

Mao's Five Revolutions...

...in 25 years??

<https://herecomeschina.substack.com/p/maos-five-revolutions>



[Godfree Roberts](#)

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Mao was the most prolific, successful revolutionary in history. He revolutionized China's military, governance, economy, industry, and culture in twenty-five years, without bloodshed – entirely under vicious Western embargoes. Says Harvard's John King Fairbank,

The simple facts of Mao's career seem incredible: in a vast land of 400 million people, at age 28, with a dozen others, to found a party and in the next fifty years to win power, organize, and remold the people and reshape the land—history records no greater achievement. Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne, all the kings of Europe, Napoleon, Bismarck, Lenin—no predecessor can equal Mao's scope of accomplishment, for no other country was ever so ancient and so big as China. Indeed Mao's achievement is almost beyond our comprehension".

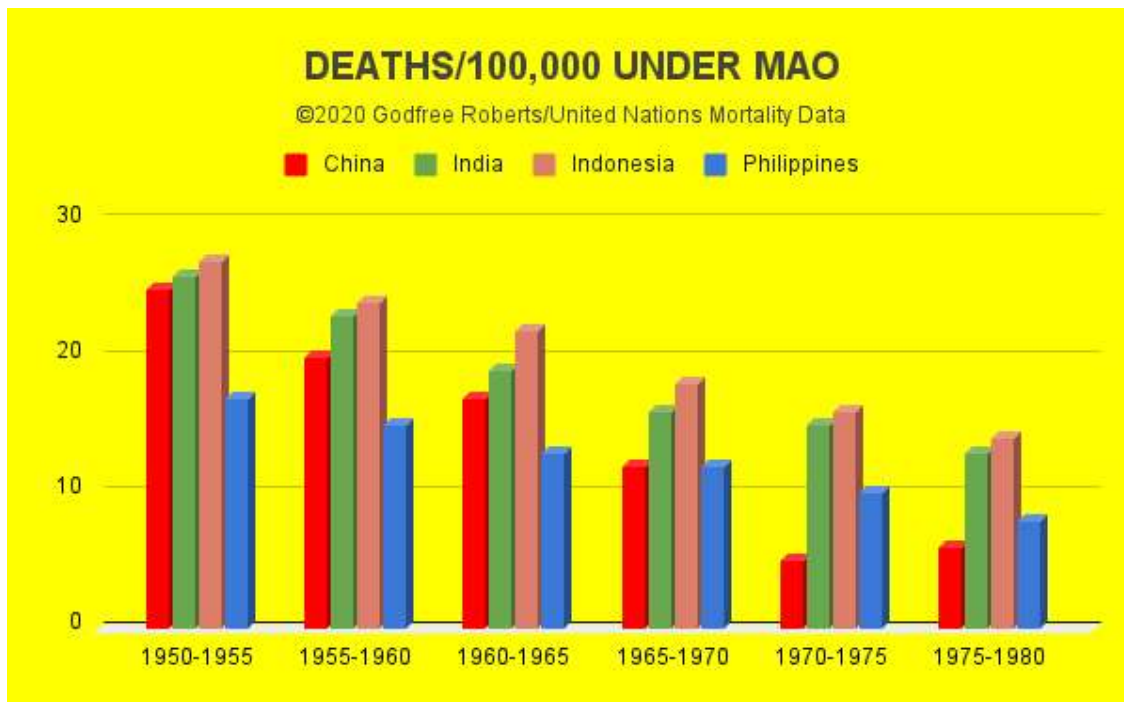
Fairbank was not exaggerating.

1. Military Revolution

As we saw in [Commander Mao](#), he re-wrote the book on military affairs, democratized the world's biggest army, and wrote *On Guerrilla Warfare*, still studied in every officers' school. After the war of Liberation, Mao continued his unbroken string of victories by proving in 1951 that the American Army was, as he predicted, a paper tiger. But his greatest (and least emulated) military achievement was integrating the Red Army into society, giving it a unique social role and responsibility and leaving it the most democratic military on earth.

2. Governance Revolution

Mao was one of the greatest organizers in history. His first political assignment was organizing a union in Hunan, where unions were illegal. When his boss showed up to check his progress, Mao greeted the astonished man with 100,000 new members cheerfully assembled in a local stadium. That helps explain why Mao's post-1950 government was the most successful in world history: he really knew how to make things happen, and taught that skill to his successors.



The principles upon which he organized government, the oath all Party members swear, their rejection of violence, their persistent success – are all Mao’s work, which is why every president pays homage to ‘Mao thought,’ though his resolution of democracy’s² contradictions may be his most enduring gift:

What does democracy consist of? On what forces does it rely? How does it express itself? To some extent, of course, it expresses itself in the ballot box. It also expresses itself in the deliberations of the village councils, in the opinions seeping up through the ranks of the army, in the resolutions of county governments, in the overt signs of change which appear in the political atmosphere of the times. The main task of the leader is to keep his ear to the ground.

He established a common, moral, familiar ideology: “Confucius is the beginning of the precious legacy which makes up the specific characteristics of China. Consequently, the sinification of Marxism—*making certain that all its manifestations are imbued with Chinese characteristics*—is our most pressing task”. And when a Reuters reporter asked him in 1943 what kind of government he planned, Mao replied,

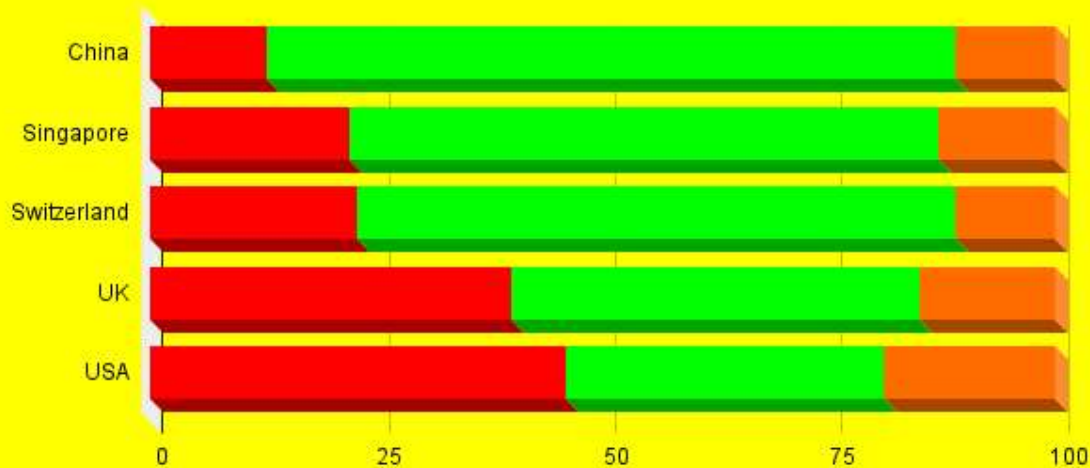
It will implement Dr Sun Yat-sen’s three principles of democracy, Lincoln’s principle of ‘of the people, by the people, for the people,’ and Roosevelt’s Atlantic Charter . It will assure the independence and unity of the nation and cooperate with all democratic powers¹.

To their credit, every Chinese leader since Mao has kept his ear to the ground (and heeded what he heard).

ENOUGH DEMOCRACY IN YOUR COUNTRY?

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■ Not Enough ■ Right Amount ■ Too Much

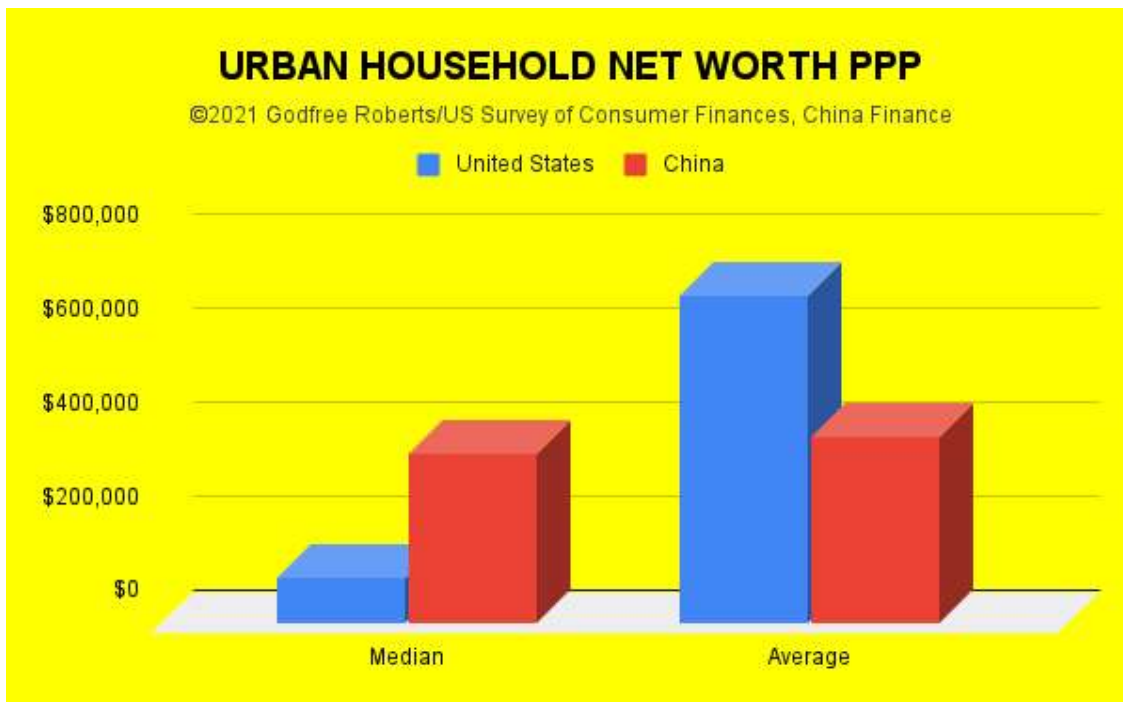


3. Agrarian Revolution

In 1910, a series of bad harvests in Hunan led to outbreaks of famine. Some desperate Hunanese formed a group under the slogan “Eat Rice without Charge” and seized stores of rice from wealthier farmers. Among the shipments they seized was one that Mao’s father was sending to the town of Xiangtan. Mao later recalled his ambiguity about the primordial clash between family obligation and social desperation: he could not sympathize with his father—who continued to export rice despite the local famine—nor could he condone the violence of those who seized others’ property. [Mao, *A Life*](#). Jonathan Spence.

Mao, born into the four-thousand-year-old hereditary class, gave landlords enough acreage to live on and, after the war, their class vanished. He distributed half the arable land, livestock and implements to landless peasants, relieved them of annual payments of seventy billion tons of grain, and waved away praise saying, “Napoleon did it. MacArthur did it in Japan. There’s no magic in redistributing land. The spontaneous forces of capitalism are already growing in the countryside, with newly rich peasants appearing everywhere, many well-to-do middle peasants striving to become rich, and many poor peasants still living in poverty”.

His rules still guide land ownership today and have given the Chinese people the world’s lowest wealth inequality, fast-falling income inequality, and family net worth higher than Americans’. In two generations.



4. Industrial Revolution

In the post-Mao era, it has become fashionable to blivate about the blemishes of the historical record of the Mao era and to keep quiet about the achievements of the time.. In fact, far from being the era of economic stagnation that is now commonly perceived, Mao’s era was one of the greatest modernizations in world history, comparable with the most intense industrialization in several major latecomers in modern times, such as Germany, Japan and Russia. *Maurice Meisner, Yale University.*

With an illiterate, typhus-infected population living in rubble, and his country under massive Western sanctions, Mao offered to come to Washington to talk with President Roosevelt, “China must industrialize. This can only be done by free enterprise. Chinese and American interests fit together, economically and politically. America need not fear that we will not be co-operative. We cannot risk any conflict”. He repeated his offer to Presidents Truman and Eisenhower but they, too ignored his pleas and placed stringent embargoes on the struggling country.

Nevertheless, Mao eliminated death by starvation and left the country with satellites, hydrogen bombs, ocean freighters, and a thriving, debt-free economy²:

- Germany's fastest development was 33% per decade from 1880-1914.
- Japan's was 43% from 1874-1929
- USSR's was 54% between 1928-58.
- Mao's was 64% between 1952-72.

5. Cultural Revolution

By 1965, sixteen years after the Communists took power, nothing had changed in the lives of the peasants who had fought and won the revolutionary war and, if the urbanite who benefited from their sacrifices had their way, their lives would never change.

Dismayed, Mao initiated the Cultural Revolution to emancipate 400,000,000 voiceless peasants whose social status had not changed in 4,000 years and, through the Cultural Revolution’s ten years, drove inequality to the lowest level ever recorded while growing the economy 7% annually *and* mechanizing agriculture with equipment built on site.

By revolution's end, rural literacy was taken for granted and rural people (no longer 'peasants') were as intolerant of oppression and corruption, vocal about their priorities, enthusiastic about voting, and as eager to voice complaints as their urban cousins. For the first time in history they were full citizens who could point to the infrastructure they built, the agricultural advances they had made, and the problems they had solved. (Though hundreds of millions of rural people benefited from the Cultural Revolution, many elites felt that, by destroying the traditional hierarchy, Mao had destroyed the culture itself—a charge that resonated with foreign elites. They were wrong, as we now see).

Conclusion

Mao's success against such odds dealt a heavy blow to Western hopes and triggered the longest, most expensive character assassinations ever – against a man who did more good for more people and less harm to fewer people than any leader in world history.

Mao was a one-off genius. Our leaders are mass-produced idiots.

[1](#)

Mao Zedong. Excerpt from Takeuchi Minoru, *Collected Writings of Mao Zedong*, Tokyo: Hokubosha, 1970-1972.

[2](#)

Mao Zedong: A Political and Intellectual Portrait 1st Edition. by Maurice Meisner