**20 mark Essay Questions: Mao’s China**

**Topic 1: Establishing communist rule, 1949–57**

**Consolidation of the regime:**

1. The role of the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) was the key factor in establishing communist rule in China in the years 1949–57’. How far do you agree with this view?
2. How far was the PLA the most important factor in the consolidation of the communist regime in China, 1949-57? (Other factors to consider include propaganda, popular policies and use of terror)
3. ‘The use of terror and violence was the most important factor in Mao’s consolidation of his regime, 1949-57? How far do you agree with this statement?
4. How accurate is it to say that it was mainly by the use of terror that the Communists tightened their grip on power in China in the years 1949-57? **(*model answer p272-3)***
5. How accurate is it to say that the authority of the Communist government was imposed mainly through the use of force?
6. How far do you agree that terror and violence were the most important factors in establishing Communist control of China in **1950-1953**?
7. How far was Communist power in China primarily consolidated through terror?

**Problems facing the new regime:**

1. ‘The biggest challenges facing the CCP when they came to power in 1949 were economic.’ How far do you agree with this statement? (E.g. backwardness of agriculture, poor infrastructure etc.)

**Korean War:**

1. ‘The Korean war was a complete success for China.’ How far do you agree with this statement?
2. The Korean War was a great success for China.’ How far do you agree?
3. How far do you agree that the most important consequence of the Korean War for the Communists was that it strengthen their control over China?

**100 Flowers 1957:**

1. How far was the 100 flowers campaign a significant turning point in the consolidation of Mao’s control over China?\*

1. How accurate is it to say that Mao launched the Hundred Flowers campaign in 1957 in order to destroy opposition to his rule?
2. ‘The 100 flowers campaign of 1957 was the most significant of Mao’s campaigns against his political opponents in the years 1949 – 62’ How far do you agree with this statement?\*
3. How accurate is it to say that Mao launched the 100 flowers as a campaign as a devious plan to trap his opponents?

**Other:**

1. How far did the international image of China change, 1949-57?\*

**Topic 2: Agriculture and industry, 1949–65**

**Agriculture:**

1. How far did Chinese agriculture improve in the years 1949-57?

2. ‘Mao’s agricultural policies in the years 1949-57 were disastrous for the Chinese peasantry’. How far do you agree with this statement?

3. ‘Agrarian land reform brought widespread benefits to the people of China.’ How far do you agree with this statement? (Essential to define ‘widespread’; need to discuss all land reform including early land redistribution to peasants, collectivisation, Communes during GLF)

**First Five Year Plan 1952-6:**

1. To what extent did the First Five Year Plan 1952-6 lead to the modernisation of the Chinese economy? (*Essential to define modernisation in the introduction e.g. industrialisation, greater economic efficiency and production of high tech goods)*
2. How accurate is it to say that industrial and agricultural policies were successful in the years 1952-57?
3. ‘The first five year plan was an undeniable success’. How far do you agree with this statement?

**Second Five year Plan 1958-62 (Great Leap Forward):**

1. How far was Mao’s ideology the main reason for the introduction of the Great Leap Forward in 1958?
2. How accurate is it to say that the Great Leap Forward in **agriculture** (1958–61) was a failure?
3. How accurate is it to say that the Great Leap Forward in agriculture was a catastrophe for the Chinese people?
4. ‘The communes brought widespread improvements to the lives of the Chinese people’. How far do you agree with this statement?
5. How far do you agree that, in the years 1949–62, communal living was more beneficial than harmful to Chinese peasants?

**Both Plans:**

1. How far do you agree that the Great Leap Forward reflected radically different economic priorities from the First Five-Year Plan? (*Important to define radically different)*

2. How accurate is it to state that, as far as industry was concerned, the first five year plan was a success and the second five year plan was a failure? (*This question requires you to assess the relative success of each of these five year plans, so you need to ensure you examine positive and negative features of each. You cannot do this effectively unless you establish the criteria on which you can judge them, so make these clear at the outset: meeting targets, increasing output of key goods etc.)*

1. How accurate is it to say that Chinese industry underwent a major transformation in the years 1949–62? (*Need to consider 1st and 2nd FYPs and also refer to years 1949 -52)*
2. How far do you agree that the Chinese economy was transformed in the years 1949–62? (*Need to consider 1st and 2nd FYPs and also refer to years 1949 -52. Refer to both Industry and Agriculture)*

**Famine:**

1. ‘China’s great famine of 1958-62 was not a natural disaster but a man made one’ How far do you agree with this statement?
2. To what extent was the famine of 1958-62 caused by government policies?
3. To what extent does the Mao’s agricultural policies from 1949 explain the extent of the Great Famine?
4. ‘Mao’s policies were entirely to blame for the Great Famine of 1958-62.’ How far do you agree with this statement? **(Model answer to this question in my revision notes p40-41)**

**General economic:**

1. How accurate is it to say that Mao’s economic policies met their aims?

**Topic 3: The Cultural Revolution and its aftermath, 1966–76**

**Reasons for launching the CR:**

1. How accurate is it to say that Mao’s main motives for launching the Cultural Revolution in 1966 were ideological rather than political? **(*See p282-3 for model answer*).**
2. ‘Mao launched the Cultural Revolution as a means to remove his political opponents.’ How far do you agree with this judgement?
3. How far do you agree that the main reason that Mao launched the Cultural Revolution was to destroy his political rivals?
4. To what extent was Mao’s decision to launch the Cultural Revolution caused by his desire to remould Chinese culture?
5. Why did Mao decide to launch the Cultural Revolution in 1966?

**Impact of CR:**

1. How accurate is it to say that the Cultural Revolution was a success for Mao? (*Make sure you consider how the outcomes (political, economic, social, cultural and military? Over the whole period 1966-76, not just those of the radical early phase*)

2.How far was Jiang Qing personally responsible for the impact of the Cultural Revolution, 1965-76?\*

3. How accurate is it to say that the main consequences of the Cultural Revolution was the destruction of traditional Chinese culture?

4. How far did the Cultural Revolution strengthen Mao’s control over China from 1966?

5. ‘The Cultural Revolution maintained its intensity from its launch in 1966 until Mao’s

death in 1976.’ How far do you agree with this statement?

**Early years of the CR:**

1. How far did the events of 1966-68 change the Communist party in China?\*

**Topic 4: Social and Cultural Changes, 1949–76**

1. To what extent did the lives of the Chinese people improve in the period 1949-57? (*Wide ranging question – need to consider living standards and other economic factors as well as impact of social policies on women, education, health etc.)*

1. ‘The Chinese revolution brought widespread benefits to the Chinese people’. How far do you agree? (*Wide ranging question – need to consider living standards and other economic factors as well as impact of social policies on women, education, health etc.)*
2. How far do you agree that the policies of the CCP brought widespread benefits to Chinese society in the years 1949-58? (**model essay in my revision notes p76-77)**

**Social policies:**

1. To what extent were Mao’s social policies successful between 1950 and 1976? (*Be careful to stick to social policies (policies targeting specific groups in society – women, young people, religious minorities etc. Good answers will establish at the outset how ‘success’ can be judged.)*

2. How far did the Mao’s social policies change China between 1949 and 1976?

3. To what extent did the government’s social policies change the lives of Chinese people in the years 1949-76?

4. How far did Mao’s economic and social policies promote equality in the period 1949–76?

5. How far did Mao’s social policies benefit the Chinese people in the period 1949–76?

**Health care:**

1. ‘Healthcare for Chinese people was extremely limited in the period 1949-76’. How far do you agree with this statement?

2. To what extent did Mao Zedong’s social policies improve health and education provision in the years 1949-76?

**Women:**

1. How far did the role and status of women change in the period 1949-65?

2. ‘The position of women in China improved radically in the years 1950-1976. ‘How far do you agree with this statement?

3. In 1950 the Marriage Law was passed. To what extent did the position of women in China change in the years 1950–76?

4. ‘The 1950 Marriage Law ensured that women were treated as equals in China in 1949-58.’ How far do you agree with this view?

**Culture and religion:**

1. How far did the CCP successfully replace traditional attitudes and beliefs in the period 1965-76?

2. How significant were young people in bringing cultural change in the years 1962-1976? (Activities of the Red Guards during the CR will be a key focus e.g. involvement in attacks on the four olds.)\*

3. How far did the Communist Party successfully remould Chinese culture between 1949 and 76?

4. How successful were the government’s attempts to suppress religion and religious beliefs in the years 1949-76??

**Education:**

1. How accurate is it to say that the improvements made in education after 1949 were destroyed by the Cultural Revolution?

2. To what extent did Mao Zedong’s social policies improve health and education provision in the years 1949-76?

3. How far did education improve in China, in the years 1949-76?

**Other themes:**

1. ‘The most important cause of Mao’s personal political prestige was his use of propaganda.’ How far do you agree with this statement?\*

2. How similar was Mao’s system of government from 1949-1954 compared to 1966-1969? \*

3. How far was Lin Biao responsible for the re-establishment of Mao’s authority between 1962 and 1969?\*

4. Why was Mao able to defeat his political opponents in the period 1962–76?

Note: Questions with an \* are difficult questions and are therefore less likely to appear in the exam.