15th century AD. It contains 800 buildings, and is surrounded by a wall and moat originally designed to keep ordinary people out.

geopolitical Relating to the influence of geographical factors - for example, a country's position, the size of its population or the nature of its industries - on politics.

guerrilla warfare A type of warfare used by members of small, unofficial and often politically inspired fighting units to attack larger armies. Guerrilla soldiers ('guerrillas') are highly mobile and specialize in surprise attacks and sabotage, rather than major battles.

Han dynasty The dynasty that ruled China from 206 BC-AD 220. The Han emperors both strengthened the country and expanded its territory. Mao was a great admirer of the fifth Han emperor, Han Wudi.

imperialism The policy or practice of extending a country's power, especially by taking over territories beyond its borders.

Industrial Revolution The changeover from a largely agricultural economy, based on crop-growing and animal-rearing, to a largely industrial economy, based on the production of goods in factories. This process began in Britain in the mid-18th century, and by the late 19th century had spread to the rest of Europe, the USA and beyond.

Kuomintang The Chinese Nationalist Party, which was founded by Sun Yat-sen in 1912. The name literally means 'National People's Party'.

Manchu A member of a nomadic people from the region of Manchuria, now in northeast China, who conquered the Chinese in 1644. The Manchus founded the Qing dynasty (see below).

manifesto A statement of beliefs, aims and policies published by a political or other organization.

opium A powerful and addictive drug that is made from the unripe seeds of a type of poppy (the opium poppy).

plenum A meeting of a political or other organization that is attended by everyone present.

Politburo The main policy-making body of the Soviet and many other Communist Parties. The word is a short form of the Russian for 'political bureau'.

proletariat (in Marxist theory) Wage-earning industrial or other workers who have no property and must therefore sell their labour to business-owning capitalists in order to survive.

protectorate A state or other territory that is under the control of, but not annexed to, another, more powerful state.

puppet state A state that is officially independent, but that is under the control of another, more powerful state.

purge (verb) To expel from (a political party or other body).

purge (noun) An expulsion (from a political party or other body).

Qin dynasty The dynasty that unified China, then ruled the country from 221-207 BC. Mao was a great admirer of the first Qin emperor, Qin Shihuangdi.

Qing dynasty The dynasty of Manchus (see above) that ruled China from 1644 to 1912 and was overthrown by Sun Yat-sen's Nationalists.

Qingming The Chinese Festival of the Dead, which occurs in early April. During the festival, people visit their relatives' graves, clean them and sometimes also lay flowers (Qingming literally means 'tomb sweep'). Some people also burn 'ghost money' on the graves so that their ancestors can spend it in the afterlife.

Red Army The Chinese Communist army that was led by Zhu De, and that later became known as the People's Liberation Army. (The army of the USSR was also known as the Red Army.)

renegade A traitorous person or organization.

republic A country or other political unit with elected rulers and no emperor, king or queen.

rightist A person who supports right-wing, conservative political ideals that are in opposition to left-wing, Communist political ideals.

Russian Revolution The revolution that took place in Russia in 1917. It led to the overthrow of the imperial Romanov family and the establishment of a Communist government under Vladimir Lenin.

Second World War A major war fought between 1939 and 1945. The main participants on one side were Germany, Italy and Japan (the Axis Powers), and on the other Britain, France, the USSR and the USA (the Allies). During the war, Japan invaded and occupied much of northern and eastern China.

Soviet A local, regional or national council run according to Communist principles. The name was originally used in the USSR (the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) and is Russian for 'council'.

Soviet A citizen of the USSR.

United Nations (UN) An international organization founded in 1945, after the Second World War, and intended to promote peace, security and cooperation. China now not only belongs to the UN, but is also a permanent member of its most powerful body, the Security Council.

Vietnam War A war between Communist North Vietnam and non-Communist South Vietnam that lasted from 1954 to 1975. American troops fought alongside the South Vietnamese from 1964 until 1973. China backed North Vietnam by providing ammunition and weapons.