

ANOTHER COMMUNIST NATION IS BORN: CHINA, 1949

Key Questions

How did communism become established in China?

What role did America and the Soviet Union play in the struggle for power by the communists?

How did the superpowers react to the formation of the People's Republic of China?

Content Recap

Disarray and corruption

China was ruled by the Manchu dynasty from 1644 until 1911. At its height, China was a progressive civilization in the **Far East**, but by 1900 it had become insular and fallen into decay. Several foreign powers held 'concessions' in China and most of the wealth was laundered by them and corrupt government officials. Between 1900 and 1949 China faced social, economic and political chaos. Despite these problems, this 'sick giant' could not be ignored.

China's problems

Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A vast illiterate population • Frequent famine caused by drought and floods • Widespread disease • Women regarded as domestic servants and possessions of men
Economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primitive farming methods. Most endured a subsistence level • Little mechanization or industry • Foreign powers exploited China's trade and resources • Rampant inflation.
Political	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corrupt Manchu government misruled China • 1911, the Kuomintang (KM T) led by Sun Yat-Sen overthrow dynastic rule; China becomes a republic. • 1926, inefficient Nationalist government under Chiang Kai-Shek; little reform; detested association with the communists • Patchwork empire; many areas fell under warlord control

- 1921-49, the Communists under Mao Tse-Tung plan to defeat the Nationalists, inspired by the
- Russian revolution of 1917 and its attack on the class system and inequality; bitter fighting erupts
- 1931 **Imperialist** Japan conquers Manchuria in northern China
- 93, Japan launches full-scale invasion of China
- 1941-49, China fought with the Allies in the Second World War against Japan; united front between the Chinese Communist Party (**CCP**) and KMT
- 1946-49, civil war; CCP vs KM T again
- 1949, communist triumph; supported by the masses and an efficient army

The American and Russian connection

America and Russia played a major role in the struggle for power in China between Nationalist and Communist forces. Thus the Cold War focused on a new sphere of concern. During the period of upheaval that plagued China in the 1940s, America provided monetary and strategic support to Chiang's Nationalist Party, determines to prevent Mao from gaining power.

The CCP had looked to Moscow for assistance. The Communist takeover in China would 'duplicate the mighty feats of the Russian revolution', but there were inherent differences between the two nations. In Russia the revolution was based on the support of the factory workers in urban areas. In China Mao gathered his support from the millions of impoverished peasants.

The Russians did not provide Mao with military assistance to the same extent as the Americans did for Chang Kai-Shek. In fact it could be argued that Stalin favoured a weak KMT government to a strong Communist one. Stalin was positive that Mao's brand of communism had little chance of victory over the Nationalists. He had seriously miscalculated. On October 1 1949 Mao Tse-tung announced, 'We proclaim the establishing of the People's Republic of China. Our nation will enter the family of peace-loving nations of the world. It will promote world peace and freedom. Our nation will never again be an insulted nation. We have stood up. Our revolution had gained the sympathy of the masses through the entire world.'

The communist victory surprised the world. It was not welcomed by the United States. It killed any lingering hope that postwar China could be an

ally and it widened the Cold War to include the Far East. To many in the West, Mao's victory had been masterminded by Stalin as part of the communist struggle for world domination. The Soviets had regarded the KMT as the legal government of China, but when the new government was proclaimed, Stalin naturally welcomed it as a victory for 'world communism'. In February 1950 the Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship was signed. Russia committed substantial military and financial aid to boost China's industrial and economic expansion. China it seemed, had a powerful ally, and for several years she followed a policy of 'leaning to one side'.

China's role in the world arena

In the United Nations Russia supported Communist China's claim to be the **legitimate** government of China. America opposed such a claim, giving its **allegiance** to the Nationalist government in exile. Russia boycotted the United Nations in protest. In reality, Stalin viewed Mao as a **subordinate** and America believed Mao to be a puppet directed from Moscow. Future events were to prove that they were both wrong.

Within a single generation the Chinese Communist Party transformed a war torn and fragmented country into a cohesive and powerful nation. China regarded herself as the champion of Third World countries in their crusade against the industrialised West. One of the most chilly phases of the Cold War was to unfold.

FACTUAL RECALL

Event	Date
Manchu dynasty overthrown	February 1950
Formation of the CCP	1949
Japanese invade Manchuria	1911
American provides mammoth support to Chiang	1948
The People's Republic of China is declared in Peking	1931
America imposes trade sanctions on China	March 1950
Treaty of Friendship	1921

Key Terms

- FAR EAST:** Eastern Asia.
- INSULAR:** inward-looking, narrow and prejudiced.
- CONCESSIONS:** areas of China taken over by foreign powers and under foreign laws. Citizens could trade freely, protected from Chinese competition.
- SUBSISTENCE:** peasants produced just enough food to meet their own needs.
- KMT:** Kuomintang
- REPUBLIC:** a state without a monarchy.
- NATIONALIST:** a person who has enormous pride in their own country and rejects foreign influence and exploitation. In the context of this chapter it also refers to a member of the KMT
- WARLORDS:** military leaders who controlled provinces of China by force.
- IMPERIALIST:** a person or country that aims to take over and dominate another country, in order to create a powerful empire.
- UNITED FRONT:** the CCP and KMT joined forces to fight the Japanese.
- CCP:** Chinese Communist Party.
- SINO-SOVIET:** Chinese-soviet.
- LEGITIMATE:** lawful.
- ALLEGIANCE:** loyalty and obligation to a particular person or country.
- SUBORDINATE:** an individual who works under and follows the orders of a more highly ranked person.

Complete these sentences:

- a. The ideological difference between the Russian revolution and the Chinese revolution was _____

- b. The fate of the entire Asian area is linked to that of China because _____

- c. Communism triumphed in China because _____

- d. Communist China fails to gain recognition in the United Nation because _____

- e. She was finally admitted in the year _____

Events related to the birth of Communist China or how Communism was established in China

➤ **Manchu Dynasty overthrown**

The disarray and the corruption of the Manchu government led to its overthrow by the Sun YatSen and the Kuomintang in 1911. China became a republic

➤ **Inefficient of the Nationalist government (1926)**

The nationalist government led by Chiang Kaishek was inefficient; little reform; detested/hated associations with the communists

➤ **Mao Tse Tung and the Communist party plan to defeat the Nationalist (1921-1949)**

This was inspired by the Russian revolution of 1917

➤ **Civil War**

It was between the CCP and KMT (Chinese Communist Party and the Kuomintang) 1946-1949

➤ **Communist Triumph (1949)**

Birth of a Communist China

Identify key figures related to the establishment of Communism in China

- i. **Mao Zedong**- Leader of the Communist party in China
- ii. **CCP**- China's Communist Party
- iii. **Stalin**- Russian leader who supported and masterminded Mao's victory
- iv. **Chiang Kaishek**- Leader of the Nationalist Party



Mao Tse Tung

Joseph Stalin

Chiang Kai-shek

Describe the roles played by the USA and Soviet Union relating to the birth of Communism in China

USA

- Provided monetary and strategic support to Chiang's Nationalist Party, determined to prevent Mao from gaining power
- USA opposed the claim made by Mao that they are the new government

USSR

- Supported Mao and his group but not to the same extent as the Americans did
- Russia supported Communist China in the United Nations to be the legitimate government of China
- Welcomed the new government as a victory for 'world communism'

Reaction of Superpowers to the formation of the People's Republic of China

USA

- America believed Mao to be a puppet directed from Moscow
- USA did not welcome this and gave its allegiance to the Nationalist government in exile

Western Countries

- Feared of the spreading of Communism
- Welcomed the new government as a victory for 'world communism'