



CHINESE REVOLUTION

POSSIBLE ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- How did the establishment of a Communist government in China and Mao Zedong's rise to power impact the Chinese people and relations between the East and West?

BACKGROUND

Following World War II and continued threats of Japanese aggression, China's Nationalist and Communist parties worked together to maintain a united front. In 1945, the Soviet Union declared war on Japan in hopes of pushing Japan back off of Manchuria, prompting civil war in China. The Soviet Union supported the Communists and their leader, Mao Zedong, while the United States of America provided support to the Nationalists and Chiang Kai-shek.

In October 1949, Chiang Kai-shek and 600,000 of the Kuomintang, or Nationalist troops, retreated to the island of Taiwan, just off the coast of mainland China, and Mao Zedong and the People's Liberation Army established the People's Republic of China.

Following the split, Mao Zedong worked to fully establish the Communist regime and subsequent policies. Zedong instituted a Land Reform and began seizing properties from wealthy landowners in order to re-allocate to landless peasants. Zedong also began a campaign of identifying and executing "counter-revolutionaries," or those who disagreed with Communist policies.

In 1958, Zedong instituted a five-year plan called The Great Leap Forward, in which the government took over all farming and industrial pursuits. This resulted in an economic downturn and contributed to what became known as the Great Chinese Famine. This three-year period resulted in over 20 million deaths.

Though China worked to remain isolated, China's close relationship with the Soviet Union was cause for concern to democratic nations across the globe until their split in 1953.



RESOURCES**Personal Stories**

- [Documenting China's lost history of famine \(BBC\)](#)
- [China's Cultural Revolution: son's guilt over the mother he sent to her death \(The Guardian\)](#)
- [A Leader in Mao's Cultural Revolution Faces His Past \(NY Times\)](#)
- [Chinese Red Guards Apologize, Reopening A Dark Chapter \(NPR\)](#)
- [An Interview with Bright Sheng \(The Journal of the International Institute\)](#)

Primary Source Documents

- ["Our Attitude Toward Modern Western Civilization" \(Columbia\)](#)
- ["Essentials of the New Life Movement" \(Columbia\)](#)
- [Intellectual Opinions from The Hundred Flowers Period \(1957\) \(Columbia\)](#)
- ["How China Proceeds With The Task Of Industrialization" \(Columbia\)](#)
- [The Sixteen Points: Guidelines For The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution \(1966\) \(Columbia\)](#)
- [Mao Zedong on War and Revolution \(Columbia\)](#)
- [How To Be A Good Communist \(1939\) \(Columbia\)](#)
- [Quotations from Chairman Mao On Being A Communist in China \(1937-1938\) \(Columbia\)](#)

Articles

- [Mao Tse-Tung: Father of Chinese Revolution \(NY Times\)](#)
- [China, The 1950s \(Country Data\)](#)

Websites

- [New Marriage Law \(1950\) \(Chinese Posters\)](#)
- [The Double Tragedy Of The Cultural Revolution in Tibet \(Beijing Cream\)](#)

Images

- [Chinese Posters, Propaganda, Politics, History, Art \(Chinese Posters\)](#)

- [Cultural Revolution \(University of Washington\)](#)
- [Great Leap Forward \(1958-1961\) \(Chinese Posters\)](#)
- [New Marriage Law \(1950\) \(Chinese Posters\)](#)
- [National Minorities \(Chinese Posters\)](#)

Audio

- [Commonly Read Speeches and Writings of Mao Zedong \(1927-1945\) \(Columbia\)](#)
- [Recording The Untold Stories of China's Great Famine \(NPR\)](#)
- [Rural Women and China's Disappearing Collective Past \(UCLA\)](#)

Data

- [China Profile - Timeline \(BBC\)](#)
- [50 Years of Communism in China \(NY Times\)](#)
- [TIMELINE: China Under Communist Rule \(NPR\)](#)

Video

- [Communists, Nationalists, and China's Revolutions \(Crash Course\)](#)
- [The Last Emperor of China \(History Matters\)](#)
- [Mao's Great Famine \(Chi Fung Lam\)](#)

Poetry

- [Mao Zedong - "The Long March" \(Columbia\)](#)
- [Hao Ran - "Date Orchard" \(Columbia\)](#)
- [Dai Sijie - *Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress*](#)
- [Gail Tsukiyama - *A Hundred Flowers*](#)
- [Jung Chang - *Wild Swans*](#)