

# The Communist Party of China and Human Rights Protection — A 100-Year Quest (I)

## 中国共产党尊重和保障人权的伟大实践(上)

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### Foreword

The year 2021 marks the centenary of the Communist Party of China (CPC). Over the past century, the CPC has invested a huge effort in human rights protection, adding significantly to global human rights progress.

A hundred years ago, the CPC came into being—its mission to salvage the country and save the Chinese people at a perilous time of domestic upheaval and foreign aggression. This was an epoch-changing moment. Under the leadership of the CPC, the Chinese people embarked on a new journey towards prosperity, national rejuvenation, and wellbeing.

Over this period of one hundred years, the CPC has united and led the people in toppling the “three mountains” of imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat-capitalism, creating the People's Republic of China (PRC), and completing the New Democratic Revolution and the Socialist Revolution. The political and institutional foundations were thereby laid down to ensure the rights and freedoms of the people. Through successes and setbacks, China has pioneered reform and opening up, set the goal of socialist modernization, and ushered in a new era of building socialism with Chinese characteristics. The Chinese nation has stood up, become better off, and grown in strength. Now, it is embarking on a new journey to build a modern socialist country in all respects.

For a hundred years, the CPC has always put people first, applying the principle of universality of human rights in the context of the national conditions. It regards the rights to subsistence and development as the primary and basic human rights, and believes that living a life of contentment is the ultimate human right. It promotes the well-rounded development of the individual, and strives to give every person a stronger sense of gain, happiness and security. Its success in pioneering human rights in a socialist

### 前言

2021年是中国共产党成立100周年。中国共产党的100年，创造了尊重和保障人权的伟大奇迹，谱写了人权文明的新篇章。

100年前，在中华民族面临内忧外患的危急关头，担负着救国救民使命的中国共产党诞生了。中国产生了共产党，这是开天辟地的大事变。在中国共产党的领导下，中国人民开启了为实现国家富强、民族振兴、人民幸福而奋斗的崭新征程。

100年来，中国共产党团结带领中国人民推翻了帝国主义、封建主义和官僚资本主义“三座大山”，建立了中华人民共和国，完成了新民主主义革命和社会主义革命，为有效保障人民各项权利和自由奠定了根本政治前提和牢固制度基础。经过艰辛探索，中国开创了改革开放和社会主义现代化建设新时期，开启了中国特色社会主义新时代，中华民族迎来了从站起来、富起来到强起来的伟大飞跃，踏上了全面建设社会主义现代化国家新征程。

100年来，中国共产党坚持人民至上，坚持将人权的普遍性原则与中国实际相结合，坚持生存权、发展权是首要的基本人权，坚持人民幸福生活是最大的人权，坚持促进人的全面发展，不断增强人民群众的获得感、幸福感、安全感，成功走出了一条

country is unique and readily apparent.

For a hundred years, the CPC has committed itself to peaceful development and common progress. China is firm in its international stance—to safeguard world peace and seek progress through cooperation, ensuring human rights with the benefits deriving from development. It has been an active participant in matters of international human rights, providing a Chinese contribution to global human rights governance and progress, and working with other countries to forge a global community of shared future.

## I. For People's Liberation and Wellbeing

### 1. Human Rights Trampled after the Mid-19th Century

The Chinese nation is a great nation boasting a civilization spanning five millennia. China once led the world in composite national strength over a long period of time. But beginning in the middle and latter half of the Qing Dynasty (1636-1911), and especially after the Opium War in 1840, China plunged into stagnation due to a corrupt, incompetent government and ever growing Western aggression. It was eventually reduced to a semi-colonial, semi-feudal state where the people were enslaved and suffered immeasurably.

Beginning in 1840, the Western imperialist powers, through war and other aggressive means, forced the Chinese government into hundreds of unequal treaties, regulations and conventions, grabbing territory, demanding reparations and privileges, and engaging in a process of colonization and plunder throughout China. Western invasion and colonization shackled the Chinese people, trampling on their dignity and putting their very lives in jeopardy.

It was a tragedy for the country and the people. Oppressed by imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat-capitalism, the Chinese people suffered from hunger and poverty and the nation from backwardness and subjugation.

The subsistence crisis raged in all directions. The economy was in a shambles. Low agricultural productivity, land annexation, harsh taxes and levies, natural disasters, and frequent wars turned large numbers of small farmers and peasants into farm laborers for hire or homeless poor. Industry and commerce developed to a certain extent, but was small in scale, low in productivity and unbalanced in structure. Manipulated by foreign and domestic bureaucrat capital, it was impossible to sustain the nation or the people. Under a shattered economy, the people were destitute and struggled to survive. It is estimated that 80 percent of the population was constantly haunted by dire hunger or inadequate food supply, and that tens or even hundreds of thousands of people starved to death every year.

China was also tortured by diseases and hindered by the lack of education among its people. Epidemics such as plague, smallpox and cholera swept across the country and recurred every year, taking a heavy toll on the populace due to the lack of health services. The average life expectancy in old China was only 35 years. When the PRC was founded in 1949, 80 percent of the 540 million population were illiterate, less than 20 percent of school-

中国特色社会主义人权发展道路。

100年来，中国共产党心怀天下，坚持走和平发展道路，坚持促进共同发展。中国坚定维护世界和平，坚持以合作促发展，以发展促人权，积极参与国际人权事务，为全球人权治理贡献中国智慧、提供中国方案，推动世界人权事业发展，与世界各国一道，共同构建人类命运共同体。

## 一、为人民解放和幸福而奋斗

### （一）近代中国人民的人权惨遭践踏

中华民族是有着5000多年辉煌灿烂文明史的伟大民族。在人类历史长河中，中国综合国力曾长期居世界前列。但到清朝（1636—1911年）的中后期，特别是1840年鸦片战争之后，由于西方列强对中国的侵略日甚一日，由于统治者的腐败无能，中国的发展开始陷入停滞，逐渐成为半殖民地半封建社会，人民惨遭压迫奴役，陷入深重苦难之中。

从1840年开始，列强通过对中国的多次侵略战争和其他方法，与中国政府签订了数以百计的不平等条约、章程、专条，强迫中国割地、赔款，攫取种种特权，构建起殖民、掠夺中国的系统性结构。列强入侵及其殖民政策，成为加在中国人民身上的沉重枷锁，中国人民的尊严和生存权利遭到严重践踏。

国家的不幸就是人民的不幸。在帝国主义、封建主义、官僚资本主义压迫之下，饥饿、贫穷、落后、挨打，是近代中国人权状况的真实写照。

近代中国人民遭遇的生存危机是全方位的。在经济上，中国的农业生产力落后，土地兼并加之苛捐杂税，自然灾害加之战乱破坏，导致大量农民破产沦为雇农甚至流民；工商业虽有一定发展，但规模小、产量低、结构失衡，并且受到外国资本和国内官僚资本的操控，难以为国计民生提供有力支持。经济衰败、民生凋敝，人民在生存线苦苦挣扎。据估算，当时全国有80%的人长期处于饥饿、半饥饿状态，几乎每年都有几万乃至几十万人因饥饿而死。

除了物质上的匮乏，中国人民还面临病疫的折磨和精神上的贫瘠。当时的中国疫病横行，鼠疫、

age children were in elementary schools, and there were only 117,000 students receiving higher education. Commenting on the miseries of the people, Mao Zedong said, “The poverty and lack of freedom among the Chinese people are on a scale seldom found.” With the people struggling for survival, it was impossible to talk about any other rights.

## 2. National Salvation on the Shoulders of the CPC

With the nation under threat and the people in pain, many people of lofty ideals and insight devoted themselves to the cause of national salvation—leading peasant uprisings, creating initiatives to learn from the West, attempting reformist experiments, and launching a bourgeois revolution. But none of these freed the Chinese from oppression and slavery. The mission of national independence and the liberation of the people fell to the CPC.

In July 1921, the First National Congress of the Communist Party of China announced the founding of the Party, heralding a new stage in the Chinese revolution. It reversed the tragic fate of the Chinese people and laid down the foundations for them to enjoy their basic rights. The first Marxists in China, including Chen Duxiu, Li Dazhao and Mao Zedong, already understood the close connection between liberation, independence and the people’s interests. They knew well that only through revolution could the proletariat and the working people establish and maintain their rights, and that only through revolution could China get back on its feet and its people emerge from poverty and humiliation.

The CPC was a party of the proletariat from the very beginning. Through its programs, proposals, and declarations, it made its mission clear and its stance known—to save the nation and secure human rights for its people. The original aspiration and the mission of the Party is to seek happiness for the people of China and rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. It is also the root of its stance on human rights. The CPC, with its people-centered position, has won the support of the Chinese people, making it the spine of the Chinese revolution.

## 3. Human Rights Protection During the New Democratic Revolution

In the New Democratic Revolution to liberate and free the people and make them masters of the country, the CPC always applied Marxist human rights theory to the Chinese context, pioneering a path of human rights predicated on the universality of human rights and one that is distinctively Chinese.

In the Great Revolution (1924-1927), the CPC took on improving people’s lives and protecting their right to subsistence as key objectives. In the Agrarian Revolutionary War (1927-1937), the CPC-led Chinese Soviet Government promulgated the Land Law, giving the peasants political rights as well as land to till, so that they could make a living. In the full-scale phase of the War of Resistance Against Japanese Aggression (1937-1945), the Party formulated a series of regulations and measures for human rights protection, and enacted tax and interest reduction policies in the Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia Border Region. In the War of Liberation (1945-1949), the Party emphasized protection of human rights and ensuring basic livelihoods for the people, formulated the Outline of the Land Law of China and carried out land reform

天花、霍乱等传染病肆虐，几乎无年不疫、无省不疫，加之医疗条件差，民众健康状况十分恶劣，旧中国人均寿命仅有35岁。新中国成立时，全国5.4亿人口中，文盲率高达80%，小学实际入学率不到20%，高等教育在校生仅有11.7万人。对于当时中国人民的悲惨遭遇，毛泽东曾指出，“中国人民的贫困和不自由的程度，是世界所少见的”。中国人民的生存权都无法得到保障，更遑论其他基本权利。

### (二) 中国共产党担负起救国救民使命

面对山河破碎、生灵涂炭，许多献身于民族进步事业的仁人志士发动了农民起义、洋务自救、维新改良、资产阶级革命等不同形式的救亡图存运动，但都没能使中国人民脱离被压迫被奴役的悲惨境地。实现民族独立、人民解放的重任，历史地落在了中国共产党肩上。

1921年7月，中国共产党第一次全国代表大会召开，正式宣告中国共产党成立。从此，中国革命进入了全新的发展阶段，中国人民的命运开始发生根本性转变，一条属于广大人民的人权保障之路开始铺就。中国最早的一批马克思主义者，如陈独秀、李大钊、毛泽东等，将民族解放、国家独立与人民切身利益紧密地联系在一起。他们深刻地认识到，只有通过革命，才能真正争取与维护无产阶级和劳动人民的权利，使中国摆脱积贫积弱，使中国人民摆脱苦难屈辱。

中国共产党自成立之日起，就以无产阶级政党的面貌出现，通过各种纲领、主张、宣言，鲜明地宣扬了救国救民和争取人权的立场与主张。为中国人民谋幸福，为中华民族谋复兴，是中国共产党人的初心和使命，也是中国共产党人权思想之本。中国共产党以鲜明的人民立场，赢得了中国人民的拥护和支持，成为领导中国革命的核心力量。

### (三) 新民主主义革命时期的人权保障实践

在领导人民争取自由解放、实现当家作主的新民主主义革命伟大斗争中，中国共产党始终将马克思主义人权理论同中国实际相结合，开创了既符合人权的普遍性原则又具有鲜明中国特色的人权保障之路。