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# China: Reform and Reaction

### MAIN IDEA

**CULTURAL INTERACTION** In response to contact with the West, China’s government has experimented with capitalism but has rejected calls for democracy.

### WHY IT MATTERS NOW

After the 1997 death of Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping, President Jiang Zemin seemed to be continuing Deng’s policies.

### TERMS & NAMES

- Zhou Enlai
- Deng Xiaoping
- Four Modernizations
- Tiananmen Square
- Hong Kong

**SETTING THE STAGE** The trend toward democracy around the world also affected China to a limited degree. A political reform movement arose in the late 1980s. It built on economic reforms begun earlier in the decade. However, although the leadership of the Communist Party in China generally supported economic reform, it opposed political reform. China’s Communist government clamped down on the political reformers. At the same time, it maintained a firm grip on power in the country.

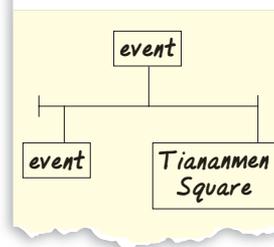
## The Legacy of Mao

After the Communists came to power in China in 1949, Mao Zedong set out to transform China. Mao believed that peasant equality, revolutionary spirit, and hard work were all that was needed to improve the Chinese economy.

However, lack of modern technology damaged Chinese efforts to increase agricultural and industrial output. In addition, Mao’s policies stifled economic growth. He eliminated incentives for higher production. He tried to replace family life with life in the communes. These policies took away the peasants’ motive to work for the good of themselves and their families.

Facing economic disaster, some Chinese Communists talked of modernizing the economy. Accusing them of “taking the capitalist road,” Mao began the Cultural Revolution in 1966 to cleanse China of antirevolutionary influences.

**TAKING NOTES**  
**Following Chronological Order** Use a diagram to show events leading up to the demonstration in Tiananmen Square.



Mao’s Attempts to Change China	
Mao’s Programs	Program Results
<b>First Five-Year Plan</b> 1953–1957	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Industry grew 15 percent a year.</li> <li>• Agricultural output grew very slowly.</li> </ul>
<b>Great Leap Forward</b> 1958–1961	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• China suffered economic disaster—industrial declines and food shortages.</li> <li>• Mao lost influence.</li> </ul>
<b>Cultural Revolution</b> 1966–1976	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mao regained influence by backing radicals.</li> <li>• Purges and conflicts among leaders created economic, social, and political chaos.</li> </ul>



▲ Zhou Enlai, a translator, Mao Zedong, President Nixon, and Henry Kissinger meet in Beijing in 1972.

Instead of saving radical communism, however, the Cultural Revolution turned many people against it. In the early 1970s, China entered another moderate period under **Zhou Enlai** (joh ehn•ly). Zhou had been premier since 1949. During the Cultural Revolution, he had tried to restrain the radicals. **A**

**MAIN IDEA**

**Recognizing Effects**

**A** What was the ultimate result of Mao's radical Communist policies?

## China and the West

Throughout the Cultural Revolution, China played almost no role in world affairs. In the early 1960s, China had split with the Soviet Union over the leadership of world communism. In addition, China displayed hostility toward the United States because of U.S. support for the government on Taiwan.

**China Opened Its Doors** China's isolation worried Zhou. He began to send out signals that he was willing to form ties to the West. In 1971, Zhou startled the world by inviting an American table-tennis team to tour China. It was the first visit by an American group to China since 1949.

The visit began a new era in Chinese-American relations. In 1971, the United States reversed its policy and endorsed UN membership for the People's Republic of China. The next year, President Nixon made a state visit to China. He met with Mao and Zhou. The three leaders agreed to begin cultural exchanges and a limited amount of trade. In 1979, the United States and China established diplomatic relations.

**Economic Reform** Both Mao and Zhou died in 1976. Shortly afterward, moderates took control of the Communist Party. They jailed several of the radicals who had led the Cultural Revolution. By 1980, **Deng Xiaoping** (duhng show•pihng) had emerged as the most powerful leader in China. He was the last of the "old revolutionaries" who had ruled China since 1949.

Although a lifelong Communist, Deng boldly supported moderate economic policies. Unlike Mao, he was willing to use capitalist ideas to help China's economy. He embraced a set of goals known as the **Four Modernizations**. These called for progress in agriculture, industry, defense, and science and technology. Deng launched an ambitious program of economic reforms.

First, Deng eliminated Mao's communes and leased the land to individual farmers. The farmers paid rent by delivering a fixed quota of food to the government. They could then grow crops and sell them for a profit. Under this system, food production increased by 50 percent in the years 1978 to 1984.

Deng extended his program to industry. The government permitted private businesses to operate. It gave the managers of state-owned industries more freedom to set production goals. Deng also welcomed foreign technology and investment.

Deng's economic policies produced striking changes in Chinese life. As incomes increased, people began to buy appliances and televisions. Chinese youths now wore stylish clothes and listened to Western music. Gleaming hotels filled with foreign tourists symbolized China's new policy of openness.

## Massacre in Tiananmen Square

Deng's economic reforms produced a number of unexpected problems. As living standards improved, the gap between the rich and poor widened. Increasingly, the public believed that party officials profited from their positions.

Furthermore, the new policies admitted not only Western investments and tourists but also Western political ideas. Increasing numbers of Chinese students studied abroad and learned about the West. In Deng's view, the benefits of opening the economy exceeded the risks. Nevertheless, as Chinese students learned more about democracy, they began to question China's lack of political freedom. **B**

### MAIN IDEA

#### Analyzing Causes

**B** How did economic reform introduce new political ideas to China?

**Students Demand Democracy** In 1989, students sparked a popular uprising that stunned China's leaders. Beginning in April of that year, more than 100,000 students occupied **Tiananmen Square** (tyahn•ahn•mehn), a huge public space in the heart of Beijing. The students mounted a protest for democracy. (See photograph on page 1064.)

The student protest won widespread popular support. When thousands of students began a hunger strike to highlight their cause, people poured into Tiananmen Square to support them. Many students called for Deng Xiaoping to resign.

**Deng Orders a Crackdown** Instead of considering political reform, Deng declared martial law. He ordered about 100,000 troops to surround Beijing. Although many students left the square after martial law was declared, about 5,000 chose to remain and continue their protest. The students revived their spirits by defiantly erecting a 33-foot statue that they named the "Goddess of Democracy."

On June 4, 1989, the standoff came to an end. Thousands of heavily armed soldiers stormed Tiananmen Square. Tanks smashed through barricades and crushed the Goddess of Democracy. Soldiers sprayed gunfire into crowds of frightened students. They also attacked protesters elsewhere in Beijing. The assault killed hundreds and wounded thousands.

## > Analyzing Primary Sources

### Training the Chinese Army

After the massacre in Tiananmen Square, Xiao Ye (a former Chinese soldier living in the United States) explained how Chinese soldiers are trained to obey orders without complaint.

#### PRIMARY SOURCE

We usually developed bleeding blisters on our feet after a few days of . . . hiking. Our feet were a mass of soggy peeling flesh and blood, and the pain was almost unbearable. . . . We considered the physical challenge a means of tempering [hardening] ourselves for the sake of the Party. . . . No one wanted to look bad. . . .

And during the days in Tiananmen, once again the soldiers did not complain. They obediently drove forward, aimed, and opened fire on command. In light of their training, how could it have been otherwise?

XIAO YE, "Tiananmen Square: A Soldier's Story"



#### DOCUMENT-BASED QUESTIONS

- 1. Making Inferences** For whom did the soldiers seem to believe they were making their physical sacrifices?
- 2. Drawing Conclusions** What attitude toward obeying orders did their training seem to encourage in the soldiers?

The attack on Tiananmen Square marked the beginning of a massive government campaign to stamp out protest. Police arrested thousands of people. The state used the media to announce that reports of a massacre were untrue. Officials claimed that a small group of criminals had plotted against the government. Television news, however, had already broadcast the truth to the world.

## China Enters the New Millennium

The brutal repression of the prodemocracy movement left Deng firmly in control of China. During the final years of his life, Deng continued his program of economic reforms.

Although Deng moved out of the limelight in 1995, he remained China's leader. In February 1997, after a long illness, Deng died. Communist Party General Secretary Jiang Zemin (jee•ahng zeh•meen) assumed the presidency.

**China Under Jiang** Many questions arose after Deng's death. What kind of leader would Jiang be? Would he be able to hold on to power and ensure political stability? A highly intelligent and educated man, Jiang had served as mayor of Shanghai. He was considered skilled, flexible, and practical. However, he had no military experience. Therefore, Jiang had few allies among the generals. He also faced challenges from rivals, including hard-line officials who favored a shift away from Deng's economic policies.

Other questions following Deng's death had to do with China's poor human rights record, its occupation of Tibet, and relations with the United States. During the 1990s, the United States pressured China to release political prisoners and ensure basic rights for political opponents. China remained hostile to such pressure. Its government continued to repress the prodemocracy movement. Nevertheless, the desire for freedom still ran through Chinese society. If China remained economically open but politically closed, tensions seemed bound to surface.

In late 1997, Jiang paid a state visit to the United States. During his visit, U.S. protesters demanded more democracy in China. Jiang admitted that China had made some mistakes but refused to promise that China's policies would change.

President Jiang Zemin and Premier Zhu Rongji announced their retirement in late 2002. Jiang's successor was Hu Jintao. However, Jiang was expected to wield influence over his successor behind the scenes. Hu became president of the country and general secretary of the Communist Party. Jiang remained political leader of the military. Both supported China's move to a market economy.

**Transfer of Hong Kong** Another major issue for China was the status of **Hong Kong**. Hong Kong was a thriving business center and British colony on the southeastern coast of China. On July 1, 1997, Great Britain handed Hong Kong over to China, ending 155 years of colonial rule. As part of the transfer, China promised to respect Hong Kong's economic system and political liberties for 50 years.

Many of Hong Kong's citizens worried about Chinese rule and feared the loss of their freedoms. Others, however, saw the transfer as a way to reconnect with their Chinese

### History Makers



**Jiang Zemin**  
1926–

Jiang Zemin was trained as an engineer. After working as an engineer, heading several technological institutes, and serving as minister of the electronics industry, he moved up in politics.

In 1982, he joined the Central Committee of the Communist Party in China. He became mayor of Shanghai in 1985, in which post he proved to be an effective administrator. In 1989, he became general secretary of the Chinese Communist Party. This promotion was largely due to his support for the government's putdown of the prodemocracy demonstrations in that year. In 1993, he became president. In 2003, he stepped down and was replaced by Hu Jintao; however, Jiang retained power behind the scenes.

heritage. In the first four or five years after the transfer, the control of mainland China over Hong Kong tightened.

## China Beyond 2000

The case of China demonstrates that the creation of democracy can be a slow, fitful, and incomplete process. Liberal reforms in one area, such as the economy, may not lead immediately to political reforms.

**Economics and Politics** In China, there has been a dramatic reduction in poverty. Some experts argue that China managed to reform its economy and reduce poverty because it adopted a gradual approach to selling off state industries and privatizing the economy rather than a more abrupt approach. At any rate, as the global economy slowed in the early years of the 21st century, China managed to maintain economic growth.

People in China and around the world have a desire for more political freedom. As economic and social conditions improve—for example, as the middle class expands and educational opportunities grow—the prospects for democracy also may improve. In addition, as countries are increasingly linked through technology and trade, they will have more opportunity to influence each other politically. In 2000, for example, the U.S. Congress voted to normalize trade with China. Supporters of such a move argue that the best way to prompt political change in China is through greater engagement rather than isolation. Another sign of China’s increasing engagement with the world is its successful campaign to host the 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing.



▲ People celebrate in Tiananmen Square after Beijing won the bid for the 2008 Olympic Games.

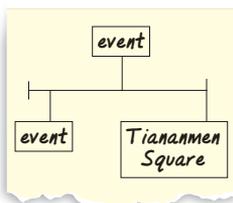
### SECTION 5 ASSESSMENT

**TERMS & NAMES** 1. For each term or name, write a sentence explaining its significance.

- Zhou Enlai
- Deng Xiaoping
- Four Modernizations
- Tiananmen Square
- Hong Kong

#### USING YOUR NOTES

2. Other than the demonstration in Tiananmen Square, which of these events was most important? Explain.



#### MAIN IDEAS

3. What effect did Mao’s policies have on economic growth?
4. What were some of Deng Xiaoping’s economic reforms?
5. How would you describe China’s record on human rights?

#### CRITICAL THINKING & WRITING

6. **SUPPORTING OPINIONS** Judging from what you have read about the Chinese government, do you think Hong Kong will keep its freedoms under Chinese rule? Explain.
7. **FOLLOWING CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER** What were some of the events that followed the demonstration in Tiananmen Square?
8. **COMPARING AND CONTRASTING** Has there been greater progress in political or economic reform in China?
9. **WRITING ACTIVITY** **CULTURAL INTERACTION** Imagine that you are a Chinese student visiting the West. Write a **letter** home in which you explain what you have seen abroad.

#### CONNECT TO TODAY MAKING A POSTER

China will be hosting the 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing. Research the efforts that China is making to prepare the city for the festivities and present your findings in a **poster**.