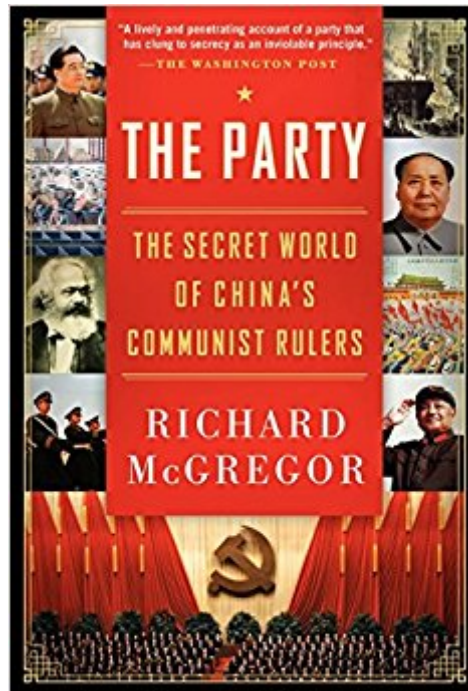




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# The Party: The Secret World Of China's Communist Rulers



## Synopsis

“Few outsiders have any realistic sense of the innards, motives, rivalries, and fears of the Chinese Communist leadership. But we all know much more than before, thanks to Richard McGregor’s illuminating and richly-textured look at the people in charge of China’s political machinery.... Invaluable.” —James Fallows, National Correspondent for The Atlantic  
The Party is Financial Times reporter Richard McGregor’s eye-opening investigation into China’s Communist Party, and the integral role it has played in the country’s rise as a global superpower and rival to the United States. Many books have examined China’s economic rise, human rights record, turbulent history, and relations with the U.S.; none until now, however, have tackled the issue central to understanding all of these issues: how the ruling communist government works. The Party delves deeply into China’s secretive political machine.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Starred Review. McGregor, a journalist at the Financial Times, begins his revelatory and scrupulously reported book with a provocative comparison between China’s Communist Party and the Vatican for their shared cultures of secrecy, pervasive influence, and impenetrability. The author pulls back the curtain on the Party to consider its influence over the industrial economy, military, and local governments. McGregor describes a system operating on a Leninist blueprint and deeply at odds with Western standards of management and transparency. Corruption and the

tension between decentralization and national control are recurring themes--and are highlighted in the Party's handling of the disturbing Sanlu case, in which thousands of babies were poisoned by contaminated milk powder. McGregor makes a clear and convincing case that the 1989 backlash against the Party, inexorable globalization, and technological innovations in communication have made it incumbent on the Party to evolve, and this smart, authoritative book provides valuable insight into how it has--and has not--met the challenge. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

"A masterful depiction of the party today. . . . McGregor illuminates the most important of the contradictions and paradoxes. . . . An entertaining and insightful portrait of China's secretive rulers." (The Economist) "A fascinating and ambitious book. . . . Revealing. . . . McGregor lays bare the secretive machinery of the party, how it operates far more pervasively in public life and commerce than many suspect." (Forbes) "McGregor does a persuasive job of sketching how communist the country really still is. . . . Anyone who wants to understand more about China would be well advised to pick up McGregor's book. (Newsweek) "As informative as it is entertaining. . . . China has been transformed. There is no denying it. The system that takes the credit is brilliantly described by McGregor." (The Financial Times) "Astute. . . . A sober, realistic book. . . . A readable guide to how China is governed." (Bloomberg) "Richard McGregor has penned a detailed look at the Chinese Communist Party that is must reading for U.S. officials and China affairs specialists who profess to be perplexed at why the regime in Beijing consistently operates like a Soviet-style communist dictatorship and not a Western-style democracy." (The Washington Times) "Fascinating. . . . The Party examines the intricate relationship between the Communist Party and the Chinese government, exposing how a political machine subverts the will to properly govern a billion people." (Esquire) "The Party: The Secret World of China's Communist Rulers is a careful, highly well-informed and entertaining account of China's ruling class, chronicling the country's 30-year rise to major economic power despite high levels of poverty." (The Associated Press) "A compelling exploration of the world's largest and most successful political machine." (Isabel Hilton, New Statesman) "Superb in its depiction and demystification of the most important force at work in China today. Essential, riveting guide to how the rising power really works." (Jonathan Fenby, author of The Penguin History of Modern China) "This is a marvellous and

finely written study of how China is really run, and how its strange but successful system of Leninist capitalism really works. It should be read by anyone doing business with or just trying to understand China. — (Bill Emmott, former editor of *The Economist*) — “Illuminating and richly-textured. . . . The Party will be invaluable for anyone trying to make sense of China’s future plans and choices. It has certainly enriched my own understanding of the country. — (James Fallows, National Correspondent for *The Atlantic*) — “Richard McGregor is one of the best foreign journalists who have ever reported from China. The Party is a fine contribution for those who want to know about the rising power they will face in the decades ahead. — (Ezra Vogel, Professor Emeritus, Harvard University) — “An engrossing read. . . . McGregor’s is a vivid narrative, sprinkled with humour and insightful analysis, of how the party has imprinted itself on almost every aspect of life in China, and how it has maintained its stranglehold on power. — (The South China Morning Post) — “An illuminating and important new book. . . . A lively and penetrating account of a party that, since its founding in Shanghai as a clandestine organization in 1921, has clung to secrecy as an inviolable principle. — (The Washington Post) — “An extraordinary book . . . with details never published before. . . . McGregor has done a terrific job of parting the curtains. . . . This book has come out at the right moment. — (The Sunday Times (London)) — “Masterful. . . . McGregor’s book is proof that for all of its secretive tendencies, the Party and its power can be usefully analyzed. . . . An accessible introduction to the Party’s power in today’s China. — (Ian Johnson, *The New York Review of Books*) — “Fascinating. . . . Illuminating. . . . Mr. McGregor guides readers through recent events in China, teasing out what each tells us about the Party’s role. . . . Reading this primer will help foreigners better navigate the hidden political shoals of the Chinese business world. — (The Wall Street Journal)

I spent the last four years living in China, serving as the president of a Chinese bank. That role took me to 44 cities all across China, where I met hundreds of government officials and Party members. I worked daily with the General Secretary of the bank’s Party Committee. During my time in China I read every major book by any foreigner who had lived and worked in China. Richard’s book, *The Party*, is the most insightful book I have encountered. If you wish to understand how China is run today and you only have time to read one book, then read this one.

This is one of the most well researched and chronicled books on the impact that the Communist Party has over all things in China. The author has meticulously researched (from Chinese and

non-Chinese sources) the topic and the major structures of one of the most closed, opaque political systems in the world. Even though the central leadership, standing committee memberships and politburo has changed (as of 2012), this is still highly relevant to many of the themes that the Party continues to struggle with and confront. This includes the growing middle class and income disparity, State-Owned versus Private Corporation governance, environmental issues, the major anti-corruption campaign underway. And this book helps understand why these dominate the party, and why the party behaves the way it does. And the author does this in a very effective manner - well organized, well researched, and well sourced. The chapters on the Shanghai Gang are also very informative as it allows the reader to understand the massive struggle Xi Jinping must of had (continues to have) in installing his key officials into key posts that will help him with his policy agenda. Highly recommend this for anyone doing business in China (or with Chinese companies), travelling or planning to live in China as this book provides a very well-rounded view of the key decision making body that is present throughout all aspects of life in this interesting country.

A good book on understanding how the Chinese communist party really works and why things are done the way they often are. It makes one think about how to feel about what the Chinese government does, proposes to other governments and so on. Unfortunately the book could have used a stern editor - some of it reads slowly to say the least, some of the details of examples are unnecessary or repetitious, and so on. So not a good bedtime read as one may fall asleep.

A very interesting and descriptive book about China. Things have changed in China but the media uses the same words such as "communists" and "dictators" as they did decades ago. The book describes the relaxation of state control over individuals and what it takes now to have the state crack down on an individual. The China media and the US media take the same approach to many news stories that are not politically correct. They let them die rather than censor them. After reading the book I would say that China is a democracy where only 10% of the people can vote and where the leaders have to work their way up as managers in different provinces for 30 years before they can hope to make it to top party positions. Then they share power and have to step down after two terms. The MSM calls China a 'dictatorship' but can't name the 'dictator.'

The subtitle might throw you off. This is not so much a book about individual personalities, although individual stories provide the basis for analysis. It's more about the institutional workings of a massive, nimble, confusing, calculating organization that influences the daily lives of over a billion

people. This book will give you a sense of the magnitude of exactly what the Chinese Community Party can do, how its role has changed, and simply how much you don't know about it. McGregor develops a clear opinion from the first page, and builds upon that image in every subsequent anecdote. Thus, the chapter of the People's Liberation Army stands not so much for itself, but how it reflects the dominance of the party. Along these lines, the book is relatively light on historical detail. It's more about individual stories and how they reflect greater trends. Don't look to this book for any comprehensive narrative. Think of it as a look inside the mind of a Chinese leader. If you are not already familiar with the history of the PRC, you could use some background. But this book will help put trends in context, giving you a basis for further studies about communist rule. Before you study isolated facts and specific leaders, it helps to have a book like this that gives you a picture of the underlying structure that defines and drives the party as a whole. The content itself is perhaps not even the book's strength. Rather it is the gripping style, intended to paint a picture and tell a story rather than lecture. Think of McGregor as a tutor, trying to teach you so you really understand. Ultimately, this is his great success: proving convincingly that the current party in power on the Mainland is persistent, flexible, and completely pervasive.

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