

Today, we go back 99 years - to July 23 1921, when the CHINESE COMMUNIST PARTY was created in the city of SHANGHAI, in China (obviously). This is an event that has had, and is still having, huge consequences for the world - because the Chinese Communist Party now controls China, and has done since 1949. In 1921, any dreams of ruling China must have seemed to be just that - dreams - to the founding members of the Chinese Communist Party, including a 28 year old called MAO ZEDONG (pronounced 'Ma-oh Zed - ong') who had drifted around as a student, teacher, and political organiser. Instead, the Party was initially formed in order to allow people who wanted to see the ideas of KARL MARX (mentioned yesterday) - about allowing workers to control the places where they worked and profit from the work that they did - come to reality in China, where there were A LOT of workers: peasants working in farms all over China.



Gradually, more and more people joined the Chinese Communist Party until the Chinese government - led by CHIANG KAI-SHEK (pronounced 'Chee - ang ky - shek') - decided to wipe out the Chinese Communists. In order to escape Chiang Kai-Shek's army, in 1934 MAO and ZHOU ENLAI (pronounced 'Joe - en - lie') led the Chinese Communists on a LONG MARCH west across China to get to somewhere where they could not be reached by Chiang Kai-Shek. After doing this, MAO and ZHOU ENLAI became the undisputed leaders of the Chinese Communist Party. Chiang Kai-Shek's forces became weaker and weaker after JAPAN attacked China in 1937. By the end of WORLD WAR II, in 1945, the Japanese were completely defeated - but they had done enough damage to the Chinese government and army that four years later, the Chinese Communists were able to overthrow Chiang Kai-Shek, driving him and his followers out of China, and into the island of TAIWAN, just off China (which is still independent of China to this day, much to the fury of the Chinese Communist government - which cannot invade Taiwan (yet) because it is protected by the United States).

The Chinese Communists who now ruled China initially were good friends with the Communist Soviet Union, just north of China - but they soon fell out when it became clear that Mao would not be dictated to by the Soviet Union, but would do what he thought was best for China. However, what he thought was best for China was actually pretty disastrous and Mao's attempts to move Chinese society forward with a GREAT LEAP FORWARD in 1958, and then a CULTURAL REVOLUTION in 1966 resulted in huge numbers of Chinese people being killed or starved to death. But in 1972, China got a lifeline from the most unexpected source - the United States of America. After 1949, the United States wanted nothing to do with China - it had supported Chiang Kai-Shek, and it hated the idea of China falling under Communist rule. But from 1965 onwards, the United States got involved in a terrible war in VIETNAM (pronounced 'Vee - et - nam'). Vietnam was a country in South East Asia that was split into NORTH VIETNAM and SOUTH VIETNAM. North Vietnam was ruled by Communists (just like China) and South Vietnam was friendly with the United States. The United States tried to



stop North Vietnam taking over South Vietnam, and sent loads of soldiers to South Vietnam to protect it - but they got involved in terrible battles, and a lot of Americans started dying out in Vietnam. (You might remember that MUHAMMAD ALI (April 28) lost his title as heavyweight boxing champion of the world because he refused to join the US Army and fight in Vietnam.)

In 1968, RICHARD NIXON was elected President of the United States, because he had promised to bring the war in Vietnam to an end. But how could he do this? - how could he get 'PEACE WITH HONOUR'? He needed someone to put pressure on North Vietnam to stop trying to take over South Vietnam, so the Americans could go home. The Soviet Union wouldn't do it - it was absolutely delighted at the terrible mess the Americans had gotten itself into over Vietnam. So instead, Nixon did something the Soviet Union NEVER expected him to do - he turned to the Chinese for help. Nixon sent his foreign policy adviser HENRY KISSINGER (pronounced 'Kiss - en - jer') on top secret trips to China, where Kissinger would discuss with ZHOU ENLAI what America could do for China, and what China could do for America in return. And when those talks went well, Nixon announced he would be going to China on February 21 1972. No one could believe it - the President of the United States was going to China! The scenes of Nixon's plane landing in China were the biggest TV event since the Moon landing in 1969. Check out this five minute video, which tells you the whole story:

<https://youtu.be/Lnz7Ze71Pc0?t=10>

The visit to China was a huge success for Nixon - everyone thought he was an amazingly visionary world leader to make such a big and bold move, and that helped to ensure he was re-elected President in November 1972.

And Nixon's visit to China started China on the road that it is now going down. Under a succession of American Presidents, the West brought China 'out of the cold' from the 1970s onwards and encouraged it to embrace Adam Smith-style FREE MARKET CAPITALISM. From 1979 onwards - after Mao's death - the Chinese Communists became free market capitalists, but there was one point on which they remained very, very firm communists: no public criticism of the Communist Party would be allowed, and no one would be allowed to challenge the Communist Party's rule over China. This resulted in thousands of Chinese people being killed in TIANANMEN (pronounced 'Tian - mun') SQUARE in 1989, when - encouraged by the fall of the Soviet Union - Chinese people assembled to call for their government to allow free and democratic elections. But even this terrible event did not stop the American government under both PRESIDENTS BUSH, and PRESIDENT CLINTON, and PRESIDENT OBAMA giving China 'most favoured nation' status and full access to Western markets.

This policy has now been reversed by PRESIDENT TRUMP, who has returned the United States to the position it held before President Nixon - that China is America's enemy and must not be given any help or



assistance. The 2020 Presidential election will determine whether America continues with that policy, and China can be expected to be hoping desperately that President Trump will not be re-elected.

In 2021, it will be the 100th anniversary of the creation of the Chinese Communist Party, and the Chinese government must already be making big plans to celebrate the anniversary. We shall just have to see whether the Chinese Communist Party gets to enjoy another 100 years - or is finally overthrown, in the same that it overthrew Chiang Kai-Shek in 1949.