

Steven L. Taylor (editor), *30-Second Politics*,  
Pier 9 Murdoch Books, Millers Point (NSW), 2012.

## ONE-PARTY RULE

the 30-second politics

One-party rule is a political system in which only one party is allowed to participate, or where restrictive electoral rules make it essentially impossible for any other party to enter the system. The party controls the levers of government and uses state resources to ensure compliance through force but also through propaganda and by providing benefits through patron-client networks. Such systems are clearly non-democratic, but can be quite durable because, unlike a personalistic dictatorship, there is a bureaucratic structure in place that better mediates between the rulers and the ruled. Communist dictatorships constitute the most prominent contemporary examples, where the Communist Party is an elite organization that allows for no political competition. It is important to note, however, that such systems can occur anywhere on the ideological spectrum. There can also be different relationships between dictators and the party, where in some cases the party exerts huge influence (the Soviet Union) while in others the leader wields the power (Cuba). Even in the latter, however, the party plays a central role acting as a go-between for the demands of the ruled and the dictates of the ruler.

### 3-SECOND SOUNDBITE

A system of government in which only a single political party is invited to the party.

### 3-MINUTE MANIFESTO

One-party systems should not be confused with dominant-party systems, in which one party is hegemonic but allows other parties to exist and – to a controlled degree – to compete. Mexico from 1929 to 2000 is an example, as is present-day Zimbabwe. They are less rigid but are also non-democratic.

### RELATED THEORIES

See also  
AUTHORITARIANISM  
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COMMUNISM  
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### 3-SECOND BIOGRAPHIES

ROBERT MUGABE  
1924–  
President of Zimbabwe  
KIM JONG IL  
1941–2011  
Former leader of North Korea

### 30-SECOND TEXT

Geoffrey Weeks

*'The possession of power over others is inherently destructive both to the possessor of the power and to those over whom it is exercised.'*

GEORGE D. HERRON

# MAOISM

## the 30-second politics

Maoism is the term used to describe the specific variation of revolutionary communism developed by Mao Zedong in China. In its most generic usage it refers to revolutionary change via mobilization of the peasantry as opposed to the urban proletariat. Like Lenin, Mao took the basic tenets of Marx's theory of class conflict and adapted them to the reality around him. While the basics of Marx's view of the progress of history dictated that communist revolution could only take place in the context of advanced capitalism, Mao believed that the theory could be adapted to the peasant-based society of China of the 1930s and 1940s. Mao himself described his approach as 'Marxism adapted for Chinese circumstances'. Mao was the son of a relatively prosperous pig farmer, and worked the fields as a child, and so had a direct understanding of the peasant life. A central tenet of Maoism was permanent revolution, including violence as a tool: progress required turmoil and therefore the revolution was never entirely over. Mao vehemently opposed elitism, even within the Chinese Communist Party. Although Maoism died with him in China, it remained a theory of choice for revolutionary groups elsewhere, including the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia and the Shining Path in Peru.

### 3-SECOND SOUNDBITE

Peasants rise up to revolt against their feudal overlords to create a communist state.

### 3-MINUTE MANIFESTO

Mao had been one of the founding members of the Chinese Communist Party when it was established by the Moscow-based Comintern in 1921. By 1949, he had proclaimed himself president of the newly formed People's Republic of China. Free from Russian intervention, he used fear, manipulation, propaganda and death squads to forge the country in his own image: anti-intellectual, anti-elite, anti-tradition. He oversaw the Great Leap Forward (destruction of traditional farming methods) and the Cultural Revolution (destruction of intellectualism).

### RELATED THEORIES

See also  
COMMUNISM  
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MARXISM  
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LENINISM  
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### 3-SECOND BIOGRAPHIES

MAO ZEDONG  
1893–1976

First president of the People's Republic of China

DENG XIAOPING

1904–1997

Secretary General of the Chinese Communist Party

### 30-SECOND TEXT

Steven L. Taylor

*'The guerrilla must move among the people as a fish swims in the sea.'*

MAO ZEDONG