

GCSE Modern World History

Mao's China, c.1930–76

Focus

China is the most populous country in the world today, and is emerging as a superpower which many people predict will challenge the USA in years to come. In this chapter you will examine the immense changes which have affected China in the twentieth century.

- ◆ Part 1 examines how China became a Communist state in 1949 and the role of Mao in the triumph of Communism.
- ◆ Part 2 considers the creation of the Communist state in China and how Communist rule changed the lives of the Chinese people including the Great Leap Forward of 1958.
- ◆ Part 3 explores the reasons for and results of Mao's Cultural Revolution of the 1960s. You will evaluate the reputation of Mao Zedong: Did he create a cruel dictatorship in China? Why has he been cast as both a hero and a villain?
- ◆ In Part 4 you will look at relations between Communist China and the wider world and evaluate how far Communist China became a superpower by 1976.

This chapter covers

- ◆ OCR's *Mao's China, c1919–39* Paper 1 Depth Study
- ◆ Edexcel's *China 1945–76* Unit 4 Controlled Assessment Option CA4.

It is designed for use alongside these two books:



which you can order from <http://www.hoddereducation.co.uk>

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Activity

This timeline shows some of the main events you will cover in this chapter. On your own copy of the timeline add other events as you study the chapter.



Part 1 Why did China become a Communist state in 1949?

In medieval times, China had been a great civilisation. By the early twentieth century, however, it had fallen behind other great powers. The vast majority of China's people were peasant farmers, who grew their own food and paid rent to their landlords. They also had to work in the landlord's fields. The system was very similar to the feudal system in medieval Europe which you may have studied earlier in your History courses.

China had an emperor, but in reality the country was dominated by foreign powers, especially Japan, Britain and the USA. Britain, for example, controlled the port of Hong Kong.

SOURCE 1



A French cartoon from before the First World War. Britain, Germany, Russia, France and Japan are dividing up China. The caption reads: In China: The cake of kings and emperors.



Map of China in 1900 showing main provinces and features.

The Guomindang and the Communists

In 1911 the last emperor of China, who was only six years old, was overthrown in a revolution. China then collapsed into chaos as warlords divided the country up into local mini-kingdoms of their own. They recruited armies of local peasants to control their own areas.

The Guomindang or Nationalist Party was formed to unite China. It was led by Sun Yat-sen and proclaimed three principles:

SOURCE 3

Nationalism: to rid China of foreign interference and exploitation.

Democracy: to create a more modern system of government acceptable to the people of China.

Social advance: to bring about reforms in industry and everyday life and particularly to improve the position of Chinese peasants.

The Three Principles of the Guomindang.

Factfile

Chinese Communist Party

- Formed in 1921 with 57 members.
- Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai, who were both to hold great power in China in years to come, were among early leading figures.
- Their ultimate aim was to make China a Communist state in which the peasants and workers owned and ran farms, industries and businesses.
- From 1924 to 1927 they helped the Guomindang against the warlords. They organised strikes as well as taking part in the actual fighting.
- In the process their power and support rose dramatically and Mao rose to the top of the ranks of the party.
- From 1927 onwards they were at war with the Guomindang.
- Their army was known as the Red Army.

To start with, the Guomindang had little success. Sun Yat-sen, however, was impressed by what the Communists had achieved in Russia and in 1921 he allied the Guomindang with the newly founded Chinese Communist Party. Together they began to defeat the warlords one by one.

In 1925 Sun Yat-sen died and Chiang Kai-shek became leader. He continued to fight alongside the Communists but he was much less keen on them than Sun Yat-sen had been. He was alarmed at their growing power. Most of the Guomindang officers were landlords or came from the business classes. They were afraid that Communism would take away their wealth and power.

In 1927 Chiang defeated many of the warlords and then turned against the Communists. There was a bloody purge and many Communist leaders were killed. Mao Zedong was imprisoned but escaped to help rebuild the Communist Party and organise its support in the country regions.

In 1931 Chiang Kai-shek started a full-scale military campaign against the Communists. He cornered them in Jiangxi (see Source 4) but in 1934 they broke through Chiang's lines and the Communist Red Army made their celebrated 'Long March' to set up new Communist bases in Yanan province.

Profile

Mao Zedong



- ▶ Also known as Mao Tse-tung.
- ▶ Born in 1893. His father was a peasant farmer.
- ▶ Left school in 1918. Became a librarian in Peking. By this time he had already become interested in Communist ideas.
- ▶ In 1919 he joined the 'May the Fourth' Communist Movement.
- ▶ Started up Communist groups in Shanghai and by 1924 Mao had become a member of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party.
- ▶ Was imprisoned by the Guomindang in 1927 but escaped.
- ▶ His wife was killed by the Guomindang in 1930.
- ▶ In October 1934 he led 100,000 Communists on the 'Long March'.
- ▶ In 1935, while on the Long March, he was elected leader of the Communist Party. He remained leader until his death in 1976.

Factfile

How to pronounce the Chinese names

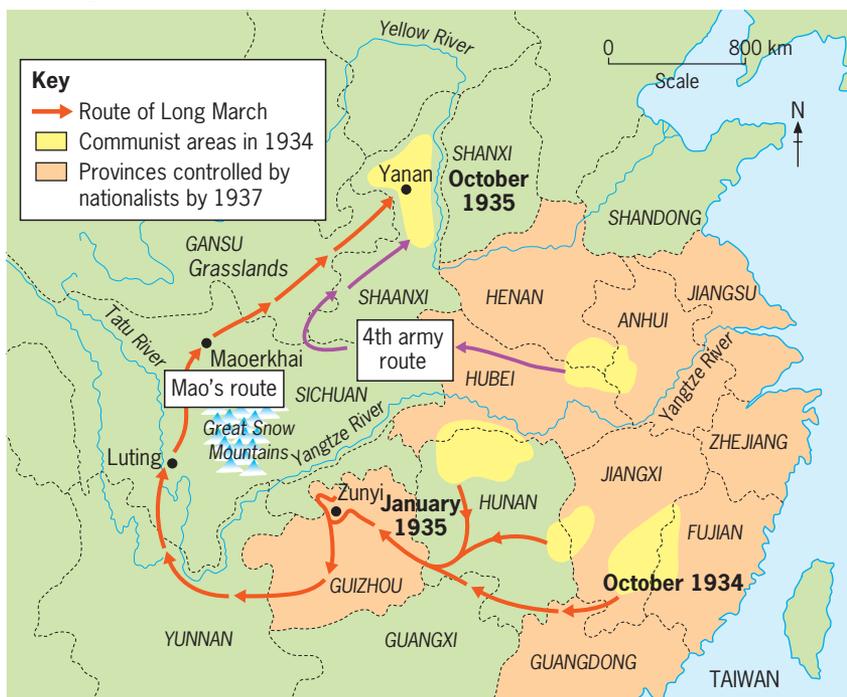
People

- ▶ Deng Xiaoping (Deng Shauping)
- ▶ Lin Biao (Lin Byou)
- ▶ Zhou Enlai aka Chou En-lai (Jo En-lie)
- ▶ Mao Zedong (Maow Dzuh-dong)
- ▶ Chiang Kai-shek (Chang Kie-shek)
- ▶ Liu Shao-qi (Lyoow Shaow-chee)
- ▶ Jiang Qing (Jyahn Ching)

Places

- ▶ Sichuan (Suh-chwann)
- ▶ Jiangxi (Jyang-she)

SOURCE 4



Map showing the Civil War and the Long March.

The Long March

The Long March, which was in fact a strategic retreat, was one of the most extraordinary events in military history. Mao marched some 100,000 men over 3,000 kilometres, fighting a guerrilla campaign against the Nationalist troops on the way. Though in many respects it was a disaster – the Red Army lost 90 per cent of its men – it was a propaganda success. As they marched, the Red Army spread Communist ideas among Chinese peasants. By 1936 everyone had heard of the Long March and of the new Communist leader Mao Zedong.

SOURCE 5

The Long March is a manifesto. It declares to the world that the Red Army is an army of heroes and that Chiang Kai-shek and the like are as nothing. It shows Chiang's complete failure. The Long March also tells the 200 million people in 11 provinces that only the road of the Red Army leads to their freedom. It has sown many seeds in 11 provinces which will bear fruit and yield a crop in the future. To sum up, the Long March has ended in our victory and the enemy's defeat.

Mao commenting on the Long March soon after the event.

The Long March also brought important changes to the Communist Party which made it much more effective. Mao was not the leader of the Communists at the start of the Long March, but in January 1935 Communist leaders on the March elected him to head the Party. The Communists were fortunate to find an able leader in these difficult times. But Mao was not their only asset. They were fortunate to have a group of talented leaders who worked together effectively during this period. These leaders included:

- Deng Xiaoping: a dedicated Communist who had tried to establish a Communist base in Guanxi province in 1929 and then served in the Jiangxi Soviet.
- Lin Biao: a brilliant general who had trained in the Guomindang armies.
- Zhou Enlai: a widely travelled Communist activist who was especially skilled as a diplomat and negotiator.

China and the Communist Party would need these talented individuals in the difficult years to come.

The impact of the Second World War on China

You have already investigated the Japanese invasion of Manchuria. In 1936 the Japanese took advantage of the civil war between the Guomindang and the Communists and advanced further into China.

SOURCE 6



A baby sits in the wreckage of Shanghai Railway station after a Japanese bombing raid.

SOURCE 7

Thursday, Dec 16th: At our staff conference at four we could hear the shots of the execution squad nearby; it was a day of unspeakable terror for the poor refugees and horror for us . . .

Friday, Dec 17th: Robbery, murder, rape continued unabated. A rough estimate would be at least a thousand women raped last night and during the day. One woman had her five-month-old infant deliberately smothered to stop its crying while he raped her. Resistance means the bayonet. The hospital is rapidly filling up with the victims of Japanese cruelty and barbarity. Bob Wilson, our only surgeon, has his hands more than full and has to work into the night. Rickshaws, cattle, pigs, donkeys, often the sole means of livelihood of the people, are taken from them.

Saturday, Dec 18th: Wilson reported a boy of five years of age brought to the hospital after having been stabbed with a bayonet five times, once through his abdomen; a man with eighteen bayonet wounds, a woman with seventeen cuts on her face and several on her legs.

Extracts from reports on the rape of Nanjing. The reports were collected by HLJ Timperley, China correspondent for the Manchester Guardian.

SOURCE 8

My grandparents were on the verge of starvation. Much of what was produced locally was forcibly exported to Japan. The large Japanese army took most of the remaining rice. The main food was acorn meal which tasted and smelled revolting . . .

When local children passed a Japanese in the street they had to bow and make way. Japanese children would often stop local children and slap them for no reason at all . . .

The Japanese set up a system of neighbourhood control. They made the local big shots the heads of these units and these neighbourhood bosses collected taxes and kept a round-the-clock watch for lawless elements. It was a form of gangsterism. The Japanese offered large rewards for turning people in . . .

[A friend of the author's mother was caught with a book by a banned Chinese writer.] Two days later the whole school was marched to a barren snow-covered stretch of ground outside the west gate. Local residents had also been summoned there. The children were told they were to witness 'the punishment of an evil person who disobeys great Japan'. Suddenly my mother saw her friend being hauled by Japanese guards to a spot right in front of her. The girl was in chains and could hardly walk. She had been tortured and her face was swollen so that my mother could barely recognise her. The Japanese soldiers lifted their rifles. There was a crack of bullets and the girl's body slumped into the snow.

Four extracts from *Wild Swans*, written by Jung Chang in 1991. The authors parents were schoolchildren during the war.

- 1 Study Sources 6–8. Which events could be described as normal acts of war and which would you describe as war crimes?
- 2 How might Japanese actions have been used for propaganda purposes by the Chinese?

The Nationalist war effort

The Japanese invasion was an ideal opportunity for Chiang Kai-shek to rally the Chinese people behind him. When the invasion began in 1936, however, Chiang's instinct was to ignore the Japanese and concentrate on destroying the Communists. His view was that 'The Japanese are a disease of the skin; it can be cured. The Communists are a disease of the soul; it affects the whole body.' But he soon had to change this view. His own officers in the Guomindang forced him to join with the Communists and fight the Japanese.

The early campaigns went badly. The well-equipped, well-led modern Japanese armies swept the Nationalist forces aside and penned them up in the mountains of Sichuan province. Chiang set up a new capital at Chungking late in 1938 and as he retreated, his troops destroyed crops, villages and equipment so that they would be of no use to the invaders. This 'scorched earth' policy failed to stop the Japanese, who got their supplies by rail and sea, but it brought misery to millions of Chinese.

SOURCE 9

On 12 November 1938 the city of Changsha was in great part destroyed by fire, not started by the Japanese but by the Guomindang themselves. In their stupid scorched earth policies they laid waste to all about them. This was more harmful to their own people than to the enemy. In the spring the Yellow River dykes had been breached by order of Chiang Kai-shek to flood the land and stop the Japanese. It had not stopped them, though it did flood the land, and a million Chinese peasants were drowned.

Han Suyin, a nurse in China in the late 1930s.

- 1 According to Han Suyin, how effective were Chiang's tactics?
- 2 Han Suyin took part in the Long March. Does this change your view on this source?

The sole Japanese weakness was a lack of troops. They could capture any city or territory but they did not have enough forces to hold every area they took. This provided Chiang with an ideal opportunity to strike at them in a mobile campaign. In fact, morale and enthusiasm in Chungking for taking on the Japanese was high in 1938–39. His situation seemed to improve when the Second World War broke out in 1939. Then he began receiving supplies from the British through Burma. This supply route was cut in 1941 but by then the USA had joined the war. The Americans flew in millions of tons of arms, equipment and supplies, and sent military advisers to train Chiang's officers in effective warfare against the Japanese. The chief US officer was General Stilwell. You can see them together in Source 10.

SOURCE 10



US General Stilwell, Chiang Kai-shek and Madame Chiang in a publicity photograph.

Despite all these promising opportunities, Chiang squandered them. He opted for a defensive strategy which frustrated his own supporters and his foreign allies. Chiang avoided confrontation with the Japanese and stockpiled supplies, often holding back supplies even from his own forces. The usual explanation for this is that he was storing up resources to fight the Communists once the war against the Japanese was over. But, if that was Chiang's policy, it backfired.

- He lost the support of his own forces and the Chinese population by not fighting the Japanese.
- If he had used the stockpiled supplies to take back territory from the Japanese his reputation would have improved and the Americans would have provided him with more resources.
- He frustrated Stilwell by blocking his attempts to train Guomindang officers – Chiang was afraid of developing an efficient officer corps in the Guomindang in case they tried to overthrow him. By the time Stilwell left China he and Chiang absolutely hated each other. In 1944 an American mission even went to meet Mao Zedong to consider the possibility of providing US support against the Japanese.

On top of all of these shortcomings was the fact that, in the areas it did control, Guomindang rule was chaotic and often corrupt. Discipline within the Guomindang forces was poor and despite all the wartime hardships the Nationalists still made the peasants pay taxes. Chiang's right-hand man, Tai Li, dealt ruthlessly with any protests. For many peasants, life under the Guomindang was not much different from life under Japanese occupation.

SOURCE 11



Communist cartoon criticising Nationalist taxes.

SOURCE 12

- 3 Why do you think the cartoon (Source 11) would have generated support for the Communists?
- 4 Why do you think the author of Source 12 switched sides?

Nearly everyone in the Guomindang army was on the make. Officers fiddled their accounts, drawing pay for twice the men they really commanded and keeping the extra for themselves. Army stores were sold on the black market. The only things the Guomindang seemed to think of were food, drink and women.

A Nationalist officer who later switched to the Communists in 1945.

Activity

During the war against the Japanese the US press and media portrayed Chiang as a hero. Imagine you are an American reporter in China and you have discovered a story different from the official version. Report your story back to your editor at home. It could be a radio broadcast, a newsreel or an article in a journal or newspaper.

The Communist war effort

The war record of the Communists contrasted sharply with the Nationalists' performance. Unlike Chiang, Mao seemed determined to take positive action to drive the Japanese out. From 1936 to 1939 the Communists built up their forces under the brilliant leadership of Lin Biao. They had virtually no resources – at first they were armed mainly with spears! But they knew the countryside and the peasants and they made excellent use of guerrilla tactics. They cut telegraph wires, blew up railways and surprised Japanese troops in ambushes, capturing their weapons.

SOURCE 13



Early days of the Red Army. Although they had very poor equipment they had strong discipline.

- 5 Why did the Communists have to use guerrilla tactics?
- 6 List the factors which helped the Communists gain support from the peasants.

SOURCE 14

The war was the period when the Communist Party really came into its own. Their base area, centring on Yanan in Shaanxi province, was the first area where the Party had ever been able to establish a reasonably secure and stable government. The Party's relations with the peasants were good, and it was not troubled by serious internal conflict. When the Japanese threatened the cities on the coast, a significant number of educated Chinese went to Yanan instead of Chiang's capital in Chungking; their education and skills proved very valuable. There were no ostentatious luxuries, even for the top leaders. Unselfish dedication to the cause seemed the general rule. The period 1937 to 1947 became known as a golden age.

An extract from *Modern China: A History* by Edwin Moise, published in 1994.

SOURCE 15

Party members should go among the peasants and lead the people in the fight for their own well-being. They should organise the people into unions, peasants' associations, women's leagues, youth corps, children's leagues and self-defence armies. All this to fight against the Japanese and improve the living conditions.

Wartime instructions from the Chinese Communist Party to its members.

Guerilla warfare

Mao described the Red Army as the 'fish who swam in the sea', the sea being China's peasants. The peasants supported the Communists from the start. The Red Army lived in the villages with the peasants. They taught children to spy on the Japanese while pretending to play in the fields. When they warned the villagers that Japanese soldiers were coming, the villagers would bury food and tools and hide their cattle. They laid mines and hid themselves in caves or tunnels under the village. The Japanese soldiers never knew what they could touch in these empty villages. An old plough, a parcel, even a dead cow might explode.

The Japanese responded to these guerrilla tactics with vicious reprisals. They burned villages and crops and slaughtered millions of peasants, but their tactics actually worked in the Communists' favour, confirming the peasants' hatred of the Japanese.

Mao's Red Army had all the qualities which Chiang and his officers seemed to lack. The Communists had a core of dedicated and able leaders who were not corrupt and who treated the peasants with courtesy and respect. As they taught the peasants to fight, they also taught them about Communist beliefs and ideas.

In the early stages of the war Mao was prepared to work with landlords and the richer peasants, even though he regarded these people as enemies of the Communists and the ordinary peasants. As the war went on the Communists became more secure and they began to put their ideas into practice.

- The Communists introduced Rent Reduction Laws. At first they were not always enforced but by the end of the war landlords who had charged rents higher than the limit had to pay back the extra money they had taken.
- The rent limits were reduced from 37.5 per cent of the crop (early in the war) to 22.5 per cent of the crop by the end of the war.
- Landlords and rich peasants had to pay land taxes and also pay back taxes they had managed to avoid in the past.

By 1945 Mao had effectively driven the Japanese out of large areas of the Chinese countryside, confining them to their army bases and the major cities. Estimates vary but Mao probably controlled up to one-sixth of the Chinese countryside and had the loyalty of over 100 million Chinese.

Focus Task

How did the Second World War help the Communists?

Draw your own copy of this diagram. Use the information on pages 5–8 to add points to each shape. When you have done this, draw lines between points which you think are connected.



SOURCE 16

Chiang was no great tyrant, only a petty one; he failed not because he was Caesar or killed too many people, but because he killed too few of the right people; he never understood his worst enemies were inside his own camp. Chiang was not resolute, only obstinate; not wise, only obsolete; not disciplined, only repressed; not original, only a scavenger among the relics of the past; not ruthless, merely vain – as none knew better than the greedy parasites who surrounded and finally consumed him.

American journalist Edgar Snow writing about Chiang Kai-shek. Snow reported on events in India and China throughout the 1930s and 1940s.

SOURCE 17



Mao Zedong arriving in the Chinese capital Beijing (Peking) in 1949. The Guomindang commander surrendered the city without a fight and became a minister in Mao's government.

Focus Task

How did China become a Communist state?

Write a report to explain this event. Your report should be divided into two sections:

- 1 The successes of the Communists
 - 2 The failings of the Nationalists
- For each section you should consider:
- ◆ the strengths and weaknesses in 1936
 - ◆ the war record of each group
 - ◆ relations between each side and the Chinese people
 - ◆ relations between each side and the foreign powers
 - ◆ the qualities of each leader.

The Civil War

Japan surrendered in August 1945 after the Americans dropped two atomic bombs on Japanese cities. The end of the war took the Communists and the Nationalists by surprise and Chiang was concerned that the Japanese troops (along with their vital weapons and equipment) would surrender to the Communists, because his own Nationalist forces were stuck in the mountains. This of course was exactly what Mao had in mind.

Despite the obvious support for the Communists the Allies decided that Chiang should be reinstated as ruler of China. Even Stalin agreed to this, despite the fact that Mao was a Communist leader; some historians believe that Stalin did not want a rival as the world's leading Communist figure. Allied planes ferried Nationalist forces to the cities and military bases where they accepted the surrender of the Japanese troops and set about re-establishing Nationalist rule.

The American General George Marshall tried to get the two sides to cooperate but within a short time a new civil war began in China. This time it was a fight to the finish. At first Chiang was confident – he had more men, masses of American equipment and he was expecting American aid.

Mao simply used the same tactics that worked against the Japanese, and, because the Nationalists were seen as a party of landlords, the Red Army kept the support of the peasants. It even gained the support of the middle classes and intellectuals who were sick of the corruption of Chiang's rule. By 1947 the Red Army was known as the People's Liberation Army (PLA) and the tide of civil war was beginning to turn in the Communists' favour. Although Chiang captured Mao's base at Yen-an, Mao had in fact already abandoned it. Crucially, the Americans refused to continue supplying Chiang because they did not feel it was appropriate to take sides in a civil war.

Even Chiang's advantages in troops and equipment began to disappear. Huge numbers of nationalist troops and officers began defecting to the PLA, taking their equipment with them. They were no longer prepared to put up with the misery and corruption of Chiang's rule. The PLA doubled in size and now had the jeeps, armoured cars and artillery to fight the Nationalist troops in the open. By mid-1948 many of the important eastern provinces were in Communist hands. By the end of 1949 Shanghai fell to the Communists and the Nationalists were driven out of China altogether. Taking a vast amount of treasure with him, Chiang fled to Formosa (Taiwan) with a small but loyal group of advisers and soldiers. China had become a Communist Republic.

SOURCE 18



The Communist takeover of China.

Part 2 China under the Communists 1949–65

Rebuilding China

For more than 30 years China had been at war. Millions had died. For 20 of those years Mao himself had been at war or on the run. In the conflict he had lost his first wife, his children and many of his comrades. In October 1949 he announced his vision for a new peaceful China.

In theory, the new republic was governed by a coalition of the Communists with a number of smaller parties. In practice power lay with Chairman Mao and the Communist Prime Minister Zhou Enlai. Mao put his plans into operation through Party workers in each local area.

Rebuilding China after foreign occupation and civil war was a huge challenge. China was backward and its system of government was in chaos. There was little industry. Most of it was in Manchuria and had been destroyed by the Russians when they 'liberated' the region from the Japanese. They had simply dismantled factories and machines and transported them back to Russia. Unemployment was high and there were food shortages. In some country areas life expectancy was only about 40 years. There was also raging inflation.

From the 30 years he had spent trying to spread Communist ideas among the peasants, Mao was keenly aware that Chinese people disliked change. Nevertheless, he had already worked wonders with the peasants during the Civil War. He knew that they were willing and hard-working and if he could keep their loyalty then he felt he could achieve anything.

SOURCE 1

We announce the setting up of the People's Republic of China. Our nation will from now on enter the large family of peace-loving and freedom-loving nations of the world. It will work bravely to create its own civilisation and happiness and will at the same time promote world peace and freedom. Our nation will never again be insulted. We have stood up.

Mao speaking in 1949.

The Agrarian Reform Law

In 1950 Mao introduced the Agrarian Reform Law. He sent his Communist Party workers into each village to enforce it. They shared out village land between the peasants. They also encouraged peasants to put landlords on trial in so-called 'People's Courts' (see Sources 2 and 3).

At these trials landlords were accused of such things as charging high rents or mistreating their tenants. Though many of them were let off, others were imprisoned or executed. Party workers helped set up the courts but it was the peasants who ran them and made the decisions. This further increased support for Mao.

SOURCE 2



Huang Chin-chi was found guilty at this 'people's tribunal' of being a despotic landlord. He was shot on 17 January 1953.

- 1 Study Source 3. What does it reveal about how landlords had treated the peasants?
- 2 What role did the Communist Party activists play?
- 3 How would an event like this affect peasants' views of the Communists?

SOURCE 3

One feeling animated them all – vengeance! They wanted vengeance! They wanted to give vent to their hatred, the suffering of the oppressed since their ancestor's times, the hatred of thousands of years; all this resentment they directed against him. They would have liked to tear him with their teeth.

The cadres could not stop everyone jumping onto the stage. With blows and curses the crowd succeeded in dragging him down from the stage and then more people swarmed towards him. Some crawled over the heads and shoulders of those in front.

Schemer Qian's silk gown was torn. His shoes had fallen off, the white paper hat had been trampled underfoot. All semblance of order was gone and it looked as though he was going to be beaten to death, when Yumin remembered Comrade Pin's last instructions and pushed his way into the crowd. Having no other way of stopping them, he shielded Qian with his body, and shouted 'Don't be in such a hurry to beat him to death! We've got to ask the county authorities!' Then the militiamen started checking the people.

The crowd was furious at seeing Yumin shelter Schemer Qian. They pressed forward together. Yumin was considerably knocked about but still he said to them: 'I swear, there was a time I was afraid we couldn't get the better of him! Now you want to beat him to death, of course I'm pleased. I've long wanted to beat him to death to clean up our district! Only, there's been no order from our superiors and I don't dare. I daren't take the responsibility. A man can only be executed with the county court's approval. I'm asking you to delay it for a few days. Do it as a favour for me! Don't kill him yet; we'll punish him suitably later.'

[The court then discussed the case. They decided not to execute him.]

'Thanks to the mercy of the liberated gentlemen, my unworthy life has been spared ...'

'What? I don't understand.' Another voice from the crowd interrupted Qian. 'We liberated gentlemen aren't going to pass all this literary stuff. Just put it briefly: say your dog's life has been spared.'

'Yes, spare your dog's life!' the rest agreed.

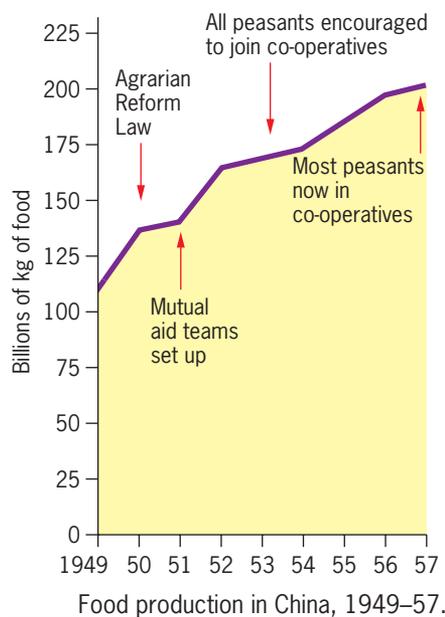
Qian had to go on: 'Spare my dog's life. In future I must change my former evil ways completely. If I transgress in the slightest or oppose the masses, I shall be put to death. This statement is made by the local despot, Qian, and signed in the presence of the masses. August 3.'

The presidium asked the crowd to discuss it, but very few further amendments were proposed, although a few people still felt he was getting off too lightly and they ought to beat him some more.

Schemer Qian was allowed to go back. He was only permitted to live in Yi's house for the time being. All his property apart from his land was to be sealed up immediately by the peasants' association. As to the question of how much should be left to him, that was left to the land assessment committee to decide.

An extract from *The Sun Shines over the Sangkan River*, a novel by Ding Ling, published in 1948 and based on scenes the author witnessed while travelling with her husband.

SOURCE 4



SOURCE 5

In 1951 we set up a mutual aid team. The work went well, but there were lots of quarrels about whose land should be worked on first. It was difficult to solve all these problems. Some said 'Why should his field be taken first? I've got a bigger crop. It ought to be my turn now.' Whatever we did this went on. So we then began to talk about forming a peasant's co-operative.

A Chinese peasant talking in 1953.

The Co-operatives

Land reform made Mao popular but it did not solve his biggest problem. China's population was rising quickly but food production was not. Food production had to rise to avoid famine. Mao's first step was for peasants to form mutual aid teams. Peasants worked on each other's land, fertilising, killing pests or harvesting so that each family's plot would become more productive.

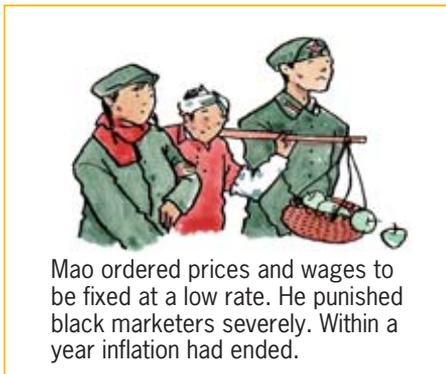
As you can see from Source 4 the mutual aid teams did help increase production – but this did not happen quickly enough.

From 1953 Mao encouraged peasants to form co-operatives. Under this system land was jointly owned so one large crop could be grown efficiently. The co-operative's resources could be pooled to buy equipment, fertilisers and seeds. There was opposition from many peasants who did not want to give up the private land they had fought for, but local Communist workers pressurised them to join co-operatives. By 1957 well over 90 per cent of China's peasants belonged to co-operatives.

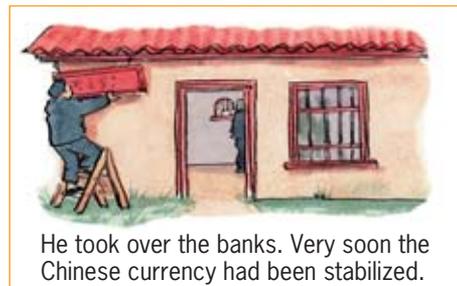
Changing industry

When the Communists took over China they were faced by economic and industrial chaos. The first task was to tackle this chaos.

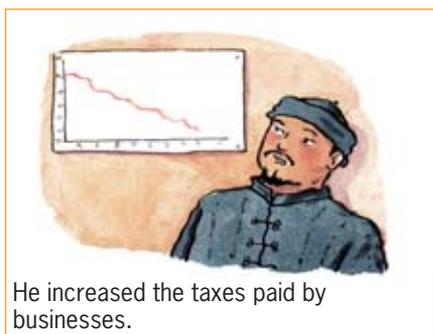
SOURCE 6



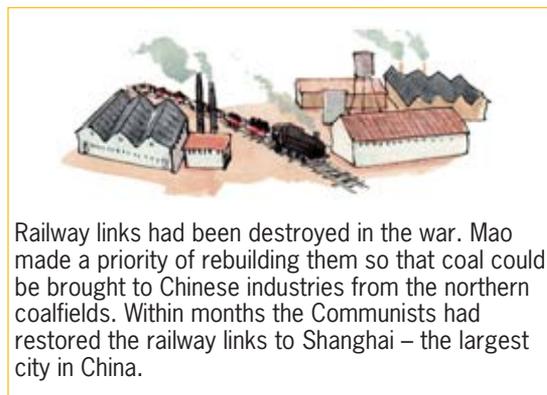
Mao ordered prices and wages to be fixed at a low rate. He punished black marketers severely. Within a year inflation had ended.



He took over the banks. Very soon the Chinese currency had been stabilized.



He increased the taxes paid by businesses.



Railway links had been destroyed in the war. Mao made a priority of rebuilding them so that coal could be brought to Chinese industries from the northern coalfields. Within months the Communists had restored the railway links to Shanghai – the largest city in China.

Mao's economic and industrial reforms.

SOURCE 7

It will take many years to raise China from her low economic position. China must use elements of urban and rural capitalism which help the national economy. Our present policy is to control not eliminate capitalism.

Mao speaking in the early 1950s.

The Five-Year Plan 1953–57

Solving the existing problems was not enough. Mao wanted China to become an industrial superpower. At first he moved slowly. Then in 1953 all businesses were taken over by the government. It planned and organised what should be produced although the owners remained as managers.

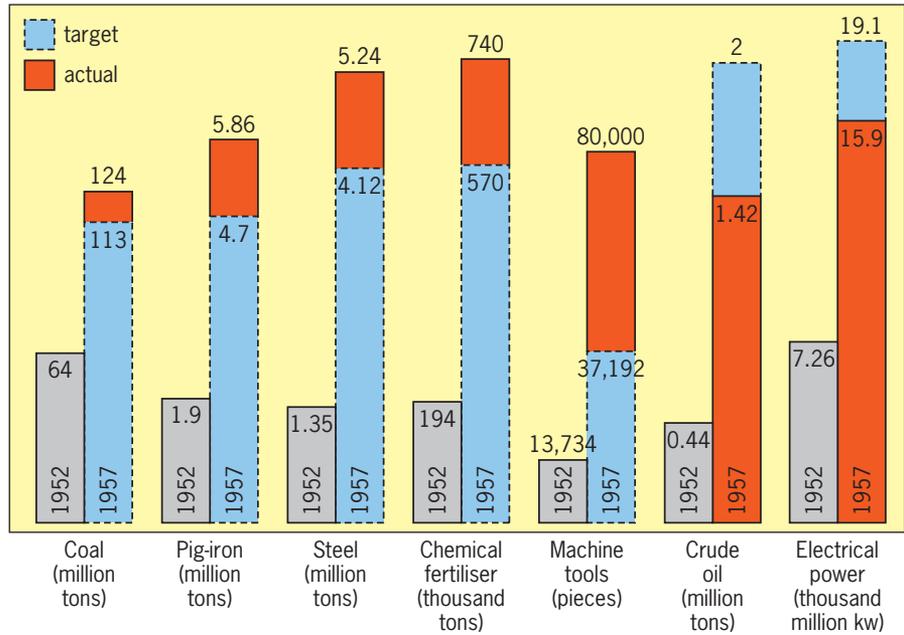
In 1953 Mao also began the first Five-Year Plan. With the help of the USSR he began an ambitious programme to build new industries. Thousands of Russian scientists and engineers supervised millions of Chinese on almost 700 major projects. At the same time thousands of Chinese students were sent for training in Soviet universities and colleges.

The focus was on heavy industries – steel, coal, chemicals. The plan was that these would provide the raw materials to build planes, trains and engines which would improve transport throughout China. Mao put the new factories in small towns rather than in the old industrial cities. This was partly so they would be near newly discovered raw materials but also so that new industries could start 'from scratch' without 'old ways' interfering with Mao's new ideas.

The Five-Year Plan achieved astounding results. The highly motivated Chinese workers actually surpassed all of the targets for the Five-Year Plan. In five years China was criss-crossed with railways which moved vital goods and raw materials over vast distances. The population of China's towns and cities soared as peasants moved to the jobs created in the new industries.

- 1 Why was the emphasis of the Five-Year Plan on heavy industry?
- 2 Why do you think Mao used help from the USSR?

SOURCE 8



Activity

Source 8 is to be used to promote the successes of Mao's reforms. Write a caption to go with it, or use it to design a propaganda poster.

Industrial production in 1952 and 1957. Although historians now question the accuracy of these figures, contemporary observers agree that the achievements were still impressive.

3 What do you think was the purpose of the reforms shown in Source 9?

Social reforms

During the 1950s Mao attempted to modernise and reform many other aspects of life in China.

SOURCE 9

Health care became free. Medicine was not very advanced but the emphasis was on prevention.



Cities were cleaned up. Residents had to form committees to tidy up the streets. In Shanghai there was a campaign against rats. Each family member had to produce one rat's tail a week as evidence of his or her contribution.



There was a literacy drive. Party workers taught villagers to read and write and at the same time taught them Maoist Communism. As peasants came to markets they had to pass 'literacy checkpoints' manned by Communist officials. The result was that by the mid-1960s over 90 per cent of China's population had a basic grasp of reading and writing.

Education was improved. China's growing industries needed a better-educated workforce. However, Mao was only interested in basic education. He was suspicious of universities and colleges and regarded people with a university education as enemies of Communism.



For centuries women had virtually no rights in China. Female babies might be drowned. Girls could be sold as servants and prostitutes. Marriages were arranged for them. Mao banned marriages and said 'the old system which made women the servants of their men is now abolished'.

Mao made divorce easier. Women could divorce men, not just the other way around.

He also planned nurseries so mothers could more easily join the great work which needed to be done in China.



Many businesses and all the banks came under state control.



Focus Task

What was the impact of the communist reforms?

Choose one of the following characters and explain one thing which changed for each of them under Mao's reforms.



Peasant



Landlord



Woman

**Control**

Chinese society was closely controlled. Mao did not want people to think independently. He used his loyal Party workers and 'propagandists' to spread Communist ideas. In 1951 Mao had 1.5 million propagandists. In workplaces such as factories up to 10 per cent of the workforce were propagandists. They flooded China with propaganda. They put up posters and ran discussion groups, accusation groups (when people got together to talk about their own and others' failures to be good Communists), story-telling groups and memory meetings (when people recalled the sufferings of the old days before the Communists took over).

SOURCE 10

My mother's two comrades insisted that she had behaved in a 'bourgeois' [anti-revolutionary] manner. They said she had not wanted to go to the country to help collect food. When she pointed out that she had gone, in line with the Party's wishes, they retorted: 'Ah but you didn't really want to go!' Then they accused her of enjoying privileged food – cooked moreover by her mother at home – and of becoming ill more than most pregnant women. Mrs Mi also criticised her because her mother had made clothes for the baby. 'Such a bourgeois waste,' she said. 'Why can't she just wrap her up in old clothes like everyone else?' The fact she had shown her sadness that my grandmother had to leave was singled out as definitive proof that she put family first. A serious offence . . . At the end of all this my mother's two comrades voted against full Party membership for her.

From *Wild Swans* by Jung Chang. The writer is describing the experiences of her mother in 1950 in the early days after the Communist revolution.

Ordinary people would have to attend three or four such meetings every fortnight. People who were thought to need more 're-education' had meetings even more often.

Each propagandist had targets to meet and they competed with each other to spread more propaganda. They got everyone around them involved in producing propaganda. The most common form of propaganda was the wall poster. In 1957 and 1958 students at the University of Beijing produced half a million wall posters attacking waste and intolerance in Chinese society. They produced so many that they ran out of wall! So posters were hung from strings across the ceilings of corridors and rooms around the entire university.

SOURCE 11

It is good to use wall posters in our campaign in factories. The more we use, the better. If you have 10,000 sheets in your plant that is first class. If you have 5,000 sheets that is second class. 2,000 sheets means third class. If you have only a few scattered sheets here and there, then you don't count at all.

Instructions to propagandists in 1958.

Propaganda was at every corner. Roadside loudspeakers broadcast radio programmes reporting the latest successes of the Communist reform programmes as well as advice on how to be neat, how to cook sweet potatoes, where not to spit and how to defeat American imperialists. All newspapers were controlled by the Communist Party. The government made propaganda films. During the Korean War, propagandists competed with each other to get the most people to see the government's anti-American film *Resist-America, Aid-Korea*.

One aim of propaganda was to expose anyone who might oppose Communist rule. Foreigners, missionaries or businessmen who might spread anti-Communist ideas were forced to leave the country. If Chinese people showed resistance to the deluge of propaganda, they were seen as opponents and the pressure on them was increased. They would be denounced at accusation meetings. Party workers might set up loudspeakers outside their homes and yell out their alleged crimes all night. Most gave in under pressure. Those who did not were sent to labour camps to be re-educated, or were sent to live with the peasants to learn from their ways. Thousands were killed.

People learned to hide their true feelings. They learned to say and do what the Party wanted them to say and do. It was partly out of loyalty to Mao – who genuinely inspired ordinary Chinese people – yet partly out of fear of being singled out as anti-Communist. If Mao wanted them to work harder they worked harder. If he wanted them to accuse each other of crimes they did so. If Mao took a dislike to sparrows – which he did – the loyal Chinese people followed suit and waged a long battle against the sparrow.

SOURCE 12



A Beijing (Peking) students putting up revolutionary posters.



B A poster from the 1950s.

SOURCE 13



Workers entering a factory under a Maoist banner.

- 1** Historians cannot agree whether the Hundred Flowers was:
- a)** a genuine attempt to find out what people thought; or
 - b)** a devious way of flushing out the opposition.
- What do you think?

SOURCE 14

Why can't 600 million poor people by their own efforts create a socialist country which is rich and strong? The wealth of society is created by the workers and the peasants, the working intellectuals. If they take their destiny in their own hands and energetically tackle their problems instead of evading them, there is no difficulty in the world they cannot overcome.

Mao, speaking about the Great Leap Forward.

- 2** Explain in your own words what Mao is saying in Source 14.

SOURCE 16



A peasant working a home-made grain thresher.

The Great Leap Forward, 1958

In 1956 Mao announced a period of debate and reflection on how China was being run. He suggested that open debate would lead to better ways of running government. He said 'let a hundred flowers bloom', but he was then deeply upset when his government was bombarded with posters, speeches and books which criticised it. In June 1957 the Hundred Flowers period ended abruptly. Soon large numbers of critics were arrested, re-educated or lost their jobs.

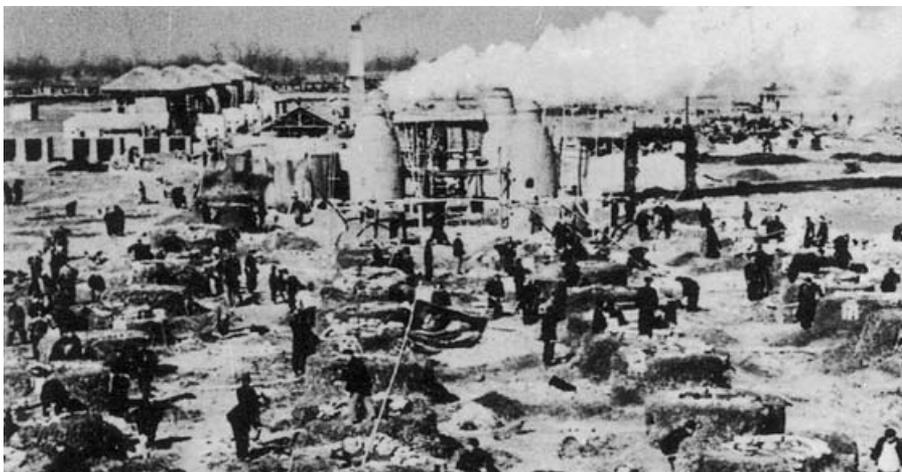
Mao believed that China had become backward-looking again and needed a new revolution to inspire the people. In his words, China needed to make a Great Leap Forward. Instead of the vast industrial projects of the Five-Year Plan, he wanted ordinary people in the towns and villages to get involved in small-scale industry. The farmer's co-operatives were to be joined together as communes and each commune would have industrial as well as farming targets. The ordinary people would create a powerful industrial nation. In 15 years Chinese steel production would be equal to that of the UK.

The communes abolished private land and property altogether. Family life was replaced by shared canteens, barracks and dormitories. Within each commune were brigades of 600–1,000 people. Brigades were divided into teams of 50–200 who would plan and carry out the work which needed to be done.

Some members continued to work in the fields. Others mined coal or iron ore. Others smelted it in crude backyard furnaces. In the meantime their colleagues were building schools, hospitals and roads while others improved the land with irrigation or terracing projects. As with the co-operatives there was opposition and resistance but the process continued all the same. By the end of 1958 most Chinese citizens belonged to one of China's 40,000 communes.

SOURCE 15

A



B



Blast furnaces in a Chinese village built under the Great Leap Forward. **A** shows the furnaces being built. **B** shows them being used.

SOURCE 17

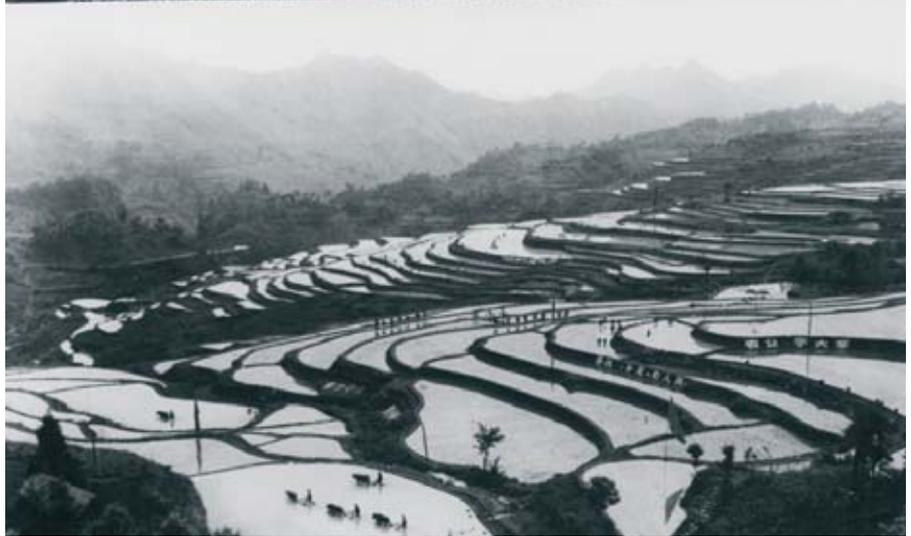


SOURCE 18

Dazhai is famous because of the way its 365 people have set an example by carving out terraced fields from steep, stony hillsides. They have done this through sheer hard work using only simple tools. Dazhai is very poor in many ways, but there is no doubt that it is progressing very fast. It has a special feeling about it.

A report on the Dazhai Commune by Colin Mackerras who lived in China in the 1960s.

- 3 What impression do you get of the Great Leap Forward from Sources 14–17?
- 4 Draw up two lists showing the reasons for and the results of the failure of the Great Leap Forward.



Chinese peasants digging terraces and terraced fields in China.

Focus Task

Did Chinese people benefit from Communist rule?

Work in pairs.

One of you draw up a list of ways in which you think Chinese people benefited from Communist rule; the other list ways in which you think they did not benefit.

Compare the two lists, then write a balanced answer to the question above. You should include evidence from the sources of pages 10–17.

At first it appeared that the Great Leap Forward was another triumph for Mao. Steel production doubled in a year. But the Great Leap Forward was actually a disastrous failure. In 1960 Mao quarrelled with the new Soviet leader, Khrushchey, who then withdrew his advisers from China. The Chinese people were willing but they did not have the technical expertise to make the plan work. The massive amount of iron produced from the backyard furnaces turned out to be brittle, impure and almost unusable.

In farming the story was not much better. Peasants were forced to use methods tried elsewhere in the country, even though these methods did not suit their land. The commune system meant they no longer received more food or pay for working hard, so many people simply did less work and in the 1960s two years of serious drought set farming production in the communes back. Because of the Great Leap Forward there was a serious famine which, at the time, was covered up by the Chinese leadership but, according to recent calculations, caused at least 30 million Chinese people to starve to death between 1958 and 1962.

In later years even some of the apparent successes of the Great Leap Forward, such as the terracing at Dazhai (Source 18), were found to be a fraud. It was not actually the people of Dazhai who had terraced the rocky hills and dug the irrigation ditches. Dazhai had in fact been given millions of dollars in government aid and the help of thousands of soldiers. Dazhai's ever-increasing production figures were faked too. In fact production had gone down year by year.

This failure damaged and humiliated Mao. Deng Xiaoping and Liu Shao-qi edged him out of control of China. Mao remained Chairman of the Party but Deng and Liu were now in control. They reorganised the communes. They made them smaller. They handed land back to peasant ownership.

Part 3 China under Communism 1965–90

The Cultural Revolution

Mao resigned as President of China in 1959, but he remained as Chairman of the Communist Party. By the mid-1960s he was becoming concerned about the direction China seemed to be taking. Middle-class experts and townspeople again seemed to be getting wealthy at the expense of the peasants and ordinary people.

He began to take a more active role in China. In 1966 posters celebrating Mao's achievements appeared everywhere and millions of copies of *Quotations of Chairman Mao* (usually known as Mao's Little Red Book) were printed and distributed free. Mao called for the young people to rise up and rid China of the anti-Communist elements within the Party, schools, universities and society as a whole.

SOURCE 1



In 1966, to show he was fit and well, Mao (in foreground) swam 24 kilometres down the Yangtze River.

SOURCE 4

There are some people within the Communist Party who are in important positions yet who are not really Communists.

Mao, speaking on Chinese radio in 1966.

SOURCE 5

Although the middle class has been overthrown, it is still trying to use the old ideas, culture, customs and habits of the exploiting classes to corrupt the masses, capture their minds and endeavour to stage a comeback.

An announcement from the Central Committee of the Communist Party, 1966.

SOURCE 2

Chairman Mao put up his famous 'Bombard the Headquarters' poster. He attacked the leaders from the top downwards. His main targets were Liu Shao-qi and Deng Xiaoping . . . Soon, lots of people in Changsha, some very important, were being accused and removed from office. It seemed that every day good people were being exposed as evil and only pretending to support the Revolution. Most felt that the Cultural Revolution was a wonderful thing because when our enemies were uncovered China would be much safer. So I felt excited and happy and I wished I could do something to help.

Liang Heng, who was 12 years' old in 1966, describes the beginning of the Cultural Revolution.

SOURCE 3



A poster issued during the Cultural Revolution.

SOURCE 6

Every letter in Chairman Mao's words is gold and every sentence is truth. Mao Zedong's thought is the red sun in the hearts of the entire Chinese people and of the revolutionary people the world over; it is their life line and their treasure. Fish cannot live without water and without Mao Zedong's thought how can people make revolution?

A Red Guard chant from the Cultural Revolution.

SOURCE 7



Three people are paraded through the streets by Red Guards after being accused of being anti-revolutionary.

- 1 Study Sources 1–8 and make notes under the following headings:
- The aims of the Cultural Revolution.
 - The methods used by Mao and his supporters in the Cultural Revolution.

SOURCE 9

The Cultural Revolution was really a good thing. In the 1950s the Chinese were very simple. They believed in the Communists – like my mother. She’s a teacher. Whatever the Communists said she thought was great. Then in the Cultural Revolution they locked her up for a year and a half because her father was a well-known scholar whom they said was a ‘capitalist’. Some Red Guards in her school made her kneel on broken glass in front of all the students. For an intelligent person it was about the worst thing that could happen – to be made to feel so small. Her eyes were opened by the Cultural Revolution. She saw through the Communists.

A 16-year-old Chinese girl speaking about the Cultural Revolution.

- 2 Read Source 9. Why does the speaker think the Cultural Revolution was a good thing?

SOURCE 8



A demonstration by Red Guards in support of Chairman Mao.

Deng Xiaoping and Liu Shao-qi were dismissed from their jobs. Deng was forced to become a waiter while Liu died in 1969 after three years in prison.

Over the next three years the Cultural Revolution plunged China into a deep crisis. Mao told the young students of China to form themselves into Red Guards. These Red Guards then went on the rampage. Children denounced their own parents as anti-Communist. Schools and colleges were closed and many teachers and lecturers were beaten and abused for being anti-revolutionary. Tortures included being made to kneel on broken glass. Mao’s wife Jiang Qing organised huge Red Guard demonstrations throughout 1967 and 1968.

Factories, offices and even local Communist Party offices were ransacked by Red Guards. They broke into homes. Everywhere books, works of art, suspect technology – anything which could be considered anti-revolutionary – were smashed or burned. Thousands of innocent people were beaten, tortured or killed or imprisoned after unfair trials. Others were driven to suicide by constant accusations and mistreatment.

By 1967 the Cultural Revolution was rapidly spinning out of control. The Red Guards began to divide into rival factions. Using the weapons which Lin Biao’s army had provided them with, they began to fight street battles. In other areas Red Guards fought with gangs of peasants or even militia formed from ousted managers and local party officials. By 1968 action was needed and Lin Biao’s PLA stepped in to disarm the Red Guards and restore peace and order. The violent phase of the Cultural Revolution was over but some one million people are estimated to have been killed. The education of a whole generation of young people had been lost, and industrial production had fallen. Some factories had been closed for as long as three years. And, to complete the casualty list, the absolute faith of many Chinese people in the Communist Party that had carried them through decades of traumatic change was irreparably damaged.

After peace was restored, Mao encouraged thousands of Red Guards to move to the countryside, to re-educate themselves and to learn the ways of the peasants. Many of the Red Guards were shocked to see how poor Chinese peasants were and how hard their lives were. Communism apparently had not done much for them. Mao was right. There was much yet to do.

SOURCE 10

In the days after Mao's death I did a lot of thinking ... I tried to think what his philosophy was. It seemed to me that the central principle was the need – or the desire? – for perpetual conflict ... He was, it seemed to me, a restless fight promoter by nature and good at it. He understood ugly human instincts such as envy and resentment and knew how to use them for his ends. He ruled by getting people to hate each other. Mao had managed to turn the people into the ultimate weapon of dictatorship. That was why under him there was no real equivalent of the Soviet secret police in China. There was no need.

From *Wild Swans* by Jung Chang.

Focus Task B

Did Mao create a cruel dictatorship in China?

Work in pairs.

Imagine that Mao is on trial. He is accused of creating a cruel dictatorship in China. Source 10 is being used at his trial. One of you gather evidence in Mao's defence. You could look at:

- ◆ the problems facing him when the Communists took power
- ◆ the legacy of Japanese occupation
- ◆ the achievements of the 1950s.

The other should gather evidence to accuse Mao. You could look at:

- ◆ the methods used by the Communists
- ◆ the mistakes made by Mao
- ◆ the period of the Cultural Revolution.

Use your evidence to write a balanced answer to the question 'Did Mao create a cruel dictatorship in China?'

Focus Task A

The Cultural Revolution

- 1 Historians disagree as to exactly why Mao launched the Cultural Revolution. Here are some of their suggestions:
 - a) Mao was genuinely concerned that China was becoming too conservative.
 - b) Mao had always wanted to regain power after the failure of the Great Leap Forward. This was his opportunity.
 - c) The Americans had begun to intervene in the war in Vietnam Mao wanted a committed army in case he had to fight the USA.
 - d) Mao disliked the other Communist leaders.
 - e) Mao was out of touch. He had lost the revolutionary spirit and was acting like an ageing emperor, who was only interested in controlling people.

Which of these reasons can be supported on the evidence so far?

- 2 In four paragraphs summarise the effects of the Cultural Revolution on:
 - a) Mao's position in China
 - b) industry in China
 - c) education in China
 - d) attitudes to Communism.

The death of Mao

After the Cultural Revolution there was a power struggle in China. Lin Biao plotted to kill Mao but, before he could succeed, Lin died in 1971 in a 'plane crash' which was almost certainly a political murder.

This event split the leadership into factions. On the one side there was Mao's old rival Deng Xiaoping and another veteran Communist Zhou Enlai. Against them were Mao and the 'Gang of Four' – Mao's wife and three supporters. Power see-sawed between the factions.

In 1976 Mao and Zhou died within a short time of each other. Within a year the Gang of Four were arrested. They were put on trial for their actions during the Cultural Revolution. But everyone knew that it was Mao, not the Gang of Four, who was really being criticised.

Was Mao a monster?

Mao and his career have been a source of fascination to many historians. Since Mao's death there have been many studies of Mao. One of the most recent was *Mao: The Untold Story*, which was written by Jon Halliday and Jung Chang and published in 2005. The main argument of this book was that Mao was a monster and 'was as evil as Hitler or Stalin, and did as much damage to mankind as they did'.

But can you trust what they say? Jung Chang was born in China in 1952 and did many jobs in China until she left for Britain in 1978. Her mother and father were loyal Communist Party members but both fell victim to the Cultural Revolution. They were accused and tormented. Her father was imprisoned and had a mental breakdown. You may think that this background would give the authors a special reason to try and tarnish Mao's reputation. However, plenty of other writers have expressed similar views on Mao:

- One of Mao's former secretaries, Li Rui, has written that Mao 'did not care how many he killed'.
- Mao's personal doctor, Li Zhisui, described Mao as a monster.
- Harvard University's Stuart Schram commented on Mao's ruthlessness in his biography of Mao in 1966.
- Jonathan Spence of Yale University wrote in 1999 that Mao's rule 'was hopelessly enmeshed with violence and fear'.
- Harvard University's Roderick MacFarquhar compares Mao with Stalin in his biography written in 2006.

China after the death of Mao

In the early 1970s Zhou Enlai and Mao's old rival Deng Xiaoping began to build better relations with capitalist countries. They had introduced the Four Modernisations: industry; agriculture; science and technology; the army.

Hua Kuo-feng became Chairman of the Party in 1977 and continued this modernisation. But it was a difficult task and by 1978 Hua himself had been replaced once again by Deng Xiaoping. Deng further opened up China to foreign trade and investment and added a Fifth Modernisation to his policies – greater personal freedom.

Although the Fifth Modernisation was carried out very cautiously, the other modernisations improved the standard of living for most Chinese. The Chinese allowed foreign companies to set up factories in special zones of China. By the late 1980s there were sights in China which would have made Mao gasp in amazement. Radios, televisions, watches and washing machines could be bought in Chinese stores. Housing and education were excellent and the diet of the Chinese people improved dramatically.

There was even a significant quantity of small-scale private enterprises with wealthy businessmen and farmers succeeding in business.

All of these successes, however, made Deng realise that he had to address the Fifth Modernisation. Chinese people had greater wealth than ever before and greater financial independence. Why should they not have more say in their government?

In 1989 Chinese students demonstrated in Tiananmen Square against corruption in the government. This soon turned into a demand for greater democracy. Deng did not disperse the crowds and for weeks the students camped out in the square. Around 2,000 went on a hunger strike timed to coincide with a visit from the reforming Soviet leader, Mikhail Gorbachev.

Once Gorbachev's visit was over the government decided to act. On the night of 3 June 50,000 troops and tanks moved in. Shooting and crushing protesters under tanks, they destroyed the democracy movement. In the next few weeks there were thousands of arrests and beatings and some executions. Many other student leaders fled to the West and set up resistance movements there. There was worldwide condemnation of the Chinese action but the leadership stood firm against international criticism.

- 1 Why do you think the Chinese authorities waited till Gorbachev had left to crush the Tiananmen Square protest?
- 2 Why do you think they crushed it so ruthlessly?
- 3 What do you think is the biggest change since the death of Mao?
- 4 What things have not changed since the death of Mao?

SOURCE 11



Two photos of Tiananmen Square in May and June 1989, before and after the army moved in to crush the demonstration.

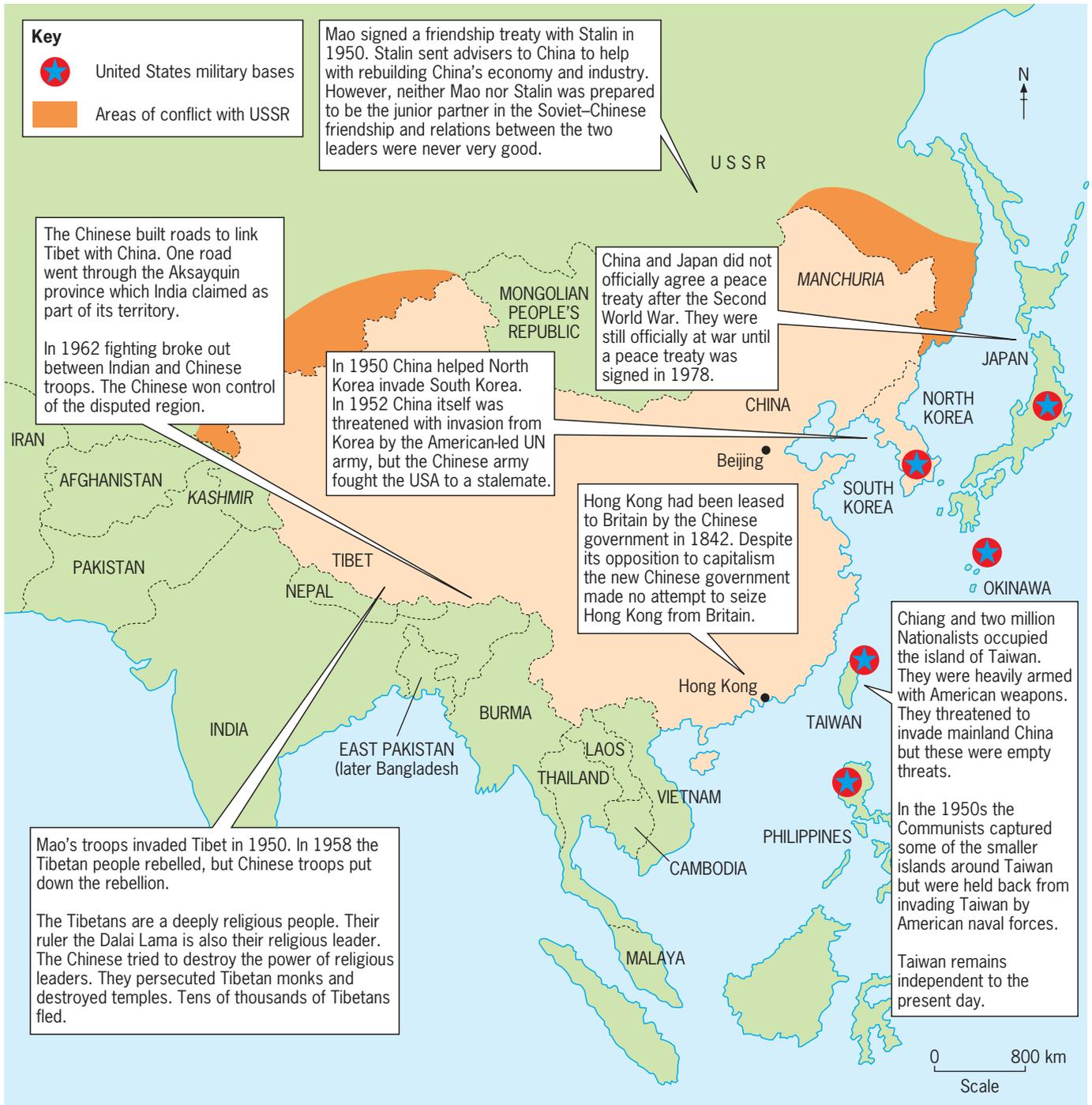
Part 4 What was Communist China's impact on the wider world?

- Study Source 1. Which of these conflicts do you think represents:
 - the greatest success for China
 - the greatest threat to China?
- Look back at Source 1 on page 10. Do China's relations with its neighbours show that Mao's promise was fulfilled? Explain your answer.

So far you have been viewing China very much from the inside. Now you are going to turn to the significance to the wider world of the changes in China.

China and its neighbours

SOURCE 1



China's relations with its neighbouring countries after the Communist Revolution.

China and the superpowers

In political terms, the Communist victory in 1949 sent shock waves around the world. As you have previously seen, Cold War relations between capitalist USA and Communist USSR were at their frostiest at this time. Now all of a sudden a huge new Communist state had appeared on the world map. How would the superpowers react?

The USSR

Initially relations between China and the USSR were good. The Korean War strengthened the bond between them. Mao and Stalin signed a friendship treaty.

SOURCE 2

In 1945 Stalin refused to permit China to carry out a revolution. However, we did not obey him and the revolution succeeded. Even after the success of the revolution Stalin feared that China might try to be too independent of the USSR. I went to Moscow and we signed the Treaty of Friendship. This was also the result of a struggle. Stalin did not wish to sign the Treaty; he only signed it in the end after two months of negotiating.

Mao writing about Stalin in 1962.

When Stalin died in 1953 he was followed by Khrushchev. Mao disliked Khrushchev's new ideas about Communism. He was suspicious of Khrushchev's efforts to improve relations with the West. The USSR and China broke their friendship treaty in 1960 and relations remained very frosty until the mid-1980s.

The Russians were particularly worried about Mao's plans to build nuclear weapons in China. Mao wrote in the People's Diary: 'If the worst came to the worst and half mankind died, the other half would become socialist; in a number of years there would be 2,700,000,000 people again.'

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, however, Communist China followed its own pathway in foreign policy, refusing to be dictated to by Communist USSR. China tested its first atomic bomb in 1964. Its independence demonstrated that China was a major world power.

SOURCE 3

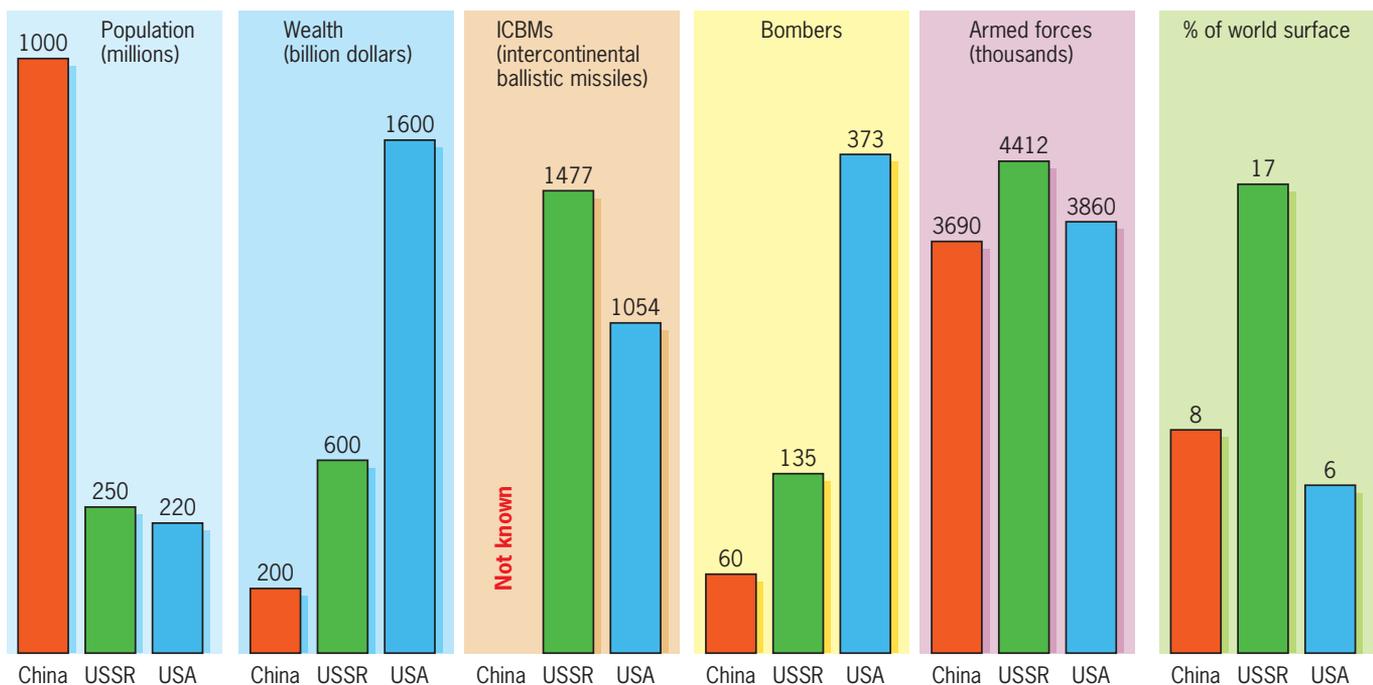


Chart showing how the resources of the USA, the USSR and China had grown by the 1980s.

Focus Task

Why did China try to improve relations with the USA?

- 1 As you read this next section note down all of the reasons that you can find in sources 4–7 and the text which helped improve relations between the USA and China in the early 1970s.
- 2 Once you have completed your list consider which you think was the single most important reason. Explain your choice.

SOURCE 4

There can be no peace without the participation of the People's Republic of China. That is why I have undertaken initiatives in several areas to open doors for more normal relations between our two countries.

President Richard Nixon speaking in 1971.

SOURCE 5

Let me suggest something about the Chinese visit that the President can't say. The President, knowing the quarrel between China and Russia, visits China, butters up the war lords and lets them be. Russia therefore has to keep 40 divisions of troops on the Chinese border.

Future President Ronald Reagan, speaking in 1972. He was strongly anti-Communist and a supporter of President Richard Nixon.

SOURCE 6

The two arch enemies facing us are the US and the USSR. We are to fight for the overthrow of these two enemies. Are we to fight them simultaneously? No. Are we to ally ourselves with one against the other? Definitely not. We act in the light of changes in circumstances.

From a secret Chinese government paper written in 1973.

The USA

In the 1960s the USA was also very suspicious of China. China played a decisive role in supplying and equipping the Viet Cong in Vietnam. The USA felt that China wanted to spread Communism to other unstable countries in South East Asia. Through the 1960s the USA blocked Communist China's entry into the United Nations and backed instead Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist China. They kept a fleet of ships patrolling the Chinese coast throughout this time. They helped rebuild Japan's strength so that it could be a more effective buffer against China.

After the Korean War China avoided military confrontation with its enemies. China never even sent soldiers of its own to fight in Vietnam. As in the USA and the USSR much of Chinese opposition to other countries was instead expressed as propaganda.

After 1970, however, changes began to take place. The Vietnam War had proved to be a disastrous failure for the USA. The new American President Richard Nixon was trying to find ways of withdrawing from Vietnam and was developing a new policy to deal with the threat of Communism. He realised the USA could not fight Communism everywhere. He felt that if he improved US relations with China he could take advantage of the Chinese split with Russia.

China for its part did not wish to be isolated against both the USA and the USSR. Mao wanted to get access to Western investment, technology and advisers to help improve China's industry.

In 1971 Nixon's secretary of State Henry Kissinger visited China. The USA also finally allowed the admission of China into the United Nations. Other symbolic gestures did a lot to convince people that relations with the West were improving. Chinese giant pandas were sent to London Zoo and the Chinese table-tennis team – the best in the world – competed for the first time against the capitalist countries.

In 1972 China and the USA signed a Friendship Treaty. Within a short time trade and investment were flowing into China from America, western Europe and Japan. At the same time China placed some \$2 billion worth of orders for advice and machinery with the USA.

SOURCE 7



A cartoon in the American newspaper the *Chicago Tribune* on 11 March 1972. From left to right the figures represent President Nixon, Chiang Kai-shek and Mao Zedong.

Focus Task

Was China a superpower by 1976?

- 1 Study Source 8 carefully. The author was writing about the 1980s. To what extent were the things he says also true about China before the death of Mao?
- 2 The lists below show the various factors which earned the USA and USSR the title 'superpower'. Using the text and sources above decide how far China in 1976 matches up to the superpower characteristics.
- 3 Repeat the process looking at China today.

SOURCE 8

China has often defied the demands of both superpowers. At other times it has behaved differently from what others expect. Despite its seeming vulnerability, China has not yielded to either Moscow or Washington.

China has assumed a unique international position as a participant in many of the central political and military conflicts in the post-war era. Indeed China must be judged as a candidate superpower in its own right.

China represents a force too important to be regarded as an ally of either Moscow or Washington or simply as an intermediate power.

Written by American historian Jonathan Pollack in *China and the Global Strategic Balance*.

SUPERPOWER FEATURES			
RESOURCES	POLITICS	ALLIES	POLICIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large area and population • Industries • Natural resources • Military strength 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong political beliefs (Communism, democracy) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plenty of allies or subordinate states • Respected by other states who desire friendship with them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strongly independent – prepared to go against world opinion • Not afraid of conflict • Supportive of allies in wars – fight indirectly

China after Mao: A new superpower?

Mao's successor Deng Xiaoping wanted an 'open door' policy with the West and throughout the 1980s American, British, French, Italian and German investment flowed into China. Towards the end of the 1980s cultural exchanges and tourism brought valuable foreign trade into China. The arrival of Mikhail Gorbachev brought the intense hostility between China and the USSR to an end.

In the 1990s Deng began a process of economic reform in China. These policies were continued by his successor Jiang Zemin. In simple terms, China has become much more like a capitalist economy but without the democratic rights which usually go along with capitalism. The economic effects of these reforms were remarkable, and it is no exaggeration to say that China's growing economy is beginning to change the twenty-first-century world. China overtook the UK as the world's fourth largest economy in 2005 and is destined to become the world's largest economy by 2010.

On the other hand critics of China point out that conditions and pay for Chinese workers are very poor, and they criticise the Chinese human rights records (for example they execute over 1,000 people each year, more than the USA). Their economic expansion has caused terrible pollution problems. Chinese exploitation of Tibet (which they regard as part of China) or their rigid censorship of information carried by the internet are likewise singled out for international condemnation. So far, however, China has shown little inclination to respond to its critics. It is likely that Chinese economic power has meant many other countries are prepared to turn a blind eye to disagreements with China. China enjoyed massive international attention as the host of the 2008 Olympic Games, and spent vast amounts of time and money to make sure it went without a hitch.

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