

Examiner's commentary

This essay has a good research question investigating an event that has been widely studied by historians so there would be plenty of accessible sources. There is a narrow focus on causation but “Why” as a command term is somewhat limiting as it invites a rather closed, descriptive approach. The reference to Mao could also have been cut as we cannot know why he acted as he did. “What was the main reason for the introduction of the 100 Flowers Campaign in China from May 1956 to June 1957?” would have made for a better research question that was more straightforward and would have given more scope for analysis. It is useful to include a timeframe, however, as this can serve as a guide both for the candidate and for the examiner as it clearly states the context within which the research question will be investigated. There is a good level of detail in the essay with the candidate demonstrating a grasp of the events of the One Hundred Flowers Campaign. There is also some critical evaluation of two of the sources. In the Extended Essay it is important to demonstrate the skill of critically evaluating both the material and the sources. Not every source needs to be evaluated, but the reliability of those you use most frequently, and which are central to your argument, should be considered.

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Extended Essay (June 2019)

An examination of the reasons why Mao Zedong introduced the Hundred Flowers campaign in China from May 1956 to June 1957.

Why did Mao Zedong introduce the Hundred Flowers campaign in China from May 1956 to June 1957?

Subject: History

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Introduction

On the 2nd of May, 1956, Mao Zedong, leader of China, announced to the Supreme State Conference the beginning of a new policy known as the Hundred Flowers campaign.¹ This movement urged the public, especially intellectuals, to speak freely and openly criticise the government,² yet criticism arose only after a year, questioning intellectuals' lack of independence, mass campaigns' cruelty, poor living standards, corruption, and the absence of freedoms.³ After several weeks, the state proclaimed the end of the movement and announced that Mao had invited open debate that solely strengthened communism, thus, labelling dissenters as 'rightists' and sparking the Anti-Rightist movement.⁴ At the time, the intelligentsia consisted of individuals who had completed secondary education,⁵ for instance, professors, scientists, managers, authors and artists, meaning this class numbered 3,840,000.⁶ But, academic discussion was limited; for nearly a decade, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) had suppressed and rectified opposition through propaganda, censorship and mass campaigns, and after Hundred Flowers movement, it returned to these programmes immediately. Thus, the liberal campaign was uncharacteristic of Mao's entire era and seemed to oppose all his other policies, causing historians to have contrasting perspectives on its origins and the Chairman's reasons for launching it. Some historians believe that the movement was a mistake, while others argue that it was a trap, which is the traditional interpretation. Fundamental questions that play a part in this debate, therefore, are whether Mao planned the Hundred Flowers campaign, whether he was a tolerant, liberal leader or an authoritarian dictator, and whether he was an opportunist or a planner. Moreover, during the

¹ Mao Zedong, *The Secret Speeches of Chairman Mao: From the Hundred Flowers to the Great Leap Forward* (Cambridge, Mass.: Council on East Asian Studies Publications at Harvard U, 1989), 6.

² *Ibid.*, 6

³ Jonathan D. Spence, *The Search for Modern China* (London: Hutchinson, 1990), 569-571.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 571-572

⁵ Witold Rodzinski, *The People's Republic of China: A Concise Political History* (New York: Free Press, 1988), 24.

⁶ Mao, *The Secret Speeches* 5

movement, Chinese society transformed drastically; at first, it seemingly tolerated open debate and freedom of speech, but the campaign quickly led to purges and the persecution of many innocent people, thereby demonstrating the significance of the research question.

Mao may have introduced the Hundred Flowers movement for economic reasons; either to solve China's economic problems by improving the CCP's programmes, or to persuade the Party to continue adopting his economic policies and so reassert his authority over the government. It is also possible that he launched it, because of China's foreign policy and outside influences, to maintain the alliance between the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the Soviet Union, and to preserve his own power. Overall, however, political factors contributed the most to Mao's decision; while he may have launched the movement to win the intelligentsia's loyalty, Mao Zedong ultimately introduced the Hundred Flowers campaign to uncover and later eliminate opposition to him and the regime, and was influenced by Eastern European, particularly Hungarian, unrest.

Economic Factors

Although the Hundred Flowers movement was never identified by Mao as an economic policy, it could still be regarded as one. Indeed, the campaign may have aimed to resolve serious economic issues by revising the Party programmes that had triggered them. While these initiatives had expanded heavy industry to an extent, policies like collectivisation and the First Five-Year Plan had hardly raised agricultural output. The Plan's focus on predominantly industry, a sector which obtained 58% of overall investment whereas agriculture acquired less than 8%,⁷ caused agriculture to grow five times slower than

⁷ Grasso, June, Jay Corrin, and Michael Kort, *Modernization and Revolution in China: From the Opium Wars to World Power* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2004), 158.

industry.⁸ Slow agricultural development and the programme's exchange of Chinese agricultural goods for Soviet capital,⁹ thus, may have limited procurement of capital and so domestic industrialisation. Progress was further hindered by a rapidly growing population, which increased from 582.6 million in 1953 to 646.5 million in 1957,¹⁰ while the food supply remained relatively constant, prompting starvation across China and preventing Mao from exporting more agricultural goods. Moreover, migration to cities raised the urban population from 58 to 92 million in eight years,¹¹ reducing the rural labour supply. This may have further undermined agricultural productivity, and to solve this issue, along with other economic problems facing China, Mao seemingly turned to the intellectuals for solutions. He had similarly appealed in 1949 to the intelligentsia, particularly to experienced factory managers and technicians, through the creation of the four-class united front, in order to rebuild China's economy,¹² and in 1957, Mao once again encouraged open discussion and debate, but this time through the Hundred Flowers campaign. This movement may have fostered new methods of strengthening agricultural productivity, thereby accelerating industrial development and solving China's economic problems, an objective Mao may have been aiming to fulfil.

On the other hand, historian Jonathan Spence claims that the campaign was caused by Party disagreement on economic policies, writing that it "grew out of conflicting attitudes within the CCP leadership ... about the pace and type of development that was best for China."¹³ As an expert in Chinese history for more than fifty years,¹⁴ Spence is reliable and objective. He

⁸ Ibid., 173-174

⁹ Ibid., 162

¹⁰ Spence, *The Search* 545

¹¹ Rodzinski 56

¹² Grasso et al. 155

¹³ Spence, *The Search* 574

¹⁴ David Skinner, "Jonathan Spence Biography," n.d., *National Endowment for the Humanities*. National Endowment for the Humanities, May-June 2010. 05 Aug. 2018. <<https://www.neh.gov/about/awards/jefferson-lecture/jonathan-spence-biography>>.

was also able to access many sources, especially newly-discovered or -declassified ones, although many relevant ones remain classified, limiting the variety of evidence in his book *The Search for Modern China*.

Therefore, it is possible that Mao launched the Hundred Flowers campaign to persuade the Party to continue implementing his increasingly unpopular economic policies and thus to recover control over the CCP. In the highest echelons of government, a debate arose between gradualists and hardliners over government economic policy.¹⁵ Gradualists, such as Liu Shaoqi, proposed that the Party should decelerate economic reforms, arguing that their excessive speed generated inefficiency and disorganisation, while hardliners maintained that doing so would cause rural capitalism to return, Mao even accusing his opponents of “tottering like women with bound feet, constantly complaining that others are going too fast.”¹⁶ The moderates also advocated an increase in material incentives for the masses, like markets and privately-owned plots, to raise agricultural output,¹⁷ and favoured more centralised planning. Mao, in contrast, feared that such incentives would encourage capitalism and that more central management would grant more power to the bureaucracy, not the public.¹⁸

In the mid-1950s, however, the pragmatists gained dominance in the internal dispute and Mao’s hard-line approach was increasingly rejected. By 1956, the consequences of collectivisation, particularly starvation and rural unrest, convinced the government to relax the programme. Additionally, the state introduced material incentives, as suggested by the

¹⁵ Spence, *The Search* 574

¹⁶ Grasso et al. 162-163

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 163

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 194-195

gradualists,¹⁹ while in September, the Eighth Party Congress abandoned Mao's plans for swifter agricultural development.²⁰ Party members' support for Mao's radical economic policies was falling, thereby weakening his control over the CCP, thus, he may have decided to retaliate against his opponents in the form of the Hundred Flowers campaign. His authorisation of public criticism of the Party and its programmes may have encouraged discussion of the gradualists' and hard-liners' economic policies, therefore, the masses could criticise his opponents' arguments. This exposed the merits of Mao's initiatives and the weaknesses of the moderates' programmes, encouraging Chinese citizens to publicly praise the Chairman and his policies, and to slander the pragmatists' reputation. Consequently, Mao may have hoped that as a result of popular support, the CCP and the gradualists would unquestioningly accept Mao's economic policies, resolving the Party's internal disagreement and re-establishing the balance of power in the Party in his favour. Thus, he potentially initiated the Hundred Flowers movement to secure the CCP's loyalty to him and his economic policies. Mao's desire to convince the Party to continue following his economic policies is evident in his speech "On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People," where he asserted that collectivisation had raised productivity so significantly that "few ... households" lacked grain.²¹ Because this claim was false, as explained previously, and the speech was given only to Party members, Mao may have been purposefully concealing his policy's failure, to defend his economic stance and persuade his colleagues to adopt it.

¹⁹ Ibid., 163

²⁰ Spence, *The Search* 568

²¹ Mao, *The Secret Speeches* 152-153

China's Foreign Policy and Outside Influences

Mao's foreign policy to maintain China's alliance with the Soviet Union and his domestic policy to preserve his position as Chairman may have also prompted the Hundred Flowers movement. The Chairman accomplished these objectives by distancing himself from Stalinism. Beijing's friendship with Moscow was advantageous, as the USSR provided extensive economic and military aid, such as \$300 million in credits,²² 10,000 advisers, more than two hundred construction projects within China,²³ training of Chinese workers at Soviet-built factories, and arms to the People's Liberation Army.²⁴ So, the PRC was relatively dependent on this union; the Cold War between the communist Eastern Bloc and the anti-communist, capitalist Western Bloc also could have forced the Chinese to "lean to one side" ... in their allegiances,"²⁵ i.e. the USSR, because it was the only possibility. Consequently, China was internationally isolated and could receive only Soviet aid,²⁶ thus, Mao may have been determined to safeguard this vital alliance by following Moscow's line. The Soviet Union's position as the Communist Bloc's leader could have further encouraged Mao to obey the USSR.

In February 1956, however, at the Twentieth Party Congress in the USSR, Soviet policy changed irreversibly and began to advocate de-Stalinization when Nikita Khrushchev exposed and denounced Stalin's cult of personality and the atrocities he committed. Khrushchev declared that Stalin had "supported the glorification of his own person" and eliminated his opponents and critics, thereby unveiling the deceased leader's "intolerance, his

²² Grasso et al. 157

²³ Michael Lynch, *The People's Republic of China 1949-76* (London: Hodder Education, 2008), 139.

²⁴ Nikita Khrushchev, *Memoirs of Nikita Khrushchev: Statesman, 1953-1964* (University Park: Pennsylvania State UP, 2007), 417.

²⁵ Spence, *The Search* 514

²⁶ Lynch 140

brutality and his abuse of power.”²⁷ These accusations against Stalin posed a serious threat to Mao’s power, because they could also apply to him. Mao himself had a cult of personality; the entire population was required to read his essays,²⁸ while the 1945 Party Constitution declared that Mao Zedong Thought guided the Party.²⁹ The public, moreover, often attributed success to Mao; for instance, according to Dai Huang, a journalist at the time, “a chef cooking a good meal [was] said to be ‘thanks to Chairman Mao’s leadership.’”³⁰ This phrase appears to have come from personal experience, meaning Huang himself observed Mao’s cult of personality in Chinese society, however, this particular example could have been an exception or a generalisation, or it may have omitted some information, either unintentionally or deliberately. Mao also followed the Soviet economic model, namely Stalin’s collectivisation and prioritisation of heavy industry, through the First Five-Year Plan.³¹ Finally, Mao often praised Stalin publicly, for example, calling him “the greatest genius of the present age.”³² The similarities between Stalin and Mao, and the latter’s admiration for the former created for China’s leader the potential risk of being labelled a Stalinist, a stance censured by Moscow after Khrushchev’s “Secret Speech.” Thus, Mao may have realized that his Stalinist views could possibly destroy Moscow’s, the CCP’s and the public’s support for him, and so perhaps endanger the Sino-Soviet alliance and his position as Chairman.

The spread of anti-Stalinist sentiment and support for de-Stalinization to China could have been, due to similarities between Stalin and Mao, an indirect attack against the Chairman.

²⁷ Nikita Khrushchev, “On the Cult of Personality and Its Consequences.” 25 Feb. 1956. Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU). *Marxists Internet Archive*. 08 Aug. 2018. <<https://www.marxists.org/archive/khrushchev/1956/02/24.htm>>.

²⁸ Spence, Jonathan D., and Annping Chin, *The Chinese Century: A Photographic History* (London: Harper Collins, 2002), 174.

²⁹ Stefan R. Landsberger, “Mao Zedong Thought.” 16 Dec. 2016. *Chinese Posters.net*. Chinese Posters Foundation. 08 Aug. 2018. <<https://chinese-posters.net/themes/mao-thought.php>>.

³⁰ Chang, Jung, and Jon Halliday, *Mao: The Unknown Story* (London: Vintage, 2006), 513.

³¹ Grasso et al. 156

³² *Ibid.*, 164

Deng Xiaoping, for example, claimed that the Party “abhor[ed] the deification of an individual,” while Liu Shaoqi argued that “there [was] no such thing as a perfect leader.”³³ As a result of Moscow’s new line, other Stalinist leaders were also threatened, not just Mao. For instance, in July 1956, the ruthless Stalinist leader of Hungary and the Hungarian Communist Party, Mátyás Rákosi, “one of Stalin’s hand-picked men,” was expelled from the government and the Party,³⁴ while in the August Incident, an opposing faction challenged Kim Il-Sung, North Korea’s leader, when the communist Party’s Central Committee gathered.³⁵ Soviet satellite states, furthermore, began to actively protest against their lack of autonomy, and the USSR’s Sovietization of countries and their economies, i.e. Stalinism. In the 1953 East German Uprising, East Berlin citizens demonstrated against the government’s plan to raise work quotas, a policy Stalin supported to hasten Sovietization there.³⁶ In Poland, the Poznań strike called for “Bread and Freedom”³⁷ and demanded Soviet forces to leave,³⁸ while in the Hungarian Revolution, slogans ordered “Russians [to] get out of Hungary.”³⁹

Because of de-Stalinization, and the parallels between Stalin and himself, Mao feared that being labelled a Stalinist could reduce the CCP’s, the Soviet Union’s, and China’s backing, and potentially cause his downfall. Thus, he seemed to dissociate himself from Stalin, publicly commending Khrushchev’s speech and announcing China’s intention “to restructure” itself,⁴⁰ while at the Eighth Party Congress, the CCP removed Mao Zedong

³³ Rodzinski 49

³⁴ Alan Blackwood, *The Hungarian Uprising* (Hove: Wayland (Publishers), 1986), 31.

³⁵ Han Kyu-han. “North Korea in the 1950s: Capital Accumulation and Power Struggles.” 01 June 2006. *International Socialism*. International Socialism. 08 Aug. 2018. <<http://isj.org.uk/north-korea-in-the-1950s-capital-accumulation-and-power-struggles/#extrahanone1>>.

³⁶ Timothy Jones. “Berlin Commemorates 1953 Uprising in East Germany.” 17 June 2017. *DW.COM*. Deutsche Welle. 08 Aug. 2018. <<https://www.dw.com/en/berlin-commemorates-1953-uprising-in-east-germany/a-39289423>>.

³⁷ William Taubman, *Khrushchev: The Man and His Era* (London: Free Press, 2005), 289.

³⁸ N. Khrushchev, *Memoirs* 625

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 648

⁴⁰ N. Khrushchev, *Memoirs* 400

Thought from its constitution.⁴¹ The Chairman also attempted to improve Stalin's reputation; the official Party newspaper *People's Daily* insisted that Stalin was "an outstanding Marxist-Leninist fighter,"⁴² and Mao stressed that "Stalin's mistakes amounted to only 30 per cent of the whole and his achievements to 70 per cent."⁴³ His continuous reminder of Stalin's achievements served to render the comparison between him and the Soviet leader less damaging. Thus, it may have been Mao's aims to preserve Sino-Soviet relations and to prevent his power from diminishing, by joining the international trend toward de-Stalinization, that convinced him to launch the Hundred Flowers campaign.

Political Reasons

Mao's desire to earn the intelligentsia's loyalty may have also played a part in the introduction of the Hundred Flowers movement by inspiring the state to guarantee freedoms it had promised when the PRC was first established. In the 1949 Common Programme, Article 5 granted citizens "freedom of thought, speech, publication, assembly, association, correspondence, ... and ... holding processions and demonstrations,"⁴⁴ yet the CCP frequently broke these promises. In 1951, a campaign of *zhengfeng*, or thought reform,⁴⁵ aimed to coerce intellectuals with Western, liberal ideas into conforming to Socialist standards⁴⁶ through self-criticism, who were compelled to confess their faults and mistakes.⁴⁷

⁴¹ Spence, *The Search* 568

⁴² The Editorial Department Of "Renmin Ribao". "On the Historical Experience of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat." *Renmin Ribao* 05 Apr. 1956: n. pag. *Marxists Internet Archive*. 08 Aug. 2018. <<https://www.marxists.org/history/international/comintern/sino-soviet-split/cpc/hedp.htm>>.

⁴³ Mao Zedong. "On the Ten Major Relationships." 25 Apr. 1956. Enlarged meeting of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party. *Marxists Internet Archive*. 08 Aug. 2018. <https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-5/mswv5_51.htm>.

⁴⁴ First Plenary Session of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference. "The Common Program of The Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference." *The Important Documents of the First Plenary Session of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference*. Comp. Foreign Languages Press. Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1949. 1-20. *Internet Modern History Sourcebook*. 03 Aug. 2018. <<https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/mod/1949-ccp-program.asp>>.

⁴⁵ Grasso et al. 146

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 166

⁴⁷ Edwin E. Moise, *Modern China: A History* (Harlow: Longman Group Limited, 1994), 128.

As any dissent could potentially be labelled as counter-revolutionary, this drive discouraged people from speaking freely and exercising their freedoms, thereby violating all rights promised by the Party. A similar infringement of citizens' rights occurred in 1954; when Hu Feng, a widely-known Communist literary critic, censured the CCP's restrictions on the Arts, Mao called him and his disciples counter-revolutionaries, consequently prompting a mass campaign against them and Hu Feng's incarceration.⁴⁸ His followers, additionally, were dismissed from their jobs or forced to relocate to rural areas.⁴⁹

The CCP's harsh treatment of intellectuals, therefore, caused the regime's popularity among them to fall. In June 1953, 12% of Party members were intellectuals,⁵⁰ while in 1956, only four out of ten intellectuals in Beijing backed the government, and one out of ten despised it.⁵¹ Mao's objective to secure the obedience of culture and thus the intelligentsia, as expressed in his article "On New Democracy,"⁵² demonstrates his failure to accomplish this previously through rectification. Perhaps because of this, Mao liberalised his policies. For example, in 1954, a new Constitution for the PRC was created, which assured citizens the same freedoms as the 1949 Common Programme. However, one way the new constitution differed from the old one was that it also protected, as stated in Article 95, "the freedom of citizens to engage in scientific research, literary and artistic creation and other cultural pursuits," and it stressed that it would support "creative work in science, education, literature, art and other cultural pursuits."⁵³ Mao may have believed that a renewal of promises through liberal policies could restore the public's and intelligentsia's hope that the government would

⁴⁸ Rodzinski 41-42

⁴⁹ Grasso et al. 167

⁵⁰ Rodzinski 47

⁵¹ Grasso et al. 165

⁵² Mao, Zedong. "On New Democracy." *Chinese Culture* Jan. 1940: n. pag. *Marxists Internet Archive*. 03 Aug. 2018. <https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-2/mswv2_26.htm#bm2>.

⁵³ National People's Congress. "Constitution of the People's Republic of China (1954)." Comp. Chinalawinfo Co., Ltd. Trans. Lawinfochina.com. *Laws & Regulations Database*. Legal Information Center of Peking University, n.d. 03 Aug. 2018. <<http://en.pkulaw.cn/display.aspx?cgid=52993&lib=law>>.

allow them freedom of expression, and thus, that this renewal could convince citizens to support the Party, in order to award it more power to grant rights to them. It could have been, therefore, the Chairman's aim to acquire the allegiance and support of the masses, particularly intellectuals, that led him to launch the Hundred Flowers campaign.

Nevertheless, China's seemingly liberal constitutions might not have truly tolerated dissent, since they permitted the Party to deprive citizens, who engaged in reactionary endeavours, of their freedoms. For instance, Article 7 of the Common Programme declared that the state should suppress counter-revolutionaries and remove reactionaries' political rights,⁵⁴ which authorized the *zhengfeng* campaign. Article 19 of the 1954 Constitution also permitted suppression of counter-revolutionaries,⁵⁵ such as Hu Feng in 1955. Because the CCP continued to pursue the same policies of terror that had caused intellectuals to despise it in the first place, it is possible that Mao may have been only pretending to grant the Party's original promised freedoms and was possibly not prepared to make any concessions to intellectuals. The Hundred Flowers movement, therefore, could have been a similar false promise that concealed its true suppressive nature.

In contrast, writer Jung Chang and historian Jon Halliday argue, in their biography of Mao, that the Chairman "was setting a trap, and that he was inviting people to speak out so that he could then use what they said as an excuse to victimise them."⁵⁶ They collected more than ten years of research and were able to access a large range of sources, including newly-found or -declassified ones, but historians have accused them of disguising speculation as fact, and of

⁵⁴ First Plenary Session of the Chinese People's PCC

⁵⁵ National People's Congress

⁵⁶ Chang and Halliday 508

selecting evidence and manipulating details to confirm their arguments.⁵⁷ Furthermore, Chang's hatred of Mao, who indirectly caused her family great suffering, may have introduced a bias against him and diminished her objectivity.

Nonetheless, despite of these limitations, there is considerable evidence that Mao may have initiated the Hundred Flowers campaign in order to reveal and later purge his opponents. Lack of intellectual support for the Party, as previously explained, along with Mao's anti-intellectualism, may have prompted the Chairman to regard intellectuals as potential counter-revolutionaries, and thus, decide to contain their criticism through terror. He mistrusted intellectuals because many of them had Western backgrounds; many academics had studied either abroad or at Western academic institutions in China. Indeed, the West had greatly influenced the Chinese intelligentsia, since America and Britain owned 2688 schools, and 31 universities and specialised schools in China (1949).⁵⁸ Mao's anti-intellectualist stance can be seen in his assertion that there was "no such thing as ... art that [was] detached from or independent of politics,"⁵⁹ thereby indicating that intellectuals who criticised Communism or the CCP, or diverged from the Party line, would be labelled counter-revolutionaries. Moreover, in the published version of "On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People," Mao recognised that "Marxists remain[ed] a minority among the entire population as well as among the intellectuals."⁶⁰ This rectification of potential intellectual dissenters appeared in Mao's earlier policies. Mass campaigns, such as the 1951 *zhengfeng*

⁵⁷ Benton, Gregor, and Lin Chun, *Was Mao Really a Monster? The Academic Response to Chang and Halliday's "Mao: The Unknown Story"* (London: Routledge, 2010), 5-6.

⁵⁸ Chang and Halliday 423

⁵⁹ Mao Zedong. "Talks at the Yen'an Forum on Literature and Art." May 1942. Yen'an Forum on Literature and Art. Yan'an. *Marxists Internet Archive*. 06 Aug. 2018. <https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-3/mswv3_08.htm>.

⁶⁰ Mao Zedong. "On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People." 27 Feb. 1957. Eleventh Session of the Supreme State Conference. *Marxists Internet Archive*. 06 Aug. 2018. <https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-5/mswv5_58.htm>.

campaign and the 1955 *sufan* campaign, which Hu Feng was a prominent victim of,⁶¹ may have struck the intelligentsia into submission. Yet despite this repression, there was a resurgence of intellectuals; the Party's First Five-Year Plan stimulated a re-emergence of managers, technicians and experts,⁶² in other words, intellectuals. Thus, once the Plan ended in 1957, Mao was faced with a growing, independent, free-thinking intelligentsia, which he possibly needed to reprogramme in order to suppress potential future dissent.

The Party's vague label for opposition during the Hundred Flowers campaign enabled Mao to later ensnare counter-revolutionaries. The imprecise definition of 'counter-revolutionary' meant that any opinion that differed from the CCP's position could be classified as this,⁶³ authorising Mao to persecute all opposition. In the published version of "On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People," he declared that in order to suppress "unmistakable counter-revolutionaries and saboteurs of the socialist cause," the Party should "deprive them of their freedom of speech."⁶⁴ As these labels were so vaguely defined, the CCP was potentially free to apprehend and suppress those who had dared to question it during the Hundred Flowers movement, i.e. opponents, thereby accomplishing a possible objective of Mao. But, it should be noted that only the revised speech contained these indefinite labels, thus, if Mao did not expect criticism to be so critical during the campaign, he may have been attempting to conceal his error.

Mao himself, moreover, claimed that the movement had been a trap to "let the demons and hobgoblins come out of their lairs in order to wipe them out better, and let the seeds sprout to

⁶¹ Jean-Louis Margolin. "China: A Long March into Night." *The Black Book of Communism: Crimes, Terror, Repression*. By Stéphane Courtois, Nicolas Werth, Jean-Louis Panné, Andrzej Paczkowski, Karel Bartošek, and Jean-Louis Margolin. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1999), 484.

⁶² Grasso et al. 158

⁶³ Margolin 482

⁶⁴ Mao, "On the Correct Handling"

make it more convenient to hoe them.”⁶⁵ This statement, however, was made only after the campaign ended; the Chairman’s motives may have changed during the campaign, and, if Mao had not expected criticism to be so critical of him and the CCP, he may have been trying to hide his mistake. The movement was also immediately followed by the Anti-Rightist campaign which targeted ‘rightists’, those who had recently criticised the regime. The CCP’s drive forced companies with intellectuals to discipline 5% of its employees for being rightists,⁶⁶ and so, approximately 550,000 people were targeted.⁶⁷ Since this purge affected only those who had opposed the Party during the Hundred Flowers movement, and was launched so swiftly after the movement, it is probable that Mao introduced the Hundred Flowers policy to expose opposition against him and the regime, which he could later eliminate through the Anti-Rightist campaign. Hindsight has allowed Chang, Halliday and this essay to use events that occurred after the Hundred Flowers movement, for instance, the Anti-Rightists campaign, as evidence. However, doing so assumes that the policy was planned and part of an overall scheme. The possibility is ignored that Mao may not have expected criticism to target him and the regime, which would mean the Hundred Flowers campaign was not a trap, or that his intentions may have altered during the movement.

However, his careful control of criticism during the movement demonstrates that he understood the possibility of bitter opposition against the state, while his own initiation of the policy indicates how he planned it. Thus, Mao did launch the movement to unmask and later eradicate counter-revolutionaries, but outside events, namely unrest in the Communist bloc, also had some influence on his decision to do so. The Hungarian Revolution originated in the Petőfi Circle, a forum approved by the Communist youth organization DISZ, where

⁶⁵ Jonathan D. Spence, *The Gate of Heavenly Peace: The Chinese and Their Revolution, 1895-1980*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1982), 379.

⁶⁶ Moise 129

⁶⁷ Grasso et al. 171

intellectuals discussed, and eventually came to oppose Rákosi and the Hungarian regime.⁶⁸ Mao may have realised that permitting open debate like the DISZ, could encourage reactionaries to attack him and the Party, and thus, he decided to initiate criticism himself by introducing the Hundred Flowers campaign, as it would enable him to keep public criticism under control, and later, suppress it. Because of this control, few saw the true extent of criticism during the movement; press censorship, presence of Party delegates at forums,⁶⁹ and temporary wall posters⁷⁰ indicate that Mao had expected opposition to target him and the regime, so, he may have planned the movement to uncover these critics. Furthermore, Khrushchev's military intervention which suppressed the Hungarian Uprising demonstrated to Mao how effectively force eliminated counter-revolutionaries. Therefore, by implementing the Hundred Flowers campaign, Mao exposed those who opposed and could possibly challenge the regime, enabling him to rectify them and prevent a potential future insurgency.

Conclusion

The Hundred Flowers campaign was the most uncharacteristic, peaceful policy during the Mao era. As a result, Mao's motives for the movement are still greatly debated by historians. When he launched the Hundred Flowers policy, he portrayed it as being beneficial to China's development. At the time, low agricultural productivity with expensive Soviet loans that required Chinese agricultural goods afflicted the economy, thus, the campaign may have aimed to solve this problem by improving the CCP's economic programmes. However, Mao's justification of his economic policies could have been part of a plan to convince the Party to continue implementing his increasingly unpopular economic policies and so to

⁶⁸ William E. Griffith "The Petofi Circle: Forum for Ferment in the Hungarian Thaw." *The Hungarian Quarterly* 2.1 (1962): 15-31. *1956 Institute – Oral History Archive of the National Széchényi Library*. 17 Aug. 2018. <http://www.rev.hu/rev/images/content/kiadvanyok/petofikor/petofikor_griffith.pdf>. 15-17.

⁶⁹ Spence, *The Search* 570

⁷⁰ Chang and Halliday 510

reconsolidate his control over the CCP. Growing international support for de-Stalinization also potentially threatened Mao's power, his position as Chairman, and Beijing's alliance with Moscow, forcing him to safeguard these through the movement. When the PRC was first established, the CCP was, moreover, relatively popular amongst intellectuals, but its anti-intellectualist policies harmed its reputation among them, so the campaign could have been one of several liberal policies that intended to recapture the intelligentsia's support, yet alongside these liberal programmes, Mao seemingly continued to attack intellectuals.

Whether he planned the Hundred Flowers movement is a question that many historians ask. His careful control of how criticism could be voiced and spread during the campaign, suggests that he expected how unfavourable opposition would be to him and the Party.

Whether his motives for the movement changed during it remains an unresolved question as well. However, affected by unrest in Eastern Europe, particularly Hungary, caused by intellectual discussion and criticism, Mao Zedong may have introduced the Hundred Flowers campaign ultimately to expose and later eliminate critics and opponents across China.

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International Baccalaureate®
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Candidate personal code

Extended essays on planning and progress form

Candidate: This form is to be completed by the candidate during the course and completion of their EE. This document records reflections on your planning and progress, and the nature of your discussions with your supervisor. You must undertake three formal reflection sessions with your supervisor: The first formal reflection session should focus on your initial ideas and how you plan to undertake your research; the interim reflection session is once a significant amount of your research has been completed, and the final session will be in the form of a viva voce once you have completed and handed in your EE. This document acts as a record in supporting the authenticity of your work. The three reflections combined must amount to no more than 500 words.

The completion of this form is a mandatory requirement of the EE for first assessment May 2018. It must be submitted together with the completed EE for assessment under Criterion E.

Supervisor: You must have three reflection sessions with each candidate, one early on in the process, an interim meeting and then the final viva voce. Other check-in sessions are permitted but do not need to be recorded on this sheet. After each reflection session candidates must record their reflections and as the supervisor you must sign and date this form.

First reflection session

Candidate comments:

Having studied mainly European history, I became interested in Mao's China, a new and entirely unfamiliar topic for me, and immediately focused on his domestic policies. At first, I wanted to write about the Cultural Revolution, but research raised my curiosity about the uncharacteristic, liberal Hundred Flowers campaign; I wondered why Mao suddenly began to encourage criticism of the Communist government. Historians' conflicting perspectives on his motives further convinced me to analyze and evaluate the factors involved. Therefore, I formulated my research question: 'What was the main factor that led Mao Zedong to introduce the Hundred Flowers campaign in China from May 1956 to June 1957 as part of his domestic policy?'. I have encountered several problems so far, including indecision when selecting my focus area, broad preliminary research questions, and a lack of primary sources. However, my supervisor recommended some sources that I had overlooked, which helped me solve these issues.

Date: May 14, 2018

Supervisor initials:

Interim reflection

Candidate comments:

I have found out so much about the Hundred Flowers campaign through my research. As a result of reading books, biographies and websites, and locating sometimes hard-to-find primary sources, like speeches and constitutions, my arguments became focused and detailed, and my research skills strengthened. I also learnt how to manage my time well, breaking large goals into smaller, more attainable ones, which allowed me to complete my research and essay during the summer, while the writing process improved my ability to evaluate sources, think critically, and analyse. After speaking with my supervisor, I now know how to make my investigation better. As suggested by him, I will cover less background in the foreign policy section, because it is sometimes irrelevant and excessive, and will attempt to sustain my judgement throughout the essay. Additionally, in the draft, I gave each point a heading, which disrupted my essay's flow and coherence. So, I have decided to reorganise my arguments into broader thematic sections.

Date:

Supervisor initials: _____

Final reflection - Viva voce

Candidate comments:

I collected a lot of material during my research, because I did not want to miss any potential ideas or evidence. All information seemed important but it was impossible to include everything, so my bibliography does not reflect all the research that gave me a good understanding of the topic. Finding primary sources was tricky, since Chinese archives are closed, however, digital archives proved to be useful. I realised that there's no true answer to my research question, since Mao's real motives for the campaign are unknown, so, I mostly had to use uncertain language. I also concluded that it was entirely Mao's decision to implement the campaign, so I made my question's voice active. I got better at structuring essays thematically, and learnt that setting goals and planning helps me to stay focused on a question and to not miss deadlines. In the future, I will include more historiography in essays. For me, learning something new and looking at different perspectives was very rewarding. Although it was challenging, I learnt to persevere. Overall, I greatly enjoyed the whole process and I'm very happy with the results.

Date:

Supervisor initials: _____