

## Member Lecture – 3 February 2022

China under communism 1922-2022: from international plaything to global superpower  
Dr Michael Lynch, WEA tutor

Questions answered post-lecture

### **Q1 How did the teachings of Confucius become so integrated across China?**

Essentially because the hierarchical notion basic to Confucian thought fitted the political and familial systems that developed. Confucianism provided the justification for the imposition of authority, considered essential if an ordered, harmonious society was to be maintained. The *san gang* created a mind-set.

### **Q2 What do you think the future holds for Hong Kong & Taiwan?**

From Mao to Xi Jinping, all Chinese leaders have asserted the PRC's right to recover those territories, regarded as integral parts of the Chinese nation. Xi has recently restated the PRC's readiness to do this - by force if necessary. Up to now, the question has been would any outside power defend Taiwanese and Hong Kong independence. Since neither the USA nor the UK appears willing any longer to do this to the point of military intervention, the two areas in question seem destined in the not too distant future to come fully under PRC control.

### **Q3 How would you interpret China's One Belt One Road policy?**

The realistic answer is that the policy is an example of soft power takeover. Some would describe it as a form of colonialism in which a stronger economic and financial power imposes itself on a set of weaker nations, albeit done under the guise of legitimate commercial co-operation.

### **Q4 What do Chinese people now think of Mao?**

He is still officially regarded as the great revolutionary who began the restoration of Chinese greatness. That he got the economics of modern development wrong is cleverly side-stepped by the '70% right, 30% wrong' formula, which enabled Deng Xiaoping and his successors to venerate Mao as a political colossus while reversing his economic policies. For most ordinary Chinese people, Mao Zedong remains the great symbol of Chinese regeneration, the leader who defeated the Nationalists and the Japanese and put the Western foreign devils in their place.

### **Q5 How does China see its future role in space in the context of its sino-centric stance?**

The PRC's moonshots, etc., have to be seen in a military context. Beijing's line is that it has to be able to defend itself in a troubled world where potential, if not actual, hostile powers threaten it. China's space research and development, therefore, is not carried for purely scientific advance, impressive though this undoubtedly is. Defence needs are the key consideration.

### **Q6 To what extent do modern Tibetans accept their subjugation to China?**

Officially, Tibet's public representatives accept Beijing's dominance. As in most occupied countries (think of Nazi-controlled Europe 1939-45), those with interests to protect are obliged to collaborate with the occupier. But, as the periodic anti-PRC risings since 1949 show, Tibetans feel oppressed and belittled by a coercive regime intent on ethnic cleansing. As with the Uighurs in Xinjiang, no outside power is willing actively to defend the Tibetans.

#### Useful links and further reading

##### **Books by Michael Lynch**

*Modern China* (Hodder, 2006)

*China 1839-1997* (Hodder, 2016)

*Mao* (Routledge, 2017)

*Encyclopedia of Chinese History* [34 entries] (Routledge, 2017)

*The Chinese Civil War 1945-49* (Bloomsbury, 2022)

#### Forthcoming WEA courses by Dr Michael Lynch

##### **2022 Anniversary talks**

**The Chanak Crisis (C2346551)** – 8 Feb 2022, 1.30pm

**Anglo-Irish Treaty Implemented (C2346552)** – 22<sup>nd</sup> Feb 2022, 1.30pm

**End of the Lloyd George Coalition (C2346550)** – 1<sup>st</sup> Mar 2022, 1.30pm

**C2346553 - Birth of Fascist Italy (C2346553)** – 8<sup>th</sup> Mar 2022, 1.30pm

**Creation of USSR (C2346554)** – 22<sup>nd</sup> Mar 2022, 1.30pm

##### **Other talks**

**British Prime Ministers of 20th Century: Stanley Baldwin (C2346765)** – 10<sup>th</sup> Feb 2022, 10.30am

**British Prime Ministers of 20th Century: Winston Churchill (C2346766)** – 24<sup>th</sup> Feb 2022,  
10.30am

**British Prime Ministers of 20th Century: Clement Attlee (C2346767)** – 10<sup>th</sup> Mar 2022,  
10.30am

**British Prime Ministers of 20th Century: Margaret Thatcher (C2346768)** – 24<sup>th</sup> Mar 2022,  
10.30am

**British Prime Ministers of 20th Century: Tony Blair (C2346769)** – 7<sup>th</sup> Apr 2022, 10.30am

### **Scheduled for Summer term 2022**

Neville Chamberlain, Anthony Eden, Edward Heath, Harold Macmillan, Harold Wilson, John Major

### **Scheduled for Autumn term 2022**

Russia from Lenin to Putin

China from Mao to Xi