

# Lesson 2

## Communists Take Power in China



“The Chinese People Have High Aspirations”

# Setting the Stage

- In World War II, China fought on the side of the victorious Allies. But the victory proved to be a hollow one for China. During the war, Japan's armies had occupied and devastated most of China's cities. China's civilian death toll alone was estimated at between 10 and 22 million persons. This vast country suffered casualties second only to those of the Soviet Union. However, conflict did not end with the defeat of the Japanese. In 1945, opposing Chinese armies faced one another.

# Communists vs. Nationalists

- A bitter civil war was raging between the **Nationalists** and the **Communists** when the Japanese invaded China in 1937. During World War II, the political opponents temporarily united to fight the Japanese. But they continued to jockey for position within China.



# World War II in China

- Under their leader, **Mao Zedong** (MOW-dzuh•dahng), the Communists had a stronghold in northwestern China. From there, they mobilized peasants for guerrilla war against the Japanese in the northeast. Thanks to their efforts to promote literacy and improve food production, the Communists won the peasants' loyalty. By 1945, they controlled much of northern China.
- Meanwhile, the Nationalist forces under **Jiang Jieshi** (jee•ahng-jee•shee) dominated southwestern China. Protected from the Japanese by rugged mountain ranges, Jiang gathered an army of 2.5 million men. From 1942 to 1945, the United States sent the Nationalists at least \$1.5 billion in aid to fight the Japanese.
- Jiang's army actually fought few battles against the Japanese. Instead, the Nationalist army saved its strength for the coming battle against Mao's Red Army. After Japan surrendered, the Nationalists and Communists resumed fighting.

- **Communists**

- Mao Zedong
- Stronghold in north & northwest China
- Peasant loyalty
- Red Army
- Fought Japanese in north

- **Nationalists**

- Jiang Jieshi (formily Chiang Kai-shek)
- Southwestern China
- Supported by US with money (most of the \$ went to corrupt officials)
- Few battles with the Japanese
- Nationalists saved their strength for the Communists



## **Internal Struggles**

# Civil War Resumes

- The renewed civil war lasted from 1946 to 1949. At first, **the Nationalists** had the advantage. Their army outnumbered **the Communists'** army by as much as three to one. And the United States continued its support by providing nearly \$2 billion in military aid.
- The Nationalist forces, however, did little to win popular support. With China's economy collapsing, thousands of Nationalist soldiers deserted to join the Communists. In spring 1949, China's major cities fell to the well-trained Red forces. Mao's troops were also enthusiastic about his promise to return land to the peasants.
- The remnants of Jiang's shattered army fled south. In October 1949, **Mao Zedong** gained control of the country. He proclaimed it the **People's Republic of China**.
- **Jiang** and other **Nationalist** leaders retreated to the island of **Taiwan**, which Westerners called Formosa.

# The Two Chinas Affect the Cold War

- China had split into two nations. One was the island of **Taiwan**, or **Nationalist China**, with an area of 13,000 square miles.
- The mainland, or **People's Republic of China**, had an area of more than 3.5 million square miles. The existence of two Chinas, and the conflicting international loyalties they inspired, intensified the Cold War.
- After Jiang Jieshi fled to Taiwan, the United States helped him set up a Nationalist government on that small island. It was called **the Republic of China**.
- The Soviets gave financial, military, and technical aid to Communist China. In addition, the Chinese and the Soviets pledged to come to each other's defense if either was attacked. The United States tried to halt Soviet expansion in Asia.
- In the early years of Mao's reign, Chinese troops expanded into Tibet, India, and southern, or Inner, Mongolia. Northern, or Outer, Mongolia, which bordered the Soviet Union, remained in the Soviet sphere. In a brutal assault in 1950 and 1951, China took control of **Tibet**.



1: Communist soldier, 1946

2: Nationalist soldier, 1949

3: Communist soldier, 1949



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**#3a** As you read about the civil war in China and the creation of two Chinas, take notes to answer the questions. Pgs. 572 -577

<p><b>1. Who?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Who was Mao Zedong?</li><li>b. Who was Jiang Jieshi?</li></ul>	
<p><b>2. When?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. When did the Civil War in China resume?</li><li>b. When did the Civil War end?</li></ul>	
<p><b>3. What?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. What advantages did Nationalist forces have?</li><li>b. What advantages did Communist forces have?</li></ul>	

# The Communists Transform China

- For decades, China had been in turmoil, engaged in civil war or fighting with Japan. So, when the Communists took power, they moved rapidly to strengthen their rule over China's 550 million people.
- They also aimed to restore China as a powerful nation.
- Communists Claim a New **“Mandate of Heaven”**
- After taking control of China, the Communists began to tighten their hold.
- The party's 4.5 million members made up just 1 percent of the population. But they were a disciplined group.
- Like the Soviets, the Chinese Communists set up two parallel organizations, the Communist Party and the national government. Mao headed both until 1959.
- Mao was determined to reshape China's economy based on Marxist socialism.

# Agriculture and Industry

- Eighty percent of the people lived in rural areas, but most owned no land. Instead, 10 percent of the rural population controlled 70 percent of the farmland.
- Under the **Agrarian Reform Law of 1950**, Mao seized the holdings of these landlords. His forces killed more than 1 million landlords who resisted. He then divided the land among the peasants.
- Later, to further Mao's socialist principles, the government forced peasants to join collective farms. Each of these farms was comprised of 200 to 300 households.
- Mao's changes also transformed industry and business. Gradually, private companies were nationalized, or brought under government ownership.
- In 1953, Mao launched a **five-year plan** that set high production goals for industry.
- By 1957, China's output of coal, cement, steel, and electricity had increased dramatically.

**“Brave the wind and the waves, everything has remarkable abilities”  
1959**

乘風破浪 各顯神通



1959年10月

# “The Future of the Rural Village” -1958



# “The Great Leap Forward”

- To expand the success of the first **Five-Year Plan**, Mao proclaimed the “**Great Leap Forward**” in early 1958. This plan called for still larger collective farms, or **communes**.
- By the end of 1958, about 26,000 communes had been created. The average commune sprawled over 15,000 acres and supported more than 25,000 people. In the strictly controlled life of the communes, peasants worked the land together.
- They ate in communal dining rooms, slept in communal dormitories, and raised children in communal nurseries. And they **owned nothing**. The peasants had no incentive to work hard when only the state profited from their labor.
- The Great Leap Forward was a giant step backward. Poor planning and inefficient “backyard,” or home, industries hampered growth. The program was ended in 1961 after crop failures caused a **famine that killed about 20 million people**.

# After the Great Leap Forward

- After the failure of **the Great Leap Forward** and the split with the Soviet Union, Mao reduced his role in government. Other leaders moved away from Mao's strict socialist ideas.
- For example, farm families could live in their own homes and could sell crops they grew on small private plots. Factory workers could compete for wage increases and promotions.
- Mao thought China's new economic policies weakened the Communist goal of social equality. He was determined to revive the revolution.
- In 1966, he urged China's young people to "learn revolution by making revolution." Millions of high school and college students responded. They left their classrooms and formed militia units called **Red Guards**.

# The Cultural Revolution

- **The Red Guards** led a major uprising known as the **Cultural Revolution**. Its goal was to establish a society of peasants and workers in which all were equal.
- The new hero was the peasant who worked with his hands. The life of the mind—intellectual and artistic activity—was considered useless and dangerous.
- Mao and Lin Biao urged the students to “**Destroy the Four Olds**”: old ideas, old culture, old customs and old habits.
- To stamp out this threat, the Red Guards shut down colleges and schools. They targeted anyone who resisted the regime. Intellectuals had to “**purify**” themselves by doing hard labor in remote villages.
- Thousands were executed or imprisoned. Chaos threatened farm production and closed down factories. Civil war seemed possible.
- By 1968, even Mao admitted that the Cultural Revolution had to stop.
- The army was ordered to put down the Red Guards. **Zhou Enlai** (joh ehn•leye), Chinese Communist Party founder and premier since 1949, began to restore order.

# The Red Guards in China



# #3b

As you read about the civil war in China and the creation of two Chinas, take notes to answer the questions. Pgs. 572 -577

## 4. Where?

- a. Where is Nationalist China located?
- b. Where is the People's Republic of China located?

## 5. How?

- a. How did the superpowers react to the existence of two Chinas?
- b. How did Mao transform the economy of China

## 6. Why?

- a. Why did the Great Leap Forward fail?
- b. Why did Mao launch the Cultural Revolution?