



TACTICS OF OPPRESSION

CHINA 1950-PRESENT

BY FRANCIS DUFFY

“Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun”
~Mao Zedong (7 August 1927)

The Chinese civil war (now known as the Chinese Communist Revolution) was fought recurrently between 1927 and 1949 with the forces of the Republic of China battling the forces of the Chinese Communist Party. That civil war reportedly had two phases: Phase 1 between 1927 and 1937; and Phase 2 from 1937 to 1945. The civil war was put on hold with the invasion of China by Japan during World War II. The war resumed with the Japanese defeat and ended with the Chinese Communist Party forces defeating the Republic of China forces.

RISE OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF CHINA

The People's Republic of China (PRC) was officially created following the 1949 civil war victory of the Communist Party of China

(CPC). The Provisional Measures on Firearms Control were published on June 27, 1951¹ shortly after the official creation of the PRC.

The Provisional Measures were used to locate and control the enormous supply of firearms within China at the end of the long period of civil war. These provisions authorized local police to take an inventory of firearms (akin to gun registration) in their areas and then issue permits to those who were authorized by the Communist Party to have a firearm.

The 1951 Provisional Measures were replaced in 1981 by the Measures on Firearms Control.² These new controls specifically focused on regulating hunting rifles and sport-shooting guns. Some citizens over the age of eighteen could own a maximum of two hunting rifles.

GUN CONFISCATION AND MASS ATROCITIES

Gun control in the early years of the CPC through the mid-20th Century correlated with mass atrocities on the part of the Chinese government against its' citizens. These atrocities were justified under the banner of the “Cultural Revolution” – a violent purge in which China was factionalized and citizens were turned against each other, using pretextual causes popular at the time, to create the upheaval necessary for the CPC to consolidate internal power in China between 1966-1976.

Mao Zedong, the Chairman of the CPC, was responsible for the great purge. The Revolution's goal was to preserve Chinese communism by eradicating capitalist and traditional influences from Chinese society. Zedong also wanted to ensure that his philosophy (known

as Maoism) became the dominant ideology for the Chinese Communist Party.

The tactic Mao used to motivate his revolutionary followers was to accuse rivals and critics in the Communist party, as well as in schools, factories, and government institutions, of the crime of undermining the Communist philosophy by working to reinstate capitalism. His followers, especially younger ones, formed the infamous Red Guards in response to his calls to action against his “enemies.” Previously obscure people were given the power to kill, torture, and imprison previously prominent, or simply middle class, individuals locally.

The Cultural Revolution resulted in a death toll estimated from hundreds of thousands to 20 million.³ The period known as the Red August of Beijing marked the beginning of massacres throughout mainland China. This included: the Guangxi Massacre, in which large scale cannibalism occurred;⁴ the Inner Mongolia incident; the Guangdong Massacre; the Yunnan Massacres; and the Hunan Massacres.⁵

Tens of millions of people were persecuted, including senior government officials who appeared to be inadequately zealous in their support of Zedong. Those targeted were subjected to public humiliation, imprisonment, torture, hard labor, seizure of property, and sometimes execution or harassment to the point of suicide. According to one observer:

“... intellectuals were considered the “Stinking Old Ninth” and were widely persecuted—notable scholars and scientists such as Lao She, Fu Lei, Yao Tongbin, and Zhao Jiuzhang were killed or committed suicide. Schools and universities were closed with the college entrance exams cancelled. Over 10 million urban intellectual youths were sent to the countryside in the Down to the Countryside Movement.”⁶

AFTER THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION

The Chinese Communist government continued its strict gun control policies after the Cultural Revolution through its Ministry of Public Security (MPS) by enacting the 1981 Firearms-Control Law. The Firearms-Control Law prohibits private possession of firearms in China except under extremely restricted conditions. The number of groups and individuals permitted to possess guns was significantly tightened. An earlier provision allowing citizens over eighteen years of age



During the Cultural Revolution, tens of millions were persecuted, publicly humiliated, tortured or killed.

to possess two hunting rifles was abolished and permits were only issued to hunters and herdsmen in areas prescribed by provincial governors. These restricted permits were subject to pre-approval and the firearms, by statute, could not be brought out of these hunting or pastoral areas.

By statute, firearms were divided into three categories according to the purposes of their use: military-use, official-use, and civilian use.

The Chinese military and armed police continued to have access to the firearms they needed to perform their duties for the CCP. These firearms are regulated by the Ministry of Public Security, State Council, and the Central Military Commission.

Firearms for official use are for law enforcement officials, guards, bodyguards, and scientific research institutions as long as these institutions can satisfy officials that firearms access is necessary and beneficial to them.

In 1998, the Ministry of Public Security (MPS) published the *Measures for Equipment of Firearms for Official Use*. These measures were published as a set of rules to strictly control access to firearms. For all uses, access to firearms was not automatic and required review and approval by the MPS or its provincial counterparts.

Firearms for Civilian Use. The Ministry of Public Security created three categories of “work units” in which civil-

ian use of firearms may be permitted:

“Sports Units”: These work units were for people specifically engaged in shooting sports and for-profit shooting ranges approved by provincial government authorities.

“Hunting Grounds”: These are areas specifically designated for hunting with the approval of provincial government authorities.

“Wildlife protection, breeding, and research institutions”: Firearms are approved for these units if they can demonstrate a need for them that satisfies CPC authorities.

There are strict rules for the daily management of firearms by individuals and groups. People authorized to have firearms have a legal responsibility to store and use their firearms safely, they are selected by the CPC, and they must undergo firearms training. Those who are able to get a permit to carry a firearm may not carry in prohibited areas. If a firearm should be lost or stolen, CPC authorities must be notified immediately.

People authorized to have a firearm may not transport firearms in China without approval. Those who wish to travel with a firearm must apply for a “transportation permit.” The application requires people to report the types and numbers of the firearms to be transported, along with information about how they will be transported (car, truck, etc.), and the routes that will be followed. Local police must be notified if any overnight stop



The Revolution brought about the destruction of old customs, ideas, and capitalist ties, and included book burnings.

is required. Guns and ammunition must be transported separately. Permits can, of course, be declined or obstructed by failing to process them.

CONCLUSION

Gun control in China, since the 1950s, has precipitated numerous atrocities claiming the lives of millions of people; all in the name of preserving and protecting the Communist regime and its philosophy. The elements of the Chinese gun control effort described above represent a tiny fraction of existing Chinese gun laws. An armed population deters tyrannical rulers as an obstacle that must be overcome before a number of nefarious actions can be taken against them. The Chinese Communist Revolution's "Cultural Revolution" also demonstrates how easily tactics of oppression can enslave an unarmed population. Today, citizens of the People's Republic of China are subject to electronic surveillance by their own government 24 hours a day, citizens are incentivized to inform against each other, freedom of speech does not exist, the CPC controls individual travel, and political opponents are banned from government and punished harshly.

Students of history will consider the example China presents when considering H.R. Bill 127⁷ a bill submitted to the U.S. House of Representatives by Sheila Jackson Lee of

Texas. Her bill would:

- Create a national firearm registry
- Set a minimum gun ownership age at 21
- Require licensing and psychological evaluations at the individual's cost
- Require psychological evaluations of other members of the licensee's household, current and former spouses, relatives and associates.
- Make it a crime to possess a firearm or ammunition without the new license or sell one to someone who doesn't have the license.
- Require gun owners to pay for insurance
- Ban ammunition of .50 caliber or greater, except for law enforcement and a limited range of security personnel.
- Give the U.S. attorney general jurisdiction over licensing through the Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives.
- Require a government-run firearms training course
- Require registration of firearms identifying all weapons, where they are stored in the home, and that would be made public
- Prohibit the display of an antique firearm in one's home without a federal firearms license
- Require a special license for "military-style weapons"
- Prohibit anyone who has ever been hospitalized due to mental illness, drug

or alcohol abuse, homicidal or suicidal thoughts or a brain disease from obtaining a firearms license.

There are various fines and jail sentences mandated for different sections of the bill; for example:

"Whoever knowingly violates section 922(bb) (4) shall be fined not less than \$75,000 and not more than \$100,000, imprisoned not less than 15 years and not more than 25 years, or both, except that if the transferee of the firearm possess [sic] or uses the firearm during or in relation to a crime, an unintentional shooting, or suicide, the transferor shall be fined not less than \$100,000 and not more than \$150,000, imprisoned not less than 25 years and not more than 40 years, or both."⁸

H.R. 127 is merely one measure proposed. The distance between mandated gun registration and confiscation is narrow and the potential for official abuse, overreach or error is large. History has provided many examples of how quickly that gap closes and the horrific consequences likely to follow whether intended or not. American gun owners, and those who value liberty, must develop political strategies and tactics to prevent the erosion or circumvention of our Second Amendment rights. ✓

BIO

Francis Duffy, Ph. D, is a U.S. Army Special Forces veteran of the 6th and 5th Special Forces Groups, a graduate of the Army Ranger School, and a combat diver. Frank is also a certified executive protection specialist and is the co-founder and vice president of the Maryland-based Spartan Firearms Training Group (www.spartanftg.com).

ENDNOTES

- 1 Qiangzhi Guanli & Zanzing Banfa [Provisional Measures on Firearms Control] (approved for publication by Zhengwu Yuan, June 27, 1951) in Gonggan Fagui Huibian [Collection of Public Security Laws and Regulations] 228–31 (1980).
- 2 Zhonghua Renmin, Gongheguo Qiangzhi, & Guanli Banfa [The PRC Measures on Firearm Control] (approved by the State Council, Jan. 5, 1981, put into effect by the Ministry of Public Security, Apr. 25, 1981).
- 3 Pye, Lucian W. (1986). "Reassessing the Cultural Revolution". *The China Quarterly*. 108 (108): 597–612. doi:10.1017/S0305741000037085. ISSN 0305-7410. JSTOR 653530.
- 4 Kristof, Nicholas D. (January 6, 1993). "A Tale of Red Guards and Cannibals". *The New York Times*. ISSN 0362-4331. Retrieved January 22, 2020.
- 5 Cultural Revolution. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural_Revolution#cite_note--1-1
- 6 *Ibid.*, p. 1
- 7 H.R. 127 submitted by Sheila Jackson Lee. H.R.127 - 117th Congress (2021-2022): Sabika Sheikh Firearm Licensing and Registration Act | Congress.gov | Library of Congress
- 8 *Ibid.*