Comunism Spreads in East Asia

Objectives
- Analyze China’s Communist Revolution.
- Describe China’s role as a “wild card” in the Cold War.
- Explain how war came to Korea and how the two Koreas followed different paths.

Terms, People, and Places
collectivization
Great Leap Forward
Cultural Revolution
38th parallel
demilitarized zone

Note Taking
Reading Skill: Summarize Complete this chart to summarize the effects of the Communist Revolution on China and the impact of the Cold War on China and Korea.

Vocabulary Builder

Use the information below and the following resources to teach the high-use word from this section.

High-Use Word Definition and Sample Sentence

commune, p. 624 n. a commonly owned and operated farm or community
We visited several communes where I was impressed by the cooperation I saw.
Instruct

- Introduce Have students read the introductory paragraph and the black headings under China’s Communist Revolution. Have students predict what challenges China will face during its Communist Revolution. Then have students read to find out whether their predictions were accurate.

- Teach Review the key events of China’s Communist Revolution. Discuss the revolution’s goals and its methods. Then ask How did China change as a result of its Communist Revolution? (It became a communist nation with a centralized government and economy. Its people endured great suffering because of the government’s brutal policies and poor decisions.)

- Quick Activity Have students read the biography of Mao Zedong on this page and review the visuals in this section. Discuss what qualities or characteristics enabled Mao to capture a nation’s support and allowed him to carry out extreme policies.

Independent Practice

Remind students of Chinese efforts to identify and eliminate “counterrevolutionaries,” particularly during the Cultural Revolution. Using the Think-Write-Pair-Share strategy (TE, p. T23), have students write a paragraph on whether this policy was in the nation’s long-term interest.

Monitor Progress

Ask students to reread the black headings and summarize the content under each one.

Answer

**BIOGRAPHY** He executed anyone who threatened his power and sent critics to the countryside for forced labor.

**Change** Mao Zedong built a Communist one-party totalitarian state in the People's Republic of China. Communist ideology guided the government’s efforts to reshape the economy and society that China had inherited from the dynastic period. The Communist government discouraged the practice of Buddhism, Confucianism, and other traditional Chinese beliefs. Meanwhile, the government seized the property of rural landlords and urban business owners throughout China. Opponents of the Communists were put down as “counterrevolutionaries.” Many thousands of people who had belonged to the propertied middle class, or “bourgeoisie,” were accused of counterrevolutionary beliefs. They were then beaten, sent to labor camps, or killed.

With Soviet help, the Chinese built dams and factories. To boost agriculture, Mao at first distributed land to peasants. Soon, however, he called for collectivization, or the forced pooling of peasant land and labor, in an attempt to increase productivity.

**The Great Leap Forward** From 1958 to 1960, Mao led a program known as the Great Leap Forward. He urged people to make a superhuman effort to increase farm and industrial output. In an attempt to make agriculture more efficient, he created communes. A typical commune brought together several villages, thousands of acres of land, and up to 25,000 people. Rural communes set up small-scale “backyard” industries to produce steel and other products.

The Great Leap Forward, however, proved to be a dismal failure. Backyard industries turned out low-quality, useless goods. The commune system cut food output partly by removing incentives for individual farmers and families, leading to neglect of farmland and food shortages. Bad weather added to the problems and led to a terrible famine. Between 1959 and 1961, as many as 55 million Chinese are thought to have starved to death.

**The Cultural Revolution Disrupts Life** China slowly recovered from the Great Leap Forward by reducing the size of communes and taking a more practical approach to the economy. However, in 1966, Mao launched the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. Its goal was to purge China of “bourgeois” tendencies. He urged young Chinese to experience revolution firsthand, as his generation had.
in response, teenagers formed bands of Red Guards. Wearing copies of the “little red book,” Quotations From Chairman Mao Tse-tung (Zedong), Red Guards attacked those they considered bourgeois. The accused were publicly humiliated or beaten, and sometimes even killed. Skilled workers and managers were forced to leave their jobs and do manual labor on rural farms or in forced labor camps. Schools and factories closed. The economy slowed, and civil war threatened. Finally, Mao had the army restore order.

Checkpoint What were the main successes and failures of the Chinese Communist Revolution?

China, the Cold War’s “Wild Card”
In 1949, the triumph of the Communists in China had seemed like a gain for the Soviet Union and a loss for the United States and its democratic allies. The number of people under communist rule had more than tripled. China’s role in the Cold War, however, proved to be more complex than a simple expansion of communist power.

Split With the Soviet Union The People’s Republic of China and the Soviet Union were uneasy allies in the 1950s. Stalin sent economic aid and technical experts to help China modernize, but distrust between the two countries created tensions. Some of these tensions dated back to territorial disputes between tsarist Russia and dynastic China. By 1960, border clashes and disputes over ideology led the Soviets to withdraw all aid and advisors from China. Western fears of a strong alliance between the Soviet Union and China had proved unfounded.

China’s main successes were improved public infrastructure and somewhat improved public hygiene. The Revolution’s main failures were the purges of intellectuals, the failure of the Great Leap Forward, and inadequate progress in improving productivity.

Caption that the government tried to control all thought and expression, and that Mao Zedong was the ultimate authority.

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Independent Practice
Tell students to suppose they are a team of specialists assigned to prepare a briefing for the U.S. President, so he can stay abreast of events. Have them prepare a brief but thorough report on relations with China and Taiwan during the Cold War, including the pros and cons of the current situation. Ensure students understand the inherent compromises in the U.S. position.

Monitor Progress
As students fill in their charts, circulate to make sure they understand how China’s Communist Revolution affected the nation. For a completed version of the chart, see Note Taking Transparencies, 191

Washington Plays the China Card
Relations between China and the United States were even more complex. After Jiang Jieshi (Chiang Kai-shek) fled to Taiwan, the United States supported his Nationalist government as the rightful representative of China. Washington refused diplomatic recognition of the mainland People’s Republic of China, which American leaders saw as a communist threat to all of Asia.

As the Cold War dragged on, however, the United States took a second look at the People’s Republic. From the American point of view, there were strategic advantages to improving relations with Communist China after its split with the Soviet Union. By “playing the China card,” as this strategy was sometimes called, the United States might isolate the Soviets between NATO in the west and a hostile China in the east.

The United States allowed the People’s Republic to replace Taiwan in the United Nations in 1971. A year later, U.S. President Richard Nixon visited Mao in Beijing. Finally, in 1979, the United States set up formal diplomatic relations with China.

Taiwan and the Nationalists
Jiang Jieshi’s government continued to rule Taiwan under martial law as a one-party dictatorship. Not until the late 1980s did Taiwan’s government end martial law and allow opposition
parties. Mainland China saw Taiwan as a breakaway province and threatened military action when Taiwanese politicians proposed declaring the island’s formal independence. In the long term, the mainland government insisted that Taiwan be rejoined with China. Taiwan’s government resisted such pressure.

**Checkpoint** How did China’s relationships with the Soviet Union and the United States change during the Cold War?

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**War Comes to Korea**

The nation of Korea occupies a peninsula on China’s northeastern border. Like East and West Germany, Korea was split in two by rival forces after World War II. And like other divided lands, the two Koreas found themselves on opposite sides in the Cold War.

A **Divided Nation** Korea was an independent kingdom until Japan conquered it in the early twentieth century. After Japan’s defeat in World War II, rivalries over ideology and borders. China’s relationship with the Soviet Union deteriorated during the Cold War because of rivalries over ideology and borders. China’s relationship with the United States improved as the Cold War progressed, because the United States saw China as a useful partner in its conflict with the Soviet Union.

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**Map Skills** In June 1950, North Korea invaded South Korea. U.S. troops made up the bulk of the UN force that aided South Korea. When UN troops neared the Chinese border, communist China sent troops to aid North Korea.

1. **Locate** (a) the 38th parallel (b) Pusan (c) Inch’on (d) Yalu River
2. **Movement** Which nation gained new territory by the end of the war?
3. **Draw Conclusions** How might UN forces have avoided war with China?

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**Link to Geography**

**Frostbite in Korea** U.S. troops in Korea were not only fighting Communism; they also fought frostbite. The troops first landed in Korea during the summer, when the temperature was high, the air humid. The military was not prepared for the Korean winters, when Siberian air masses flowed south over the country; the temperature typically dipped below zero. Soldiers camped outside during the harsh conditions. During one battle at the Chosin Reservoir, the temperature reached 40 degrees below zero, yet the troops still wore summer uniforms. In the first year of battle alone, an estimated 5,300 troops suffered some form of frostbite. By war’s end, the number would be in the tens of thousands.

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**Answers**

1. **China’s relationship with the Soviet Union** deteriorated during the Cold War because of rivalries over ideology and borders. China’s relationship with the United States improved as the Cold War progressed, because the United States saw China as a useful partner in its conflict with the Soviet Union.

**Map Skills**

1. Review locations with students.
2. Both the North and South gained and lost territory during the war, but ultimately the border was restored to a position close to the 38th parallel.
3. By avoiding the Chinese border
Two Koreas

Instruct

- **Introduce** Tell students that the text compares a divided Korea to a divided Germany. Ask them to predict how these nations would be similar, politically and ideologically. What roles were these areas likely to play in the Cold War conflict?

- **Teach** Draw a Venn diagram on the board, labeled Korea, Germany, and Both. Have students supply facts to compare and contrast the two divided nations. Ask in what ways were divided Korea and divided Germany similar? (Both were divided into communist command economies and capitalist market economies. In both cases, capitalists thrived and communists struggled.) How did they differ? (South Korea was not democratic, while West Germany was. North Korea had one dictator, while East Germany had many leaders. Korea remained divided after the Cold War while Germany was unified.)

- **Quick Activity** Invite students to suggest reasons why command economies seem to stagnate, while market economies seem to thrive.

Independent Practice

Have students use the Venn diagram on the board to write a paragraph comparing and contrasting the economies and the postwar developments of North Korea and South Korea.

Monitor Progress

As students work on their paragraphs, circulate to ensure they understand the differences between a market economy and a command economy.

Answers

**Caption** relative safety and a better vantage point

China got involved in the Korean War when it felt threatened by UN forces on its borders. China wanted to help the Communist North Koreans.

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United Nations forces were made up mostly of Americans and South Koreans. Although U.S. troops arrived in early July, North Korean troops continued to advance until United Nations forces stopped them in August along a line known as the Pusan Perimeter. This perimeter was centered on the port city of Pusan, in the southeastern corner of the Korean peninsula.

In September 1950, United Nations troops landed on the beaches around the port of Inch'on, behind enemy lines. These U.S.-led troops quickly captured Korea’s north-south rail lines and cut off North Korean troops from their supply of food and ammunition. North Korean forces in the south soon surrendered. By November, United Nations forces had advanced north to the Yalu River, along the border of China.


The Korean War turned into a stalemate. Finally, in 1953, both sides signed an armistice, or end to fighting. Nearly two million North Korean and South Korean troops remained dug in on either side of the demilitarized zone (DMZ), an area with no military forces, near the 38th parallel. The armistice held for the rest of the Cold War, but no peace treaty was ever negotiated.

**Checkpoint** Explain why China became involved in the Korean War.
Two Koreas

Like the two Germanys, North and South Korea developed separately after the armistice—North Korea as a communist command economy, South Korea as a capitalist market economy. As in Germany, the capitalist portion of the country had an economic boom and rising standards of living, while the communist zone went through economic stagnation and decline. Also as in Germany, the United States gave economic and military aid to capitalist South Korea, while the Soviets helped the communist north.

Unlike democratic West Germany, however, South Korea was governed by a series of dictators and military rulers during much of the Cold War. Unlike East Germany, where a series of officials led the communist government, a single dictator controlled North Korea throughout the Cold War. Whereas Germany was reunited at the end of the Cold War, Korea remained divided.

South Korea Recovers

After the war, South Korea slowly rebuilt its economy. By the mid-1960s, South Korea’s economy had leapt ahead. After decades of dictatorship and military rule, a prosperous middle class and fierce student protests pushed the government to hold direct elections in 1987. These elections began a successful transition to democracy. Despite the bloody Korean War, most South Koreans during the Cold War years wanted to see their ancient nation reunited, as did many North Koreans. All Koreans shared the same history, language, and traditions. For many, this meant more than Cold War differences.

North Korea Digs In

Under Kim Il Sung, the command economy increased output for a time in North Korea. However, in the late 1960s, economic growth slowed. Kim’s emphasis on self-reliance kept North Korea isolated and poor. The government built a personality cult around Kim, who was constantly glorified as the “Great Leader” in propaganda. Even after its Soviet and Chinese allies undertook economic reforms in the 1980s, North Korea clung to hard-line communism.

Checkpoint How did North Korea’s economic performance compare to South Korea’s?