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# Imperial China Collapses

**MAIN IDEA**

**REVOLUTION** After the fall of the Qing dynasty, nationalist and Communist movements struggled for power.

**WHY IT MATTERS NOW**

The seeds of China’s late-20th-century political thought, communism, were planted at this time.

**TERMS & NAMES**

- Kuomintang
- Sun Yixian
- May Fourth Movement
- Mao Zedong
- Jiang Jieshi
- Long March

**SETTING THE STAGE** In the early 1900s, China was ripe for revolution. China had faced years of humiliation at the hands of outsiders. Foreign countries controlled its trade and economic resources. Many Chinese believed that modernization and nationalism held the country’s keys for survival. They wanted to build up the army and navy, to construct modern factories, and to reform education. Yet others feared change. They believed that China’s greatness lay in its traditional ways.

**TAKING NOTES**

**Comparing and Contrasting** Make a chart to compare and contrast the actions of Jiang Jieshi and Mao Zedong in controlling China.

Jiang	Mao
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.

## Nationalists Overthrow Qing Dynasty

Among the groups pushing for modernization and nationalization was the **Kuomintang** (KWOH•mihn•TANG), or the Nationalist Party. Its first great leader was **Sun Yixian** (soon yee•shyahn). In 1911, the Revolutionary Alliance, a forerunner of the Kuomintang, succeeded in overthrowing the last emperor of the Qing dynasty. The Qing had ruled China since 1644.

▼ Sun Yixian led the overthrow of the last Chinese emperor.

**Shaky Start for the New Republic** In 1912, Sun became president of the new Republic of China. Sun hoped to establish a modern government based on the “Three Principles of the People”: (1) nationalism—an end to foreign control, (2) people’s rights—democracy, and (3) people’s livelihood—economic security for all Chinese. Sun Yixian considered nationalism vital. He said, “The Chinese people . . . do not have national spirit. Therefore even though we have four hundred million people gathered together in one China, in reality, they are just a heap of loose sand.” Despite his lasting influence as a revolutionary leader, Sun lacked the authority and military support to secure national unity.

Sun turned over the presidency to a powerful general, Yuan Shikai, who quickly betrayed the democratic ideals of the revolution. His actions sparked local revolts. After the general died in 1916, civil war broke out. Real authority fell into the hands of provincial warlords or powerful military leaders. They ruled territories as large as their armies could conquer.



**World War I Spells More Problems** In 1917, the government in Beijing, hoping for an Allied victory, declared war against Germany. Some leaders mistakenly believed that for China's participation the thankful Allies would return control of Chinese territories that had previously belonged to Germany. However, under the Treaty of Versailles, the Allied leaders gave Japan those territories.

When news of the Treaty of Versailles reached China, outrage swept the country. On May 4, 1919, over 3,000 angry students gathered in the center of Beijing. The demonstrations spread to other cities and exploded into a national movement. It was called the **May Fourth Movement**. Workers, shopkeepers, and professionals joined the cause. Though not officially a revolution, these demonstrations showed the Chinese people's commitment to the goal of establishing a strong, modern nation. Sun Yixian and members of the Kuomintang also shared the aims of the movement. But they could not strengthen central rule on their own. Many young Chinese intellectuals turned against Sun Yixian's belief in Western democracy in favor of Lenin's brand of Soviet communism. **A**

**MAIN IDEA**

**Identifying Problems**

**A** What problems did the new Republic of China face?

## The Communist Party in China

In 1921, a group met in Shanghai to organize the Chinese Communist Party. **Mao Zedong** (MOW dzuh•dahng), an assistant librarian at Beijing University, was among its founders. Later he would become China's greatest revolutionary leader.

Mao Zedong had already begun to develop his own brand of communism. Lenin had based his Marxist revolution on his organization in Russia's cities. Mao envisioned a different setting. He believed he could bring revolution to a rural country

### Connect to Today

#### Tiananmen Square

In Tiananmen Square, the Gate of Heavenly Peace was the site of many political activities during the 20th century. Early in the century, May 4, 1919, thousands of students gathered there to protest the terms of the Versailles Treaty. (upper right). The May Fourth Movement was born that day. The movement marks the beginning of Chinese nationalism.

Seventy years later, in 1989, students once again gathered at the square to demand political reforms. Shortly after the anniversary of the May 4 event, thousands—and perhaps a million people—gathered at the square. On June 3, 1989, the Chinese army was ordered to clear the square of all protesters. Thousands were killed or injured.



where the peasants could be the true revolutionaries. He argued his point passionately in 1927:

#### PRIMARY SOURCE **B**

The force of the peasantry is like that of the raging winds and driving rain. It is rapidly increasing in violence. No force can stand in its way. The peasantry will tear apart all nets which bind it and hasten along the road to liberation. They will bury beneath them all forces of imperialism, militarism, corrupt officialdom, village bosses and evil gentry.

**MAO ZEDONG**, quoted in *Chinese Communism and the Rise of Mao*

#### MAIN IDEA

#### Analyzing Primary Sources

**B** What forces does Mao identify as those that the peasants will overcome?

**Lenin Befriends China** While the Chinese Communist Party was forming, Sun Yixian and his Nationalist Party set up a government in south China. Like the Communists, Sun became disillusioned with the Western democracies that refused to support his struggling government. Sun decided to ally the Kuomintang with the newly formed Communist Party. He hoped to unite all the revolutionary groups for common action.

Lenin seized the opportunity to help China's Nationalist government. In 1923, he sent military advisers and equipment to the Nationalists in return for allowing the Chinese Communists to join the Kuomintang.

**Peasants Align with the Communists** After Sun Yixian died in 1925, **Jiang Jieshi** (jee•ahng jee•shee), formerly called Chiang Kai-shek, headed the Kuomintang. Jiang was the son of a middle-class merchant. Many of Jiang's followers were bankers and businesspeople. Like Jiang, they feared the Communists' goal of creating a socialist economy modeled after the Soviet Union's.

Jiang had promised democracy and political rights to all Chinese. Yet his government became steadily less democratic and more corrupt. Most peasants believed that Jiang was doing little to improve their lives. As a result, many peasants threw their support to the Chinese Communist Party. To enlist the support of the peasants, Mao divided land that the Communists won among the local farmers.

**Nationalists and Communists Clash** At first, Jiang put aside his differences with the Communists. Together Jiang's Nationalist forces and the Communists successfully fought the warlords. Soon afterward, though, he turned against the Communists.

In April 1927, Nationalist troops and armed gangs moved into Shanghai. They killed many Communist leaders and trade union members in the city streets. Similar killings took place in other cities. The Nationalists nearly wiped out the Chinese Communist Party.

In 1928, Jiang became president of the Nationalist Republic of China. Great Britain and the United States both formally recognized the new government. Because of the slaughter of Communists at Shanghai, the Soviet Union did not. Jiang's treachery also had long-term effects. The Communists' deep-seated rage over the massacre erupted in a civil war that would last until 1949.

## Civil War Rages in China

By 1930, Nationalists and Communists were fighting a bloody civil war. Mao and other Communist leaders established themselves in the hills of south-central China. Mao referred to this tactic of taking his revolution to the countryside as "swimming in the peasant sea." He recruited the peasants to join his Red Army. He then trained them in guerrilla warfare. Nationalists attacked the Communists repeatedly but failed to drive them out.

**The Long March** In 1933, Jiang gathered an army of at least 700,000 men. Jiang's army then surrounded the Communists' mountain stronghold. Outnumbered, the



▲ Jiang Jieshi and the Nationalist forces united China under one government in 1928.

## The Long March

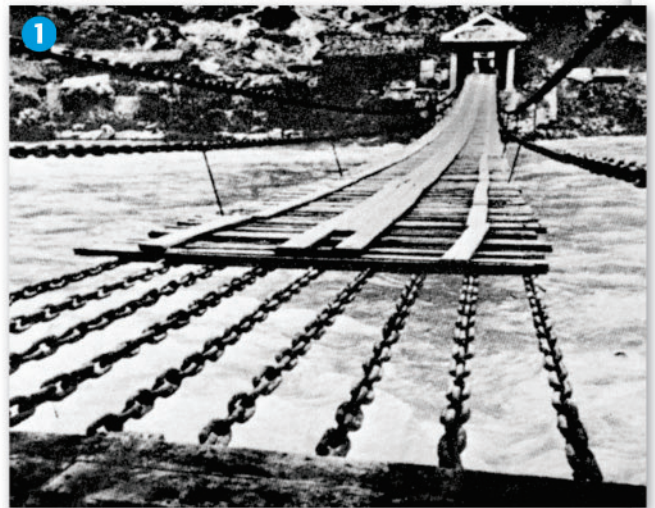
The Long March of the Chinese Communists from the south of China to the caves of Shaanxi [shahn•shee] in the north is a remarkable story. The march covered 6,000 miles, about the distance from New York to San Francisco and back again. They crossed miles of swampland. They slept sitting up, leaning back-to-back in pairs, to keep from sinking into the mud and drowning. In total, the Communists crossed 18 mountain ranges and 24 rivers in their yearlong flight from the Nationalist forces.



### GEOGRAPHY SKILLBUILDER: Interpreting Maps

- 1. Movement** What was the course of the Long March, in terms of direction, beginning in Ruijin and ending near Yan'an?
- 2. Movement** Why didn't Mao's forces move west or south?

▼ In one of the more daring and difficult acts of the march, the Red Army crossed a bridge of iron chains whose planks had been removed.



▼ The Red Army had to cross the Snowy Mountains, some of the highest in the world. Every man carried enough food and fuel to last for ten days. They marched six to seven hours a day.



◀ After finally arriving at the caves in Shaanxi, Mao declared, "If we can survive all this, we can survive everything. This is but the first stage of our Long March. The final stage leads to Peking [Beijing]!"



▲ A Japanese landing party approaches the Chinese mainland. The invasion forced Mao and Jiang to join forces to fight the Japanese.

Communist Party leaders realized that they faced defeat. In a daring move, 100,000 Communist forces fled. They began a hazardous, 6,000-mile-long journey called the **Long March**. Between 1934 and 1935, the Communists kept only a step ahead of Jiang’s forces. Thousands died from hunger, cold, exposure, and battle wounds.

Finally, after a little more than a year, Mao and the seven or eight thousand Communist survivors settled in caves in northwestern China. There they gained new followers. Meanwhile, as civil war

between Nationalists and Communists raged, Japan invaded China. **C**

**Civil War Suspended** In 1931, as Chinese fought Chinese, the Japanese watched the power struggles with rising interest. Japanese forces took advantage of China’s weakening situation. They invaded Manchuria, an industrialized province in the northeast part of China.

In 1937, the Japanese launched an all-out invasion of China. Massive bombings of villages and cities killed thousands of Chinese. The destruction of farms caused many more to die of starvation. By 1938, Japan held control of a large part of China.

The Japanese threat forced an uneasy truce between Jiang’s and Mao’s forces. The civil war gradually ground to a halt as Nationalists and Communists temporarily united to fight the Japanese. The National Assembly further agreed to promote changes outlined in Sun Yixian’s “Three Principles of the People”—nationalism, democracy, and people’s livelihood. As you will learn in Section 4, similar principles were also serving as a guiding force in India and Southwest Asia.

**MAIN IDEA**

**Recognizing Effects**

**C** What were the results of the Long March?

**SECTION 3 ASSESSMENT**

**TERMS & NAMES** 1. For each term or name, write a sentence explaining its significance.

- Kuomintang • Sun Yixian • May Fourth Movement • Mao Zedong • Jiang Jieshi • Long March

**USING YOUR NOTES**

2. Whose reforms had a greater appeal to the peasants? Why?

Jiang	Mao
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.

**MAIN IDEAS**

- How did the Treaty of Versailles trigger the May Fourth Movement?
- How was Mao’s vision of communism different from that of Lenin?
- What started the civil war in China?

**CRITICAL THINKING & WRITING**

- RECOGNIZING EFFECTS** What influence did foreign nations have on China from 1912 to 1938?
- ANALYZING CAUSES** What caused the Communist revolutionary movement in China to gain strength?
- HYPOTHESIZING** If the Long March had failed, do you think the Nationalist party would have been successful in uniting the Chinese? Why or why not?
- WRITING ACTIVITY** **REVOLUTION** Write a series of **interview questions** you would pose to Sun Yixian, Mao Zedong, and Jiang Jieshi.

**CONNECT TO TODAY** **REPORTING ON CURRENT EVENTS**

Research the selection of the newest Communist Party leader of China. Write a brief **report** identifying that person and explaining how this new leader got into office.