**Political Parties and Social Organizations**

China is a country of many political parties. Apart from the Communist Party of China (CPC), which is in power, China has eight non-Communist parties. Since their founding the latter have established cooperative relations with the CPC to different extents. The non-Communist parties responded to the call put forward by the CPC to hold the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), and participated in the First Plenary Session of the CPPCC in September 1949 with the CPC and other democratic personages, at which the Common Program was adopted as the provisional constitution, and the Central People's Government was elected and founded, hence the founding of the People's Republic of China. Since then, all the non-Communist parties have earnestly participated in the consultations and decisions concerning important issues in the state's political life; and many representatives of the non-Communist parties have been elected deputies to the people's congresses and members of the committees of the CPPCC at various levels. Many members of the non-Communist parties hold leading posts on the standing committees of the people's congresses, the committees of the CPPCC, government organs, and economic, cultural, educational, scientific and technological departments at various levels. The non-Communist parties of China are neither parties out of office, nor opposition parties, but friendly parties that "coexist over a long period of time, engage in mutual supervision, show utter devotion to each other, and share honor and disgrace, weal and woe" with the CPC. They are parties participating in government and political affairs.

Communist Party of China Founded in July 1921, the CPC today has more than 60 million members. From 1921 to 1949, the CPC led the Chinese people in their arduous struggles that finally led to the overthrow of the rule of imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat-capitalism with the establishment of the PRC. After the founding of New China, the CPC led the Chinese people of all ethnic groups in defending the independence and safety of the country, successfully completing the transition from new democracy to socialism and carrying out systematic large-scale socialist construction, thus achieving economic and cultural progress unparalleled in Chinese history.

In September 1997, the CPC convened its 15th National Congress, a gathering of historic significance. The CPC 15th National Congress declared Deng Xiaoping Theory the guiding ideology of the whole Party, put forward the Party's basic program for the primary stage of socialism, and formulated the basic objectives and basic policies for economic, political and cultural development. It was clearly pointed out at the Congress that the period from now to the end of the first decade of the next century will be the key period for China's modernization drive. Therefore, it was stressed, China must actively promote fundamental changes in the economic system and economic growth modes, and establish a fairly complete socialist market economy to guarantee the sustained, rapid and healthy development of the national economy, and lay a solid foundation for the basic realization of modernization in the middle of the next century. Now the CPC is leading the Chinese people in building socialism with Chinese characteristics, and striving to achieve its ultimate goal-communism.

The highest leading bodies of the Communist Party of China are the national Party congress (which is held once every five years) and the Central Committee produced at the national Party congress. The Central Committee holds its plenum at least once annually. The Central Political Bureau (Politburo), the Politburo's Standing Committee and the general secretary of the Central Committee are elected at a plenary session of the Central Committee, which also decides on members of the Central Secretariat. The Central Political Bureau and its Standing Committee exercise the functions and powers of the Central Committee when it is not in session. The Central Secretariat attends to the day-to-day work of the Politburo and its Standing Committee. The Central Committee's general secretary is responsible for convening meetings of the Central Political Bureau and its Standing Committee, and directs the work of the Central Secretariat. Jiang Zemin is the current general secretary.

China Revolutionary Committee of the Kuomintang Founded in January 1948, the party has more than 60,000 members. The current Central Committee chairman is He Luli. It is for the most part composed of former Kuomintang members and those who have historical connections with the Kuomintang.

China Democratic League Founded in October 1941, it now has more than 144,000 members, mostly intellectuals at fairly senior levels. The current Central Committee chairman is Ding Shisun.

China Democratic National Construction Association Founded in December 1945, this party has more than 78,000 members, most of whom are from the economic field or academic specialists. The current Central Committee chairman is Cheng Siwei.

China Association for the Promotion of Democracy Founded in December 1945, this party currently has more than 74,000 members. Its membership is mainly drawn from intellectuals working in educational, cultural, scientific and publishing fields. The current Central Committee chairman is Xu Jialu.

Chinese Peasants and Workers' Democratic Party Founded in August 1930, it currently has more than 74,000 members, most of whom work in the fields of public health, culture and education or science and technology. The current Central Committee chairman is Jiang Zhenghua.

China Zhi Gong Dang Founded in October 1925, this party currently has more than 18,000 members. Most of them are returned overseas Chinese, relatives of overseas Chinese, and representative individuals and specialists and scholars with overseas connections. The current Central Committee chairman is Luo Haocai.

Jiusan Society Founded in December 1944, this party currently has more than 78,000 members. They are mostly high- and medium-level intellectuals working in science and technology, culture and education, or public health. The current Central Committee chairman is Wu Jieping.

Taiwan Democratic Self-government League Founded in November 1947, this party has more than 1,800 members who are for the most part people born or with family roots in Taiwan currently residing on the mainland. The current Central Presidium chairman is Zhang Kehui.

There are a large number of social organizations in China, of which the major ones are the All-China Federation of Trade Unions, the All-China Youth Federation, the All-China Women's Federation, and the All-China Federation of Industry and Commerce.

All-China Federation of Trade Unions This mass organization is the supreme leading body of all the local trade union organizations and national industrial union organizations in China. Founded in May 1925, it currently has 89.13 million members. The current Executive Committee chairman is Wei Jianxing.

All-China Youth Federation Founded in May 1949, this is a federation comprising all the youth organizations in China. The current chairman is Bayin Chaolu. Of the organizational members of the All-China Youth Federation, the Communist Youth League of China is the core, being a mass organization composed of China's advanced youth. Founded in May 1922, it currently has 68.71 million members. The current Central Committee first secretary is Zhou Qiang.

All-China Women's Federation Founded in April 1949, this mass organization was founded to get women from all ethnic groups and all walks of life united to fight for women's further emancipation. The current Executive Committee chairwoman is Peng Peiyun.

All-China Federation of Industry and Commerce Founded in October 1953, this people's association organized by people in industry and commerce functions as a non-governmental chamber of commerce for promoting business people's domestic and overseas ties. Its current Executive Committee chairman is Jing Shuping.

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