Main problems facing the Communist Party in 1949

- Economic backwardness
  - Land reform
  - Foreign assets seized
  - New currency introduced
  - Three and Five Anti Campaigns

- Lack of political control
  - New political structure imposed
  - Reunification campaigns
  - Danwei
  - Terror campaigns

- Chaos caused by years of war
  - Bandits rounded up and shot
  - Suppression of counter-revolutionaries
  - Anti-rightist campaign

- Lack of national identity
  - Korean War
  - 'Resist America, Aid Korea'


Recommended reading

J. Brown and P. Pickowicz (eds.), The Dilemmas of Victory: The Early Years of the People's Republic of China (Harvard University Press, 2010). Rigorous analysis of the early years of the communist regime. Very challenging, but extremely detailed essays by top scholars in this field.

M. Burleigh, Small Wars, Faraway Places (Pan, 2013). Chapter 5 supplies an up-to-date analysis of the Korean War.


J. Melby, The Mandate of Heaven: Record of a Civil War, China 1945–49 (University of Toronto Press, 1968). Melby was an American diplomat stationed in China during the Civil War. His book is a collection of his diary extracts recording the coming to power of the CCP.

J. Spence, The Search for Modern China, 2nd edition (W.W. Norton, 1999). Especially Chapter 19 entitled 'The Birth of the People's Republic'. Also includes a very detailed account of the Civil War, not necessary for the exam but useful for understanding the background of the communist revolution.


C. Tyler, Wild West China: The Taming of Xinjiang (John Murray, 2003). A history of Xinjiang, including an analysis of the difficulties faced by the People's Republic in suppressing the fiercely independent people of the region.