

**Document 16.8: Excerpts from “Deng Xiaoping,” by George J. Church, *Time*,
January 6, 1986**

Politically and culturally, that fight [over how much to engage in trade with the West] has waxed and waned. China is still a one-party dictatorship and Deng has no intention of letting it become anything else. Rights taken for granted in the U.S., such as freedom of speech and assembly, are strictly controlled; some limited freedom of religion has been granted. Even so, a revised constitution adopted in 1982 marked a step toward making China a society governed by law rather than the whim of party officials.

In other ways, too, the dictatorship is less oppressive. Deng has permitted a popular press to spring up. Hundreds of new publications have appeared all over China; they cannot criticize policy, but they print lurid exposes of prostitution, pornography, corruption and black-marketeering by party officials (indeed, they sometimes seem to report little else). Culturally, Deng in 1983 permitted officials to start a crackdown on writers and artists, in the guise of a campaign against "spiritual pollution," probably as a gesture toward conservatives concerned that the pace of change was too rapid. But Deng speedily announced that the campaign had gone too far and called it off, leaving citizens and party officials alike in a quandary over just what is permitted and what is not.

Source: George J. Church, “Deng Xiaoping,” *Time* 6 January 1986.