

# 1949

*In 1949, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) achieved victory over the Nationalist Party in the Civil War. As he addressed the first plenary session of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference on 21 September 1949, a triumphant Mao Zedong famously proclaimed that 'the Chinese people have stood up' and China would 'no longer be a nation subject to insult and humiliation'. In little more than twenty-eight years, the CCP had gone from an underground network of like-minded revolutionaries, surviving near extinction, to the formidable party solely in charge of China's future. In the following excerpt from a speech Mao gave in June that year to celebrate the anniversary of the founding of the CCP, it is possible to see the horizon of revolutionary promise and workers' liberation imagined during that period—a horizon that over time would fade into obscurity.*

# On the People's Democratic Dictatorship (Excerpt)

MAO Zedong<sup>1</sup>

**T**he first of July 1949 marks the fact that the Communist Party of China has already lived through twenty-eight years. Like a man, a political party has its childhood, youth, manhood and old age. The Communist Party of China is no longer a child or a lad in his teens but has become an adult. When a man reaches old age, he will die; the same is true of a party. When classes disappear, all instruments of class struggle—parties and the state machinery—will lose their function, cease to be necessary, therefore gradually wither away and end their historical mission; and human society will move to a higher stage. We are the opposite of the political parties of the bourgeoisie. They are afraid to speak of the extinction of classes, state power, and parties. We, on the contrary, declare openly that we are striving hard to create the very conditions which will bring about their extinction. The leadership of the Communist Party and the state power of the people's dictatorship are such conditions. Anyone who does not recognise this truth is no communist. Young comrades who have not studied Marxism-Leninism and have only recently joined the Party may not yet understand this truth. They must understand it—only then can they have a correct world outlook. They must understand that the road to the abolition of classes, to the abolition of state power and to the abolition of parties is the road all mankind must take; it is only a question of time and conditions. Communists the world over are wiser than the bourgeoisie, they understand the laws governing the existence and development of things, they understand dialectics and they can see farther. The bourgeoisie does not welcome this truth because it does not want to be overthrown. To be overthrown is painful and is unbearable to contemplate for those overthrown, for example, for the Guomindang reactionaries whom we are now overthrowing and for Japanese imperialism which we together with other peoples overthrew some time ago. But for the working class, the labouring people, and the Communist Party the question is not one of being overthrown, but of working hard to create the conditions in which classes, state power, and political parties will die out very naturally and mankind will enter the realm of Great Harmony.