

COMMUNIST CHINA



Communists Take Over China

During World War II the Chinese Communists and the nationalist Guomintang put aside differences to fight Japanese invaders.

Civil War Resumes

- Once Japan defeated, civil war resumed
- Guomintang forces outnumbered Mao's Communists, but Communists had wide support among China's peasants
- Rural Chinese peasants had long been oppressed by brutal landlords, high taxes, policies of Jiang Jieshi's corrupt government

Public Support

- Communists promised to take land from landlords, distribute to peasants
- By 1949, Communists had driven Guomintang almost entirely from China
- Guomintang control limited to small areas on mainland, several islands, including Taiwan

Communists Take Over China

People's Republic of China

- October 1, 1949, Mao Zedong stood before huge crowd in Beijing
- Announced formation of People's Republic of China
- Mao's strategy of guerrilla warfare in rural China

Opposition to Mao

- China faced many difficulties, including crippled economy, lack of functional government
- Some countries opposed to communism refused to recognize Mao
- Claimed Jiang's government on Taiwan was true Chinese government

FACES OF HISTORY

MAO Zedong

1893–1976



As a teenager, Mao Zedong was forced to work full-time on his family's farm. Rebelling against his parents, Mao left home to continue

his education and by 1918 was working as a librarian's assistant at Beijing University, where he was first introduced to Marxist theory.

Mao joined the Chinese Communist Party in 1921 and soon after realized the potential power of China's rural peasants. Mao believed that, unlike the Bolshevik revolution in Russia, which depended on urban workers, China's hundreds of millions of peasants would be the revolutionaries. It was Mao's strategy of guerrilla warfare in rural China that would eventually lead to Communist victory.

Summarize How did Mao believe that China differed from Russia?

Summarize

Why did peasants support the Communist takeover of China?

Answer(s): because the Communists promised them land



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China under Mao

Having defeated the Guomindang, Mao set about building a Communist China. His first concern was rebuilding a country that had been torn apart by years of civil war.

Rebuilding China

- Communist ideology shaped new government
- Change in China's political, economic systems
- Government discouraged practice of religion

Development

- Also seized property of rural landowners, redistributed among peasants
- Put in place Soviet-style five-year plans for industrial development

First Plan

- 1957, first plan doubled China's small industrial output
- Early efforts to build economy successful
- Improved economy, reduced poverty

Early Years

Improvements in literacy rates, public health

- **Chinese life expectancy increased sharply over next few decades**
- **Improvements came at a cost**
 - To consolidate Communist control over China, government soon began to eliminate so-called “enemies of the state” who had spoken out against government’s policies
 - Many thousands—including public officials, business leaders, artists, writers—killed, or sent to labor camps

China Modeled on Soviet Union

- Soviet Union provided financial support, aid in China's first years
- China modeled many of its new political, economic, military policies on Soviet system
- 1950s, territorial disputes, differences in ideology pushed China away from Soviet ally

The Great Leap Forward

- 1958, in break from Soviet-style economic planning, Mao announced program designed to increase China's industrial, agricultural output
- The **Great Leap Forward** created thousands of communes, collectively owned farms, of about 20,000 people each
- Each commune to produce food, have own small-scale industry



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Card issued to celebrate the **Great Leap Forward**

The Great Leap Forward

Planning Disaster

- Plan was disaster; small commune factories failed to produce quantity, quality of goods China needed
- Combination of poor weather, farmers' neglect led to sharp drops in agricultural production
- Famine spread through rural China; tens of millions starved to death between 1959 and 1961

China Virtually Isolated

- Failure of Great Leap Forward led to criticism of Mao
- Soviet criticism, withdrawal of Soviet industrial aid widened rift between two Communist nations
- By early 1960s, relations had broken down completely; China virtually isolated in world community