

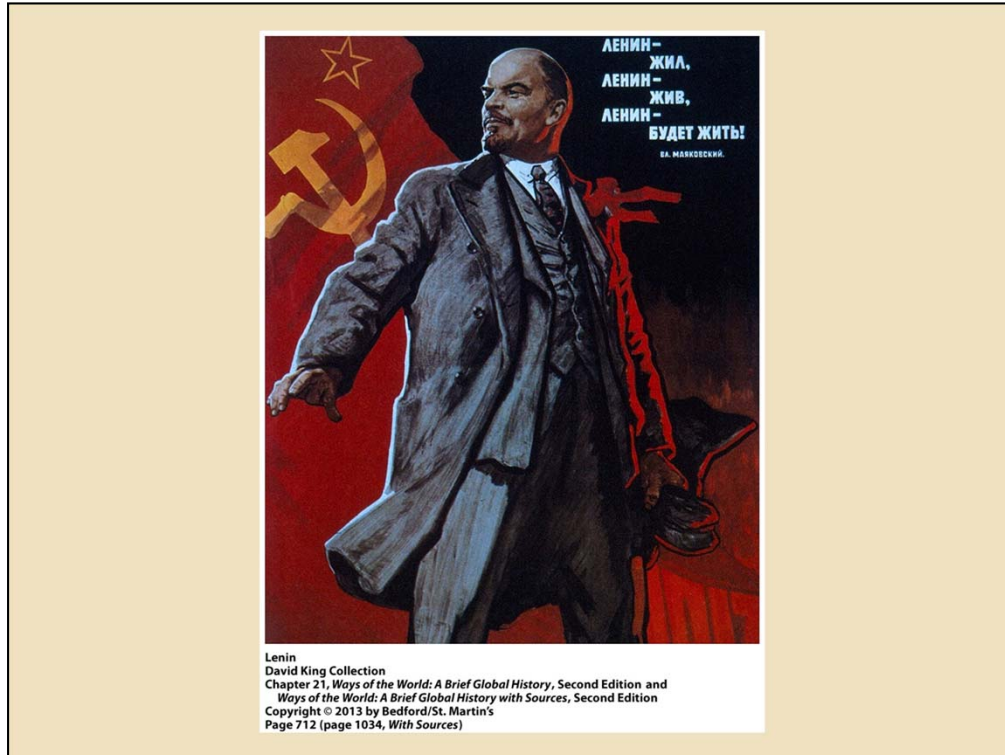
Robert W. Strayer

**Ways of the World: A Brief Global
History with Sources**
Second Edition

Chapter 21

Revolution, Socialism, and Global Conflict:
The Rise and Fall of World Communism,
1917–Present

Copyright © 2013 by Bedford/St. Martin's



1. Who is the man in this poster, and what role did he play in world history?

This is Vladimir Ulyanov, better known as Lenin, the Bolshevik Leader of the Russian Revolution. He became the iconic symbol for world communism and one of most familiar faces in the world.

2. Discuss this poster. What impression does it leave?

The poster's point of view is very low, looking up at Lenin as he stands erect and strong, gazing into the distance; his body is angled as if to shield those behind him. His clothing is respectable and civilian. His body divides the image between the red of the Soviet flag, with its hammer and sickle, and distant fires and darkness on the right. It is clearly intended to portray Lenin as a strong, powerful leader who is looking into the optimistic future while leaving the dark past behind.

I. Global Communism

- A. Marxism's path to the future**
- B. Communist revolutions in agrarian societies**
- C. Communist parties outside of communist regimes**
- D. Internationalism**
- E. Conflict among communist states**

I. Global Communism

A. Marxism's path to the future: Interpretations of the work of nineteenth-century philosopher Karl Marx predicted a path to an egalitarian future utopia. Societies would industrialize under capitalism, then see revolutions that would take them through socialism and on to communism. This ideology was named after Marx, although he discussed the nature of capitalism and its history rather than spending much time thinking about the future.

B. Communist revolutions in agrarian societies: Ironically, the revolutions that brought about so-called Marxist regimes happened in pre-industrial agrarian societies such as Russia, China, Korea, Vietnam, and Cuba. This went against the actual theories of Karl Marx. Nonetheless, these revolutions and a few others established regimes that called themselves Marxist and communist.

C. Communist parties outside of communist regimes: In Western Europe, the United States, Southeast Asia, and elsewhere, there were communist parties that ran candidates for elections. They were also part of the global communist movement.

D. Internationalism: Communism was explicitly international and antinationalist. Nationalists and communists remained staunchly opposed political enemies in the twentieth century.

E. Conflict among communist states: Yet when communist parties

came to power, they began to act like typical states. Conflicts broke out between the USSR and the states it treated like colonies in Eastern Europe and between the USSR and the People's Republic of China.

II. Revolutions as a Path to Communism

A. Russia: Revolution in a Single Year

1. Romanov collapse in WWI, February 1917
2. Continued chaos under the Provisional Government
3. Bolsheviks seize power, October 1917

II. Revolutions as a Path to Communism

A. Russia: Revolution in a Single Year

1. Romanov collapse in WWI, February 1917: Due to Russia's terrible leadership and performance in the First World War, the tsarist regime completely collapsed in February 1917.
2. Continued chaos under the Provisional Government: The new moderate Provisional Government faced many of the same problems as the tsarist state, including a widespread social revolution and mass desertions from the armed forces. People increasingly looked to radical parties for solutions.
3. Bolsheviks seize power, October 1917: In the fall, the radical socialists known as the Bolsheviks seized power in a coup.



Map 21.1 Russia in 1917
 Chapter 21, *Ways of the World: A Brief Global History, Second Edition* and
Ways of the World: A Brief Global History with Sources, Second Edition
 Copyright © 2013 by Bedford/St. Martin's
 Page 718 (page 1040, With Sources)

II. Revolutions as a Path to Communism

A. Russia: Revolution in a Single Year

4. Lenin's revision of Marxism
5. Civil War, 1918–1921
6. Stalin in Eastern Europe after WWII

II. Revolutions as a Path to Communism

A. Russia: Revolution in a Single Year

4. Lenin's revision of Marxism: Lenin, the Bolshevik leader, went against Marxist orthodoxy as Russia was not yet a fully industrialized society. Lenin argued that Russia would serve as a socialist beachhead for the coming world revolution.

5. Civil War, 1918–1921: While the Bolsheviks controlled the capital and a few cities, they then had to fight a brutal three-year civil war against a variety of anti-Bolshevik forces. While the violence of the war furthered existing authoritarian tendencies in the party and led to violent acts, the Bolsheviks, who changed their official name to the Communist Party, did win over many supporters with their social reforms and opportunities. In the end, they defeated their divided rivals and established the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics.

6. Stalin in Eastern Europe after WWII: The USSR remained a lone island of communism in a sea of capitalism until after the Second World War. Faced with the American effort to extend influence into Eastern Europe with the Marshall Plan, Stalin imposed communist-party-run governments in Eastern Europe. Yugoslavia, which was not occupied by the Red Army during the war, was the only communist state not under Stalin's control.

II. Revolutions as a Path to Communism

B. China: A Prolonged Revolutionary Struggle

1. CCP not founded until 1921
2. Conflict with Chiang Kai-shek's Guomindang
3. Chinese peasant villages
4. Mao Zedong

II. Revolutions as a Path to Communism

B. China: A Prolonged Revolutionary Struggle

1. CCP not founded until 1921: Unlike Russia, where intellectuals had debated the ideas of Marx and socialism for decades, China did not have a communist party until 1921, and even then, it only had sixty members. Initially, they were a small movement and existed only in the larger cities on the coast.
2. Conflict with Chiang Kai-shek's Guomindang: While the Bolsheviks overthrew the feeble Provisional Government, the CCP faced the larger and fairly well-equipped Chinese Nationalist Party, the Guomindang, led by the army officer Chiang Kai-shek. The Nationalists enjoyed the financial support of the landowning classes and industrial development. In 1927, Chiang launched a campaign of anticommunist terror that killed many CCP members and drove the rest out of the cities.
3. Chinese peasant villages: In the countryside, the CCP was forced to rely on the peasants in small villages, far removed from the areas controlled by the Guomindang. While this was not a social context that orthodox Marxists would see as fertile ground for revolt, the CCP had no choice but to work with the peasantry. They exploited tensions between peasants and landlords, engaged in public works projects, and built a peasant-based guerilla fighting force. The CCP also gained years of crucial experience governing provinces and villages.
4. Mao Zedong: During this period, in the countryside and in the Long March, Mao Zedong rose up as a charismatic leader of the struggling party.

He developed a theory for guerilla fighting and saw the peasants as a revolutionary force. He spearheaded this racial revision of Marxism.



Map 21.2 The Rise of Communism in China
 Chapter 21, *Ways of the World: A Brief Global History*, Second Edition and
Ways of the World: A Brief Global History with Sources, Second Edition
 Copyright © 2013 by Bedford/St. Martin's
 Page 722 (page 1044, With Sources)

II. Revolutions as a Path to Communism

B. China: A Prolonged Revolutionary Struggle

5. Appeal to women
6. Japanese invasion, 1937–1945
7. CCP triumphant in 1949

II. Revolutions as a Path to Communism

B. China: A Prolonged Revolutionary Struggle

5. Appeal to women: In addition to exploiting peasant–landowner conflicts, the CCP made a serious effort to recruit women by challenging certain aspects of rural patriarchy. While this did provoke some reaction, the CCP was a liberating force for Chinese women.

6. Japanese invasion, 1937–1945: When Japan invaded in 1937, the CCP grew in size and importance. Its membership jumped into the millions, and it had many soldiers in the Red Army and militias. The CCP's strength lay in its knowledge of guerilla warfare and its ability to operate behind Japanese lines. In contrast to the CCP's actions against the invaders, the Guomindang retreated deeper into China, forged closer ties with the landowning classes, and seemed more concerned with fighting the CCP than the Japanese. Thus, CCP credibility rose thanks to its actions and the increasing dissatisfaction with Chiang Kai-shek's regime.

7. CCP triumphant in 1949: When the war with Japan ended, there were four years of struggle between the communists and nationalists, with Mao's CCP declaring victory in Tiananmen Square in October 1949. The CCP's victory came from its base in the countryside, its track record in the war with Japan, and its

superior organization.

III. Building Socialism

A. Communist Feminism

1. Soviet state enacts reforms for women
2. Zhenotdel, 1919–1930
3. “Women can do anything”
4. Limits

III. Building Socialism

A. Communist Feminism

1. Soviet state enacts reforms for women: The early Soviet state enacted a series of reforms that gave women full citizenship, equal rights, and better access to divorce and abortion. These feminist reforms came from the top down.
2. Zhenotdel, 1919–1930: This was the Soviet Women’s Department, founded soon after the Bolsheviks’ seizure of power. It organized and educated women, encouraging them to take new public and professional roles. Many male party members and Soviet citizens resented the perceived radicalism of these programs, and Stalin closed the organization in 1930, declaring the “woman question” solved. There was little if any discussion of feminism under Stalin’s conservative reign.
3. “Women can do anything”: The CCP enacted a number of reforms such as the 1950 Marriages Law as part of direct attacks on Confucian patriarchy. While the CCP faced some opposition and there was little of the radicalism of Zhenotdel in China, the party did succeed in getting women to play a much more active role in working outside the home. In the 1960s, this slogan urged women to pursue all professions.
4. Limits: Despite these major gains, Soviet and Chinese women

saw little reform of the family structure. Often they were saddled with the double burden of work in and outside of the home.

III. Building Socialism

B. Socialism in the Countryside

1. Peasants seize land in Russia, 1917
2. “Speak bitterness meetings” in China, 1949–1952
3. Collectivization and famines

III. Building Socialism

B. Socialism in the Countryside

1. Peasants seize land in Russia, 1917: In the chaos of 1917, peasants rose up and seized land from the landowners. The Bolsheviks, with no control of the countryside, could only accept the action and praise it as revolutionary.
2. “Speak bitterness meetings” in China, 1949–1952: The CCP organized the breaking up of landlord holdings after their victory against the Guomindang. Teams of hastily trained party members went into the countryside and encouraged peasants to publicly denounce the landowners. Between 1 and 2 million landlords were killed in these vengeful actions.
3. Collectivization and famines: While the CCP had a base in the peasantry, the Soviets did not. Stalin forced the peasantry into collective farms between 1928 and 1933, resulting in massive protests and the slaughtering of animals rather than giving them to collective farms. He declared war on the wealthier peasants, calling them *kulaks*, killing some and deporting others. As the party members were from the cities, they were hated by most peasants. The process resulted in a famine that killed 5 million. While the CCP did have a base in the peasantry, Chinese collectivization was a massive undertaking that disrupted markets.

Combined with administrative chaos and bad weather, the process caused an even larger famine with some 20 million deaths between 1959 and 1962.

III. Building Socialism

C. Communism and Industrial Development

1. Anticapitalist but ardently pro-modernizing
2. Planned economies with an emphasis on industry
3. Urbanization, exploitation of the countryside, and rise of privileged bureaucrats and technocrats
4. Stalin accepted social changes, Mao did not

III. Building Socialism

C. Communism and Industrial Development

1. Anticapitalist but ardently pro-modernizing: While the communist regimes condemned capitalism, they did see industrialization as the way to a modern future. This was drawn from the work of Karl Marx.
2. Planned economies with an emphasis on industry: Both China and the USSR adopted strategies for industrial development centered on state ownership of property and five-year plans that privileged the growth of heavy industry.
3. Urbanization, exploitation of the countryside, and rise of privileged bureaucrats and technocrats: These industrialization programs induced three major social changes: large factories dominated the cities, cities lived off of the food taken from the countryside, and a new class of elite party bureaucrats, engineers, and managers rose to prominence.
4. Stalin accepted social changes, Mao did not: While Stalin and successive Soviet leaders accepted these social changes, Mao saw them as a betrayal of the Chinese communist path. He wanted to return China to the ethics of its revolutionary period.

III. Building Socialism

C. Communism and Industrial Development

5. Great Leap Forward, 1958–1960
6. Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, 1966–1969
7. Environmental consequences

III. Building Socialism

C. Communism and Industrial Development

5. Great Leap Forward, 1958–1960: Mao launched this campaign to industrialize China using his take on revolutionary values. In reaction to the social changes in the USSR and what he saw happening in China, he pushed for small, decentralized industrial projects and wanted to mobilize the population as a whole and not rely on experts. This resulted in economic chaos and contributed to the massive famine.

6. Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, 1966–1969: While Mao was discredited after the Great Leap Forward, he launched a new campaign in 1966. The Cultural Revolution was a political struggle against his opponents, but it also sought to fight the increasing inequalities in China. He wanted to bring social services such as health care to the countryside. In the end, the program was a failure.

7. Environmental consequences: Especially in the USSR, the large-scale industrialization projects created large-scale pollution problems and other disasters.

III. Building Socialism

D. The Search for Enemies

1. Old regime remnants and high-ranking party officials
2. Counterrevolutionary conspiracies?
3. Stalin's Terror and Great Purges, 1936–1941
4. Mao's Red Guards in the Cultural Revolution, 1966–1969

III. Building Socialism

D. The Search for Enemies

1. Old regime remnants and high-ranking party officials: Both revolutions attacked holdouts from the prerevolutionary order, but they also turned on the revolutionaries themselves, arguing that they were betraying the true revolution or were being corrupted by power.
2. Counterrevolutionary conspiracies?: Under both Stalin and Mao, seemingly impossible conspiracy theories grew, arguing that many old revolutionaries were trying to wreck the revolution and were in league with countries hostile to communism. These conspiracies allegedly involved some of the highest-ranking members of the party.
3. Stalin's Terror and Great Purges, 1936–1941: In the late 1930s, Stalin launched a bloody attack on his perceived enemies within the party. Scores of party members were arrested and sometimes put on trial but were more often shot or sent to Siberia. He accused many of the longest-serving members of the Bolshevik party of treason as a way of eliminating rivals.
4. Mao's Red Guards in the Cultural Revolution, 1966–1969: Mao launched his attack on the party by mobilizing youth groups known as Red Guards. His assault on the party combined

elements of a power struggle, an ideological conflict, and a generational conflict. Both Mao's and Stalin's actions discredited socialism in the eyes of many around the world.

IV. East versus West: A Global Divide and a Cold War

A. Military Conflict and the Cold War

1. Europe divided by the Iron Curtain
2. “Hot wars” in Korea and Vietnam
3. Marxism versus Islam in Afghanistan
4. Cuba

IV. East versus West: A Global Divide and a Cold War

A. Military Conflict and the Cold War

1. Europe divided by the Iron Curtain: The end of World War II quickly divided Europe into a voluntary American sphere of influence and an imposed Soviet sphere of influence. These two competing camps became rival military alliances, staring at each other across a tense border. While there was no fighting in Europe, the hostile relations between the two sides created a cold war.

2. “Hot wars” in Korea and Vietnam: In Asia, the end of the Second World War created a much more violent situation with wars in Korea and Vietnam between communist insurgents and an alliance of local anticommunists and the United States. While the Korean War ended with an armistice and a division of the country, Vietnamese communists fought for independence from the French and then for national unity against the United States and its puppet regime.

3. Marxism versus Islam in Afghanistan: In many ways, this was a reverse of Vietnam. After a communist regime came to power in 1978, it faced widespread insurgency over its land reform and women’s rights policies. When the USSR sent in troops, the United States began to send aid to the Muslim rebels. In the end, the USSR had to pull out in the face of ongoing guerilla actions, much as the United States had to leave Vietnam.

4. Cuba: When Fidel Castro overthrew a dictator in 1959, he launched a program that threatened American economic interests. Faced with American hostility, he drifted towards the USSR and declared the revolution to be Marxist. To protect the island from an American invasion, Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev sent nuclear missiles to Cuba. In response, President Kennedy launched a blockade. A tense thirteen-day standoff almost led to nuclear war, but the USSR and the

United States came to an agreement and nuclear war was averted.



Map 21.3 The Global Cold War
 Chapter 21, *Ways of the World: A Brief Global History, Second Edition* and
Ways of the World: A Brief Global History with Sources, Second Edition
 Copyright © 2013 by Bedford/St. Martin's
 Page 733 (page 1055, With Sources)



Map 21.3 (inset) The Global Cold War
 Chapter 21, *Ways of the World: A Brief Global History*, Second Edition and
Ways of the World: A Brief Global History with Sources, Second Edition
 Copyright © 2013 by Bedford/St. Martin's
 Page 733 (page 1055, *With Sources*)

IV. East versus West: A Global Divide and a Cold War

B. Nuclear Standoff and Third World Rivalry

1. Fear of nuclear war
2. Aid and intervention in the Third World

IV. East versus West: A Global Divide and a Cold War

B. Nuclear Standoff and Third World Rivalry

1. Fear of nuclear war: As both sides realized that a nuclear exchange would destroy both the USSR and the United States, the superpowers redirected their energies towards competition for client states in Asia, Africa, and Latin America.
2. Aid and intervention in the Third World: Fear of the spread of communism prompted the United States to intervene either openly or covertly in a number of states. The United States also extended aid packages to anticommunist but often corrupt and authoritarian allies. A few states such as India, Indonesia, and Egypt played both sides off of each other.



The Hydrogen Bomb
Image courtesy The Nuclear Weapon Archive
Chapter 21, *Ways of the World: A Brief Global History, Second Edition* and
Ways of the World: A Brief Global History with Sources, Second Edition
Copyright © 2013 by Bedford/St. Martin's
Page 735 (page 1057, With Sources)

IV. East versus West: A Global Divide and a Cold War

C. The Cold War and the Superpowers

1. “Imperial” presidency, “national security state,” and “military-industrial complex”
2. American economic and cultural power
3. Soviet military spending and propaganda
4. Conflicts within the communist world

IV. East versus West: A Global Divide and a Cold War

C. The Cold War and the Superpowers

1. “Imperial” presidency, “national security state,” and “military-industrial complex”: Because of the need to make quick and important decisions in the cold war, the office of the president began to amass more and more power. With the increase in military spending and the proliferation of intelligence agencies, the United States was characterized as a national security state by some while President Eisenhower warned of the growing power of the “military-industrial complex.”
2. American economic and cultural power: In addition to its political and military power, the United States came out of the war unharmed and enjoyed a major economic advantage over the rest of the world. It also exported much of its culture in the form of movies, food, and popular culture.
3. Soviet military spending and propaganda: The USSR tried to match the United States with military spending but also pumped out massive amounts of propaganda to rationalize the economic situation.
4. Conflicts within the communist world: While the communist world first seemed like a monolithic bloc, cracks appeared between the USSR and Eastern Europe, the USSR and China, and

China and Vietnam. The USSR used military force against its Eastern European satellites and threatened war with China, while China briefly invaded Vietnam over Vietnam's successful invasion of communist Cambodia. In many cases, nationalism trumped Marxism.

V. Paths to the End of Communism

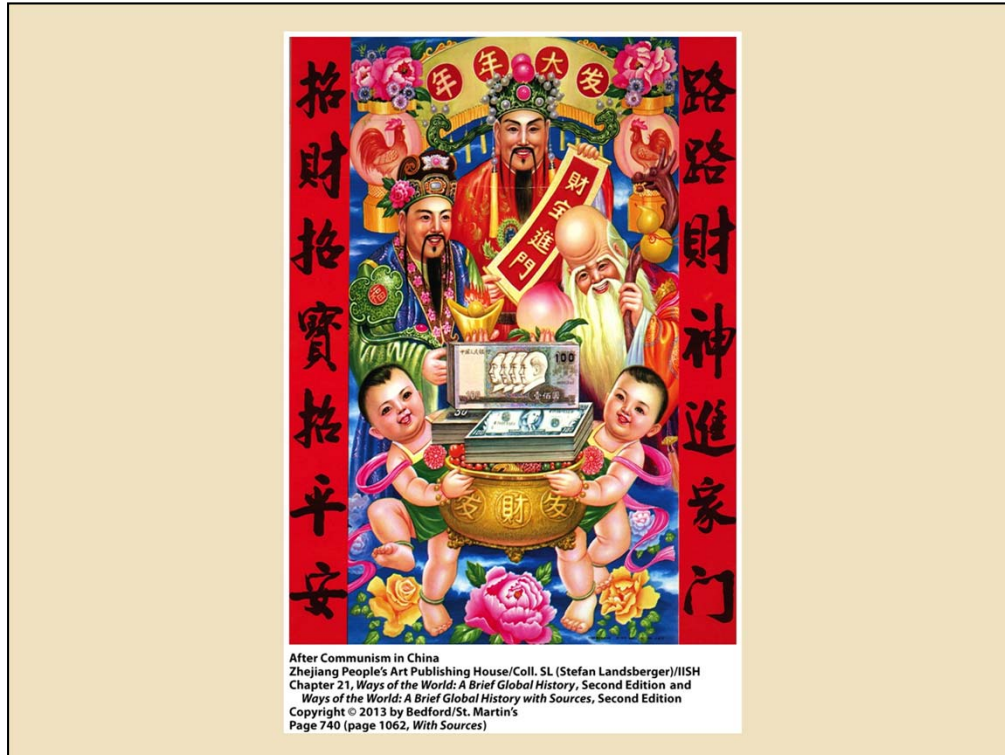
A. China: Abandoning Communism and Maintaining the Party

1. Deng Xiaoping's post-Mao reforms
2. Mao's worst fears?
3. Message of Tiananmen Square, 1989

IV. Paths to the End of Communism

A. China: Abandoning Communism and Maintaining the Party

1. Deng Xiaoping's post-Mao reforms: After the 1976 death of Mao, Deng Xiaoping engaged in a series of reforms that first loosened up on culture and then addressed the abuses of the Cultural Revolution before opening up the economy.
2. Mao's worst fears?: Deng's economic reforms revolutionized the Chinese economy by moving away from state control and allowing small-scale private enterprise to flourish. While the state supervised the process, it seemed as if Mao's worst fears came true as China went down the path towards capitalism. While the economy boomed, wealth inequalities became more and more intense, and social vices returned to the cities.
3. Message of Tiananmen Square, 1989: As the party loosened up on the economy, a student movement called for political freedoms and even democracy. Deng Xiaoping made it very clear that there would be no discussion of democracy and crushed the student movement in front of international press cameras in June 1989. Thus, while China moved away from communist economic policies and embraced capitalist growth, the CCP remained firmly in control and tolerated no dissent as it entered the twenty-first century.



1. What does this image show, and where does it come from?

This is a poster from China showing traditional gods of wealth (on top), happiness (lower left), and longevity (lower right). The caption reads “The Gods of Wealth enter the home from everywhere.” Below the gods are two children carrying a golden pot topped with stacks of paper currency. Brightly colored flowers against a sparkling blue background add to the image’s cheery atmosphere.

2. Can you date this poster? What time period in Chinese history does it reflect?

This is a 1993 New Year’s Eve poster; it is difficult to imagine such a poster being distributed in China prior to Mao’s death in 1976. The embrace of wealth and prosperity as personal goals were not part of the Communist ideology that encompassed selflessness, simplicity, and community, and it would not have included a reference to paper currency in the prerevolutionary dynasties. It was the reforms of Deng Xiao Ping, who came to power after Mao’s death, that preserved the hold of the Communist party in China while largely abandoning communism as an economic practice.

3. Is this poster simply a return to traditional Chinese culture? What about this image is anything but traditional?

Although the poster by all appearances embraces traditional Chinese values and customs, it is centered on a novel and foreign object—paper currency. One stack of notes carries the silhouette of four men—this is most likely China’s currency—but there is also a stack of U.S. dollars. Note the silhouette of George Washington visible on the center of the top bill.

V. Paths to the End of Communism

B. The Soviet Union: The Collapse of Communism and Country

1. Mikhail Gorbachev's *perestroika* and *glasnost*
2. Nationalist movements
3. Collapse of regimes in Eastern Europe, 1989
4. USSR becomes Russia and 14 other states, 1991

IV. Paths to the End of Communism

B. The Soviet Union: The Collapse of Communism and Country

1. Mikhail Gorbachev's *perestroika* and *glasnost*: The failure of the late Soviet economy was a great embarrassment to a party that claimed to make the material lives of its people better. This last Soviet leader tried to save communism by reforming it from within. He started with allowing an economic restructuring and then moved on to a policy of openness. However, Russian farmers were unwilling to engage in economic ventures as their Chinese counterparts had and he failed to attract foreign investment. Thus, Gorbachev's reforms resulted in an economic downturn, and they allowed protestors to criticize the government.

2. Nationalist movements: To make matters worse, many regional minorities demanded autonomy or independence from what they saw as Russian, not communist, domination. Gorbachev refused to use force against these movements.

3. Collapse of regimes in Eastern Europe, 1989: In this "miracle year," after the crushing of the student movement in China, a series of protests and revolts toppled the Eastern European communist regimes in the space of a few weeks. Importantly, the USSR did not move to prop up these unpopular regimes.

4. USSR becomes Russia and 14 other states, 1991: As protests

grew and a coup failed, the USSR peacefully voted itself out of existence in December 1991. Suddenly, the first communist state no longer existed, and the party quickly became inconsequential.



Map 21.4 The Collapse of the Soviet Empire
 Chapter 21, *Ways of the World: A Brief Global History, Second Edition* and
Ways of the World: A Brief Global History with Sources, Second Edition
 Copyright © 2013 by Bedford/St. Martin's
 Page 743 (page 1065, With Sources)

VI. Reflections: To Judge or Judge Not

- A. Are moral judgments on history appropriate?**
- B. Difficulty of discussing communism in the United States**
- C. Freedom or justice?**
- D. Modernization at what cost?**

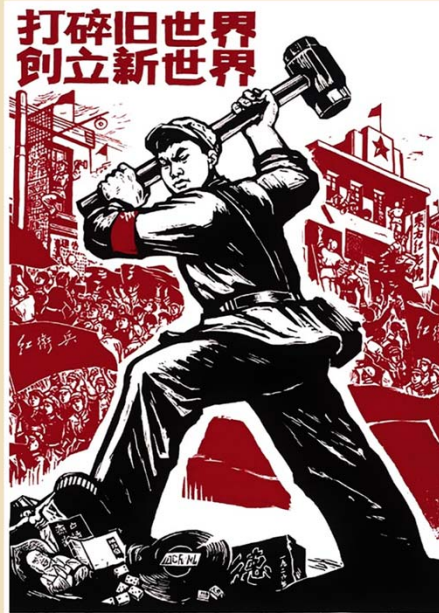
VI. Reflections: To Judge or Judge Not

A. Are moral judgments on history appropriate?: Is it right for historians to make moral judgments on historical events? How can one judge a completely different historical context?

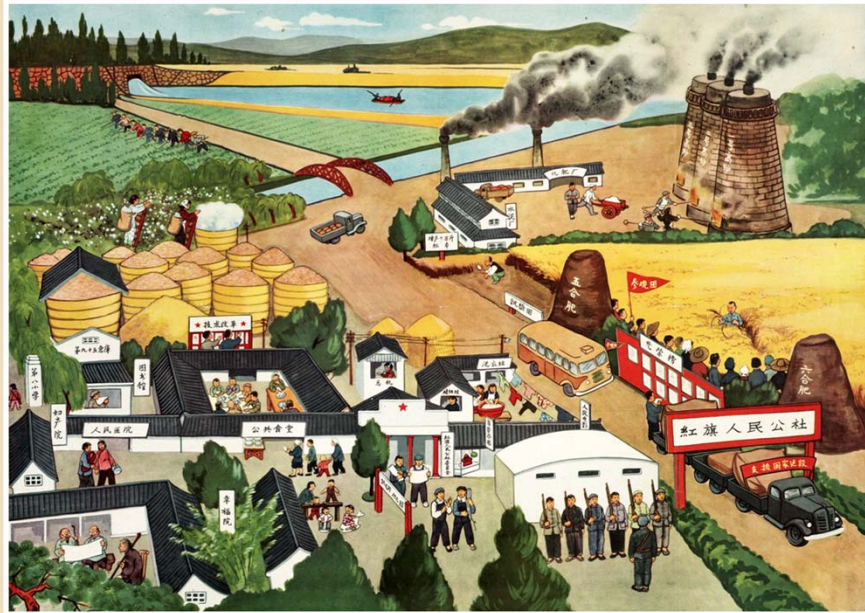
B. Difficulty of discussing communism in the United States: In the United States, with no major socialist tradition and staunch anticommunism strong in the minds of many, it is difficult to have a fair and balanced discussion of communism.

C. Freedom or justice?: Did the communist revolutions represent an effort to achieve justice at the expense of freedom?

D. Modernization at what cost?: Are these cases of putting the quest for modernization above all other considerations?



Visual Source 21.1 Smashing the Old Society
Courtesy, Centre for the Study of Democracy, University of Westminster, London, Chinese Poster Collection
Chapter 21, *Ways of the World: A Brief Global History with Sources*, Second Edition
Copyright © 2013 by Bedford/St. Martin's
Page 1080



Visual Source 21.2 Building the New Society: The People's Commune
Shanghai Educational Publishing House/Coll. SL (Stefan Landsberger)/IISH
Chapter 21, *Ways of the World: A Brief Global History with Sources*, Second Edition
Copyright © 2013 by Bedford/St. Martin's
Page 1082



Visual Source 21.3 Women, Nature, and Industrialization
Courtesy, Centre for the Study of Democracy, University of Westminster, London, Chinese Poster Collection
Chapter 21, *Ways of the World: A Brief Global History with Sources*, Second Edition
Copyright © 2013 by Bedford/St. Martin's
Page 1083



Visual Source 21.4 The Cult of Mao
Zhejiang People's Art Publishing House/Coll. SL (Stefan Landsberger)/ISH
Chapter 21, *Ways of the World: A Brief Global History with Sources*, Second Edition
Copyright © 2013 by Bedford/St. Martin's
Page 1084