Introduction. (available at: <http://acienciala.faculty.ku.edu/communistnationssince1917/ch9.html>)

The People's Republic of China (PRC) was established on October 1, 1949. However, an assessment of Chinese communism cannot begin there. It must begin about 30 years earlier, because the preceding years shaped the PRC as a communist state.

Chinese communism has had a remarkable continuity of leadership. Mao Zedong (W-G: Mao tse-Tung, 1893-1976) and his colleagues were party members in the 1920s. Mao was instrumental in establishing an early form of Chinese communism in the years 1928-34. He helped to develop it and create the military and political strategy in the Yenan years of 1935-45 that won the civil war in 1949. He then went on to mold communist China and ruled it - in his last years at least in name - until his death in September 1976.

However, we should also bear in mind that while most veteran communists followed Mao from the late 1950s on, some came to oppose his more extreme policies. Here we should mention the long-time Premier and Foreign Minister Zhou Enlai (W-G: Chu En-lai, 1898-1976), and the leader of the PRC after Mao's death, Deng Xiaoping (Teng Hsiao-p'ing, b. 1904), who was to set the country on the path of economic reform in 1978. However, Deng was also determined to preserve the party's monopoly of power, and crushed the massive student democracy movement by force in June 1989.

To understand the rise of communism in China, we must see it within the context of Chinese history.

--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

\* I would like to thank Professor Dan Bays for his help in writing the original version of this chapter, and Professor Terry Weidner for helping me revise it in fall 1996.

I. **Conditions in China in 1917.**

A. Fragmentation.

China has a 4,000 year history, and was a unified state under several imperial dynasties. The last dynasty, the Qing, was founded by the Manchus in 1644, after their conquest of China. It ruled for almost three hundred years, until it finally collapsed in 1912. By that time the imperial system had fallen into decay and was totally discredited.

Most historians attribute the decline of China at least in part to the inability of its rulers to understand and adapt modern technology. While this is true, another key factor was the quadrupling of the population under the Qing, which put enormous pressure on government resources. In fact, by the early 20th century, Japan was the only Asian country to achieve achieve modernisation and cope with a rapid population increase. We should note, however, that in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, there were some outstanding Chinese thinkers who wanted to modernize China. Some hoped for a constitutional framework, i.e., parliamentary monarchy, while others worked for a democratic republic. Most wanted the abolition of the feudal-Confucian system; all wanted the abolition of foreign privilege and the unification of their vast country.

The man who came to lead the strongest movement for reform and unity was Sun Yat-sen (1866-1925). Sun was born near Canton; he was raised by his elder brother in Hawaii and graduated as a medical doctor in Hongkong in 1892. Two years later, however, he began to devote himself to political work for the overthrow of the Qing dynasty His goal was to create a strong, unified, modern, Chinese republic. Between 1905 and 1912, Sun developed a political movement called the *Revolutionary Alliance*, which was funded by donations from Chinese businessmen living outside of China.

Sun's main backer was Charlie Soong (d. 1927). He came to the United States around 1880, converted to Christianity, and found generous Americans to pay for his education in the U.S. Later, he became a successful businessman in Shanghai. He began by printing and selling bibles, but made his fortune on noodle factories. We should note that Soong's children went on to play important political roles. His two daughters received an American education, after which Ch'ingling married Sun Yat-sen, while May'ling married Chiang Kai-shek. Soong's son, Teseven (T.V.) studied at Harvard and Columbia Universities and became Chiang's Finance Minister.

*In 1911, a military revolt led to revolution and the fall of the Qing dynasty.* Although the revolution aroused great hope for democracy, the Republic established in 1912 proved a miserable failure. The*Guomindang*(Kuomintang, KMT) or Nationalist Party developed by Sun Yat-sen after the revolution on the base of the old Revolutionary Alliance, was still very weak, and the country was in the grip of war lords, who created their own satrapies and had their own armies. Meanwhile, the central government came under the rule of Gen. Yuan Shikai, who died in June 1916 before he could consolidate his power as Emperor. He was succeeded by Li Yuanghong, who had been Vice-President. There followed an insurrection in spring 1917, led by Gen. Zhang Xun, who tried to restore the Qing dynasty in the person of its last male heir, the boy emperor Puyi (1906-1967), but the insurrection collapsed. In August 1918, a new Chinese parliament elected Hsu Shih-ch'ang (W-G) as President, and he retained this post until 1922. However, the central government was weak and faced a rival government in Guangzhou (Canton).

*In the meanwhile, China had lined up with the entente powers and Japan against Germany and Austria-Hungary in World War I.* Although the Chinese authorities did not send soldiers, they did send some 100,000 laborers who were used by the allied armies in France and Belgium, while others worked for the Allies in Mesopotamia and Africa. However,*in January 1917, Japan obtained special rights in the former Chinese provinces of Manchuria and Inner Mongolia,* extending them in 1918. Finally, the Versailles Treaty of June 28, 1919 (peace*t*reaty with Germany worked out by the victor powers) *did not return the former German concession at Shantung to China, but gave it to Japan.*This caused strong anti-Japanese and anti-western feelings in China.

B. The Semi-Colonial Status of China.

In the course of the 19th century, foreign powers had firmly established their separate enclaves (concessions) in the major coastal cities. They had extensive economic-political privileges, including extra-territorial status, the best example of which was the foreign enclave in the great port city of Shanghai. These concessions were won by force and spelled out in the *unequal treaties.*

Along with the power of local warlords, these foreign privileges were a major obstacle to any Chinese political movement aiming to unify the country.

C. The Need for Social Reform and Change.

The social structure of China was obsolete. In particular, the *gentry class*(landlords who sometimes were also local officials) was an obstacle to modernization. They dominated the *peasants*, who made up the vast majority of the population. Almost all of them lived in abject poverty, dying like flies in the recurrent famines. At the same time, most of the *merchants*in the coastal cities lacked capital and vision, while those who tried to develop more modern methods were checked by foreign privilege. The *urban workers -* about 2 million out of an estimated population of some 300 million in 1918 - were mostly unskilled and also lived in dire poverty. Thus, *social reform was a third priority, coming behind national unity and independence, because reformers saw them as the basic prerequisites for the modernization of China*.

D. Intellectual Ferment.

Many members of China's small educated class were deeply worried by the situation; they were desperate for change and looked for answers. The constitutional monarchists were led by Kang Youwei (1858-1927), who hoped that the Qing emperor Guangxu would achieve this aim. However, the Emperor died in 1908 and the reins of government were taken over by the old dowager empress Cixi, who acted as regent for the boy-emperor, Puyi. Another reformist thinker was Liang Qichao, a disciple of Kang. Liang rejected violent revolution, but worked for an informed citizenry and political discipline. Like Kang, he also argued for the liberation of women and their participation in political life. *Marxism*began to gain adherents in China with the translation of Marx's Communist Manifesto in 1906, but some thinkers were more attracted to anarchism. Finally, there was Sun Yat-sen and his Revolutionary Alliance (see above).

The yearning of educated Chinese for a reformed, united, China, free of foreign privilege, was clearly expressed in the May 4th Movement of 1919. This student-led movement *protested against the unfair treatment of China in the peace treaties following World War I,* whereby Japan took over the German concession in Shantung and expanded its control over Manchuria. *The May 4th Movement also attacked the privileges of the foreign powers, and made radical and democratic demands for changing the social and political system.* The students, encouraged by radically inclined professors, especially at Beijing University (Beida), were soon joined by businessmen and workers. Thus, there was considerable potential for mobilizing a national movement.

-----------------------------------------------

II. The Impact of the Russian Revolution and of Marxism-Leninism on China.

A. The Beginnings of Chinese Communism.

Many Chinese intellectuals were attracted by Marxism. Those active in the in May 4th Movement, as well as others outside it, saw socialism as a means of preventing the conflicts caused by capitalism - particularly because at a time of great ambivalence toward the West, Marxism could be seen as as a western "ism" that could be used against the West. Finally, many

Chinese socialists were attracted to anarchism.

In June 1918, the head librarian at Beijing University, Li Dazhao, saluted Lenin. Li saw the revolution in backward Russia as a model for China. He established a Marxist study group at the university, which Mao Zedong joined in 1919. Mao had moved to Beijing and worked as a clerk in the university library. Chen Duxiu, a dean at Beijing University and editor of the progressive journal, New Youth, decided to devote a special issue to Marxism; it was published on May 1, 1919, under the editorship of Li Dazhao. Li's article analyzed Marxist concepts, introducing them to the journal's readers all over China.

As with Russian Marxists, the main problem facing the Chinese Marxists was the fact that the vast majority of the population was made up not of workers, but of peasants. Li Dazhaocircumvented this obstacle by claiming that foreign exploitation of China made all its people an exploited proletariat. Moreover, he claimed that China could not be liberated without the liberation of the peasants. He urged young Marxists to go into the countryside, and they began to do so in 1920.

A member of Li's Marxist study group, Qu Qiubai, was one of the most successful organizers of China's peasants. He even visited Moscow that same year - 1920 - and wrote an enthusiastic report in the Beijing Morning News. He wrote that he was happy he had seen "the lighthouse of the mind's sea." Two years later, he was still in Moscow and became a member of the communist party.

B. Early Sino-Soviet Relations.

Chinese Communists benefited greatly from the fact that Sun Yat-sen obtained no support from the Western powers who were, after all, attached to their special privileges in China. (In fact, to begin with, he was seen as too close to the West and had to take a harder line anyway). It is not surprising, therefore, that he turned to Moscow. In January 1918, he congratulated Lenin on the successful Bolshevik revolution (November 1917).

There was little reliable information about the Bolshevik revolution in China before 1920. We know that study groups were organized to study Marxist thought but it was not until spring 1920, that a Comintern agent, Grigorii Voytinskii, arrived in China with information and political writings. Many of these were translated into Chinese at this time. It was also Voytinskii who worked successfully to transform the existing Marxist study groups into communist groups and then into the Communist Party of China. Here we should note that Voytinskii was assisted in this organizational work by the Soviet government's proclamation that it would give up the old Russian privileges in China. In particular, *the Soviet government promised to return the Chinese Eastern Railway (CER, a branch of the Trans-Siberian railway) to China*. Though this promise was not implemented, it made Chinese authorities more friendly to Moscow and allowed some travel between China and Soviet Russia.

Thus, it was in the period between spring and winter 1920, and with the active help of Voytinskii, that the Chinese Communist Party began to take shape. It was based on the Marxist study groups previously organized in Beijing and Shanghai. The party was secretly constituted in that city in July 1921, formalizing the organization formed the previous year. The General Secretary was Chen Duxiu, while Zhang Guotao was made head of the organization section, and Li Dazhao was head of propaganda. *Communist nuclei around the country were transformed into party branches with local secretaries in Hunan (Mao Zedong), Guangzhou, Wuhan, Beijing, and Jinan. Shanghai had its own branch*. The party program closely followed the Bolshevik program in Soviet Russia. However, some radical Chinese intellectuals rejected the Bolshevik model; they were either supporters of democratic socialism, or joined the Guomindang (Kuomingtang). Voytinskii was succeeded by Maring (alias of Hendricus Sneevliet), who continued to guide the fledgling communist movement in China.

Here it is appropriate to give a brief biographical sketch of Mao Zedong. He was born into a prosperous farming family in Hunan Province in 1893. He rebelled against his father and refused to accept an arranged marriage. He read much on his own and majored in ethics at the First Normal School (Teachers' College) in Changsha. He resented the superior airs of Chinese scholars, and it is then that he probably acquired the anti-intellectual attitudes, strengthened later at Beijing University, that he manifested as a leader. *In his essay on physical education, published in the progressive journal, New Youth, in April 1917, he attacked the "passive" Confucian thinking and way of life; he called for physical education to strengthen the body, for violence, and anger*. Soon, he was advocating the equal rights of women, and attacking the practice of arranged marriages. Above all, he expressed a determination to fight for his beliefs. He was to implement all these early thoughts when he became the leader of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and then of China. (1)

III. The Comintern and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) to 1927.

Lenin was convinced that the Russian Revolution could not survive unless successful revolutions took place in other countries, which would then become socialist allies of Soviet Russia. But he knew from his own experience that in economically backward countries -- and Russia was a backward country in 1917 -- the revolutionary leaders were not workers or peasants, but bourgeois, i.e., middle class intellectuals. Therefore, he developed the policy of supporting "bourgeois nationalism" in Western-ruled colonial areas, seeing it as the primary instrument of anti-imperialist revolution. This was, in turn, to lead to the fall of "imperialism" which he saw as the highest stage of capitalism. This explains Lenin's primary interest in the nationalist Guomindang(Kuomintang [KMT]) movement.

Thus, in the early 1920s, the Soviet Union supported Sun Yat-Sen's KMT. The Soviets agreed to give Sun military, political, and organizational help. The latter consisted of building a party cell structure in the country which strengthened it greatly. Official diplomatic relations were established in 1924. In May of that year, the Soviet government fulfilled some of its earlier promises by giving up formally the old Russian concessions in Tianjin (Tientsin) and Hankow, as well as paying the outstanding part of the indemnity for Chinese losses incurred by Russian action in the great power intervention during the Boxer Rebellion (1900-1901). These Soviet moves cost Moscow very little, while increasing Chinese goodwill toward the USSR.

Sun Yat-Sen had his base in Guangzhou (Canton). His primary goal was the reunification of the country. To do this, he had to accomplish two key objectives: defeat the Chinese warlords and force out the foreign powers. But first, he had to make the KMT an effective, political and military force, and to do this, he needed outside help. Since he received no help from any of the foreign powers, he welcomed that of the Comintern.

After Voytinskii and Maring, the foremost agent of the Comintern in China was Michael Borodin (real name: Gruzenberg), whom Sun Yat-Sen invited to China in 1923. He acted as Comintern adviser to the Central Committee of the KMT until 1927. (He was later a victim of the Stalin purges). Borodin acted as Comintern agent to the KMT Central Committee until 1927. He helped Sun reorganize the KMT along Bolshevik lines, i.e., to give it a Bolshevik party structure. At the same time, Soviet military advisers led by General Vasily K. Blyukher, (known in China as Galen), helped establish a military force under KMT control. (Blyukher was also to be a victim of the Stalin purges). The establishment of this military force saw the rise of Chiang Kai-shek (P: Chieh-shih, 1887-1975). After studying in Moscow, he began his career as the Commander of the Whampoa Military Academy in May 1924, with the communist Zhou Enlai (Chou En-lai) as his second in command.

We should note that Lenin, and later Stalin, ordered the CCP to join the KMT and many leading communists did so, including Mao and Zhou Enlai. The goal was to strengthen and, at the same time, infiltrate the KMT. Nevertheless, though Soviet advisers gave the KMT ideology an anti-imperialist slant, the bulk of the movement remained distinctly non-communist. Ironically, the CCP's major contribution to the KMT was to organize worker support for it in the coastal cities. The peak of CCP-KMT cooperation came in the years of the Nationalist Revolution, in 1925-27. This was crowned by the great campaign launched against the warlords of central China by Chiang Kai-shek in 1926. It was known as the *Northern Expedition*because he started from the south.. Chiang won a series of impressive victories and unified about half of the country by 1927.

Chiang's triumph signalled the end of cooperation between the KMT and the CCP. The generally accepted view is that the split was precipitated by CCP radicalism. This targeted not only foreign privileges and symbols, but also rich Chinese. Wealthy Shangai industrialists were alarmed and offered to bankroll Chiang if he freed himself from dependence on Moscow. This suited Chiang and in March 1925 he arrested the political commissars in his army and placed the Soviet advisers under house arrest. In April 1927, when the Northern Expedition forces approached Shanghai, the communist-led labor unions rose to take the city from the inside. When Chiang entered the city, he ordered a massacre of the communists. This became known as the "Shanghai massacre" or more commonly "the White Terror." Also in April 1927, KMT leaders met in Nanjing (Nanking), proclaimed the establishment of a National Government and outlawed the CCP.

Stalin did not want to admit the defeat of his China policy, so he ordered the CCP to continue cooperation with the KMT. It is not clear whether he sanctioned an unofficial test of strength, or whether the CCP -- perhaps encouraged by Borodin -- disobeyed his orders. In any case, it carried out an uprising in the city of Nanchang in August 1927. Although the communists held the city for only a few days, the rising is notable for the participation of future leaders of the Chinese Red Army. The communist rising in Guangzhou in December 1927 also failed. We should note that Leon Trotsky openly criticized Stalin for the failure of his policy in China. This criticism, together with his opposition to Stalin in the debate on industrialization (1926-27), led to his internal exile to Alma Ata, Kazkhastan, in 1928, and then his exile from Russia in 1929.

There was, in fact, no way that the CCP could have seized control of the KMT in the 1920s or 1930s, because at that time the KMT embodied the dominant drive toward unification and symbolized Chinese national goals. But we can at least wonder whether a different Soviet policy toward the CCP might not have averted its annihilation. For example, it is intriguing to speculate what would have happened if Moscow had ordered the CCP to split off from the KMT in March 1926, and/or supported Mao's later policy of concentrating the party's efforts on the peasants - as the CCP frantically requested (?) However, such a policy seems most unlikely for while Trotsky opposed CCP cooperation with the KMT, neither he nor Stalin ever sanctioned Mao's strategy to build Chinese communism with the support of the teeming millions of Chinese peasants.

Still, though the Stalin-Comintern Chinese policy had exposed the CCP to brutal repression, at the time it seemed to achieve the primary Soviet goal of aiding a strong national movement to victory, thus loosening the hold of the imperialist powers on China and thereby benefiting the Soviet Union. But this was a theoretical benefit at best. In fact, Great Britain, which of all the imperialist powers had the greatest investments in China, made its peace with the KMT. Furthermore, Germany gained a foothold in China by extending help to Chiang -- including military advisers -- to fight the communists in Jiangxi (Kiangsi). However, Chiang's chances of consolidating his power over China were ended by the Japanese attack on the country in 1937. This was to drive him to Chungking (Ch'ung-Ch'ing, southwest China), where he waged only limited military action against Japan until the end of the war.

\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*

IV. The Development of a Unique and Ultimately Successful CCP Revolutionary Strategy, 1928-1945.

A. The Jiangxi (Kiangsi) Period, 1928-1935.

At this time, the KMT led by Chiang continued the struggle to unify China up to the Yangtze River and beyond. However, the Japanese overran Manchuria in 1931, made it a puppet state, and called it Manchukuo. Marshal Zhang Xueliang (Chang Hsueh-liang, son of the Manuchrian warlord, Marshal Zhang Zuolin, assassinated by the Japanese in 1928), moved his troops south of the Great Wall on Chiang's orders. Meanwhile, the Japanese made the last Emperor of China, Puyi, their puppet ruler in Manchuria. Still, in 1936, the KMT exerted at least a loose form of control over two-thirds of the population of China.

However, the peasants soon found that nothing changed much except for the national flag. Warlords loosely allied with Chiang still ruled large parts of China and there was no land reform. Many intellectuals became alienated from Chiang by the end of this period because he did not introduce democratic reforms. On the contrary, he seemed to favor his own dictatorship, and to see fascism as a desirable model of government.

At this time the communist movement was rebuilt by Mao and Zhu De (Chu Teh) -- one of the leaders of the Nanchang rising -- in the southern part of the province of Jiangxi. Meanwhile, the official party leaders, who remained loyal to Moscow, went into hiding in Shanghai, where they stayed until 1930.

Key Issues.

It was during this period that Mao redirected Chinese communism from the workers to the peasants who, after all, made up the vast majority of the population. Thus *Mao changed the communist goal in China from a workers' revolution to a peasant revolution, which he saw as the first step toward a socialist revolution.*

Furthermore, in cooperation with Zhu De, Mao evolved the strategy of operating from a stable base area, and of harassing government troops by guerrilla tactics. These tactics were not new; they were rooted in traditional Chinese military strategy which Mao knew very well from hisr reading. They were to play a central role in the ultimate victory of Mao's forces over Chiang.

Equally important was the fact that in the area under their control in southern Jiangxi, the communists carried out land reform. This really meant distributing the land equally, except that landlords and richer peasants were to get less than the others. This did not always work out that way because some landlords and rich peasants kept more land in return for supporting the communists. But overall, the communists obtained solid support from the peasants, for whom land reform was the most important issue. The key to such success as the communists achieved at this time was the moderate nature of their reforms. This moderation was, in fact, mandated not by communist dogma but by the existing production shortages which were exacerbated by the ruthless KMT blockade of CCP-held areas.

Mao emerged as the leading spokesman for these policies. They were embodied in the Chinese Soviet Republic, known also as the Jiangxi Soviet, which existed from 1931-34. This was the model which mainstream Chinese communism was to follow from then on. These developments took place independently of Moscow. However, the CCP went on to impose a very radical regime when other Chinese communists, called "Bolsheviks," returned to Jiangxi from Moscow and replaced Mao sometime around 1933. This regime had disastrous results. Mao resumed power at the beginning of the "Long March" at the Cun Yi conference in 1934. The Jiangxi Soviet came to an end in late 1934-35, when KMT military pressure became too great. At that time, the communists had to break out and move elsewhere to survive. This resulted in the Long March, an event of enormous significance in the history of Chinese communism. (2)
----------------------------------------
The Long March.

In October 1934, about 100,000 people broke through the KMT armies in south Jiangxi and trekked some 6,000 miles by a round about route to the northwest province of Shaanxi (Shensi), which some 20,000 survivors reached in 1935. Yenan became Mao's main base there in 1937. This was a terrible ordeal, and a defeat in the sense that it was the consequence of the KMT's military victory over the communists. However, the Long March and the arrival of its survivors in Shaanxi signified the survival of Mao's brand of communism in a secure base. Here, it could gather its forces and, by waging a guerrilla war against Japan, lay the groundwork for its later conquest of China.

Also, the Long March provided a heroic myth for Chinese communists in the future, much as Valley Forge had done for Americans. It deepened the communists' sense of destiny. Finally, it provided the leaders of future communist China. Of the few hundred top PRC leaders that still lived in the 1980s and those still alive early 1990s, some 90% were/are veterans of that odyssey. (3)

B. The Sino-Japanese War and The Yenan Period, 1937-1945.
In September 1936, the Japanese government presented secret demands to the government of Chiang Kai-Shek. Disguised as proposals for a common war against the communists, their acceptance would have meant Japanese domination over China.

In December 1936, Chiang went north to coordinate a campaign against the Yenan communists with Marshal Zhang Xueliang. The Marshal, angered by the Japanese assassination of his father had supported Chiang, but he became angry at the latter's preference to fight the communists rather than the Japanese. Zhang was in touch with the communists and when Chiang began to move against him, he invited the KMT leader to a meeting - - and kidnapped him . At a meeting with communist leaders and Zhang, Chiang was "persuaded" to give up his anti-communist campaign and agree to wage a common fight against Japan. Chiang agreed, and flew back to his capital with Zhang. However, while he proclaimed a common war against the Japanese, he never forgave Zhang. He kept the marshal under house arrest all through the war, after which he took him along to Taiwan, and kept him under guard for decades. (Chiang died in 1975; Zhang was reported to have left Taiwan in the late 1980s, to visit relatives in the U.S.).

*On July 7, 1937, an accidental fire fight between Chinese and Japanese troops at Lukouchiao, near Beijing, gave Tokyo the long desired pretext for attacking China. Japanese armies seized Beijing and Tientsin; then they proceeded to occupy most of eastern China.*Many historians suspect that this fight was precipitated by the Japanese. Whatever the case might be, the Japanese invasion of China had a dual effect on the country: (a) it swept northeast China clear of the old authorities, whom the KMT had never been able to control effectively anyway; and (b) it bogged down the Japanese in a large area of China which they could not control either. This situation provided the ideal opportunity for guerrilla war, or as the communists called it -- "The People's War of Resistance."

The communist guerrillas, who were led by "The 8th Route Army", were able to establish links and contacts throughout northern China. These forces did so by harassing the Japanese, while at the same time fighting hard - not always successfully - to protect the peasants in the villages.

The 8th Route Army gave the CCP a very strong claim to represent Chinese nationalism, especially since the KMT, after putting up a hard fight at the beginning, reduced its resistance to the minimum when the government settled in far away Chungking.

But this was only part of the CCP achievement. The other was its use of wartime resistance to effect a *permanent penetration of the villages.* Here the communists generally treated the peasants well by paying for what they needed, and also implemented popular social-economic policies. Of these, the most important were *rent and interest controls* and an *end to abuses in tax collection,*both very popular with the peasants. These measures were accompanied by *education,* i.e., teaching the peasants to read and write a basic form of Chinese. *These policies, which followed precedents set in Jiangxi, gave the CCP a mass base, which no Chinese government had ever had, including the KMT.* (Some new studies show, however, that the CCP was not always as good as this in treating the peasants).

By the end of the war, the results were dramatic. The CCP controlled 19 base areas with a population of about 100 million and had an army of about half a million. The Party itself had about 1 million members. Thus, the CCP was all set for a test of strength with the KMT. From hindsight, the factors outlined above were bound to result in a communist victory. At the time, however, the KMT had such superiority in troops and weapons that the CCP doubted it could win.

We should also note some key developments within the CCP during this period. It evolved a self-image stressing egalitarianism, self-sufficiency, and dedication. At the same time, Mao implemented the process of rectification *or systematic thought control*, i.e., the use of mass pressure to make everyone accept the party line. This presaged Mao's mass campaigns to promote "correct thinking," after the CCP came to power. Furthermore, the party, i.e., *Mao, exercised control over literature and the arts on the premise that they "must serve the revolution";* this followed established Soviet practice and, like thought control, led to the repression of dissent.

Although the above-mentioned thought and cultural control were related to Soviet models, it is a mistake to assume that the Yenan CCP was under the control of Moscow. In fact, from June 22 1941, Stalin was too busy fighting the Germans to bother with Mao and he continued to recognize Chiang's government in Chungking as the government of China. Thus the Yenan model was Mao's work, reflecting his anti-intellectual and dictatorial character. He was to apply these policies on a massive scale after coming to power.

In conclusion, we should note that*by the end of the war in 1945, Chinese communism under Mao's leadership had both a significant social-revolutionary content and had become the embodiment of Chinese nationalism*. The CCP had accomplished all this on its own by developing a distinctly Chinese revolutionary strategy which drew on Chinese traditions and tapped directly into the two great goals of modern Chinese reformers, communist and non-communist alike, i.e., (a) effective national unity, and (b) real independence, or freedom from foreign domination. What is more, the CCP led the way to the third goal, which most Chinese reformers agreed should follow the first two: social-economic reform, especially the abolition of the feudal system in the countryside.
---------------------

V. **The Civil War**.

A. The Background.

The roots of the conflict between the CCP and the KMT go back to the late 1920s, and to the Jiangxi period in particular. It is true that their basic differences were papered over by the formal 1937 agreement to cooperate in the war against Japan -- an agreement extracted by force from a reluctant Chiang Kai-Shek during his kidnapping by young marshal Zhang Xueliang in December 1936. But, in fact, the 8th Route Army fought the Japanese on its own, while Chiang waited for U.S. victory over Japan and used American aid mostly to build up his strength for the war he planned to wage against the communists for control of China.

Chiang's passive stance toward Japan was strongly criticized by the U.S. military adviser in Chungking, General Joseph W. Stilwell (1883-1946). Hi s relations with Chiang soon developed into mutual hostility. (He called Chiang, "the Peanut"). However, the U.S. media, with the aid of the popular, American-educated, Mme. Chiang, had built up Chiang and the KMT into the embodiment of free China. Therefore, President Franklin D. Roosevelt did not believe it politically wise to abandon Chiang in favor of the more active communist army.

The President did, however, send Gen. Patrick Hurley (1883-1963) to try and patch things up between Chiang and Mao. He also sanctioned the sending of a U.S. mission to Yenan. This was called "The U.S. Observer Mission." In the U.S., it was informally known as "The Dixie Mission," because it went into "rebel" territory. The mission was led by Colonel David Barrett and established itself in Yenan in July 1944, where it stayed until 1946. Its members were very favorably impressed by Mao and his movement. Indeed, if the war with Japan had not ended with the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and Japanese troops had remained in mainland China, the United States might have given military aid to the communists because they represented a significant anti-Japanese fighting force there. (4)

-----------------------------------------

B. The Civil War.

The Japanese surrender, forced by the U.S. atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, caught everyone by surprise and created a conundrum for the American government. The problem was which Chinese forces were to take over Manchuria and north China, and how could a civil war be prevented?

President Harry S. Truman sent General George C. Marshall (1880-1959) as special ambassador to China in December 1945, with the task of mediating an agreement between the communists and the KMT. However, the U.S. government was, at the same time, helping Chiang by airlifting his troops to north China. Officially this was done because the Japanese were ordered tosurrender only to the KMT or to American troops, but it obviously favored Chiang..

*Meanwhile, the Soviet Union had declared war on Japan on August 8th and sent its troops into Manchuria, occupying it without encountering much resistance.* The Soviets allowed Chinese communist troops to take over the region as well as the weapons of the defeated Japanese. At the same time, however, they looted the industrial equipment and sent it to Russia, just as they did in their occupation zone in Germany and in the former German territories allocated to Poland.

*But Stalin did not want a confrontation with the U.S. so he signed a* Treaty of Friendship and Alliance with Chiang on *August 14, 1945. In accordance with this treaty, Chiang ceded Port Arthur and control of Dalian (in Russian, Dairen), in southern Manchuria to Russia, thus implementing the promises Roosevelt had made to Stalin at Yalta. The Russians agreed to give up some key cities to the KMT, but this did not happen until they pulled out in early May 1946.*In the meanwhile, Gen. Marshall managed to arrange a truce between the KMT and the communists, which was signed in Chungking on January 16, 1946. While neither side intended to observe it for long, the communists seemed more willing to abide by it than Chiang.

War broke out in summer 1946. Although on paper the KMT army was three times the size of the communist army, the men were demoralized and badly led. Above all, most of them were peasants, so they were naturally attracted to the CCP program of land reform, which was implemented in all regions that came under the control of The People's Liberation Army (PLA). We should note here that, just as they had done in Jiangxi in 1931-34 and in north China in 1938-45, so now the communists distributed the land to poor and landless farmers, but also left some land to the landlords and rich farmers. They did not want to alienate them, but make them allies of the CCP. However, this did not apply to those perceived as "exploiters," or others seen as enemies. Many of them were killed.

Chiang fought the communists in his old way, i.e., by garrisoning fortified places. However, they were soon surrounded by Mao's troops. Masses of KMT peasant soldiers deserted to the PLA, perceiving they had nothing to lose and everything to gain. The PLA captured their equipment and soon overpowered the KMT. Even the mainstay of the KMT, the merchants and civil servants, had become alienated from Chiang because of the terrible inflation that followed the end of the war with Japan. They looked all the more hopefully to Mao, because he carefully avoided proclaiming any radical measures, such as the abolition of private property.

Newly declassified Russian documents show that in January 1949, after Chiang asked for great power mediation, Stalin advised Mao to accept - but Mao refused. It is clear from the Russian record that Stalin was anxious to avoid a clash between the United States and Mao in China, which might invovle the USSR. Mao, however, pursued his own policy. (5)

The PLA crossed the Yangtze river in April and reached Guangzhou (Canton) in October 1948. Chiang resigned as President of the Republic of China on January 21, 1949, although he kept power in his own hands. On October 1, 1949, the The People's Republic of China (PRC) was proclaimed in Beijing (Peking), the old capital of China. The remnants of the KMT fled to Formosa, i.e., Taiwan, where they set up the government of "Free China."

------------------------------

The communist victory in China was a great shock to U.S. opinion. Wartime propaganda had portrayed Chiang Kai-shek as the heroic leader of China. At the same time, the imposition of Soviet domination over Eastern Europe, the Greek civil war and the Berlin Blockade (1948-1949) marked the beginning of the Cold War. (See ch.6). Therefore, it was natural for U.S. opinion to see the establishment of communism in China as directed from Moscow, and to seek an explanation for the defeat of America's ally, Chiang, in some kind of communist "plot."

This perception was so widespread that it allowed Senator Joseph R. McCarthy (1908-1957, R. Wisconsin) to launch his campaign against "spies" in the U.S. State Department in 1950, and to expand it into a general witch hunt against American communists and sympathizers. McCarthy had so much support among millions of Americans that President Truman and, for a certain time,President Eisenhower, did not dare oppose him, even in defense of the State Department's China experts, who were fired. It was not until McCarthy attacked the Army -- by which time U.S. opinion was becoming disgusted with his methods -- that Eisenhower put his foot down and the McCarthy era came to an end.

As it turned out, there were, in fact, some Soviet "moles" in the State Department, but the Chinese communists did not owe their victory either to them or to the Soviets. In fact, Stalin was so anxious to avoid a confrontation with the U.S. until he was ready for it, that at one point he had advised Mao to accept a demarcation line with the KMT on the Yangtze River, thus leaving south China to Chiang. As mentioned above, he also advised Mao not to reject great power mediation in in January1949. Finally, he continued to recognize Chiang's government as the government of China until Chiang fled to Taiwan.

Stalin's careful policy was probably dictated by two factors: (a) he wanted to consolidate the growing Soviet hold on Eastern Europe.Therefore, he had to avoid a confrontation with the United States until he felt he had a good chance of consolidating his gains. As we know, he risked a confrontation over Berlin in 1948-49 and lost his bid for Germany. He was not about to seek another confrontation over China, particularly since (b) the U.S. had the monopoly over the atomic bomb until the Soviets successfully exploded theirs in 1949. But, even then, they had to wait a few years to produce a stockpile and to develop a delivery system, while the U.S. had both the bombs and the long-range planes to deliver them. (We should note, however, that U.S. policy was to use these bombs only in self-defense and possibly in defense of Western Europe).

Finally, Stalin probably did not trust Mao, who had developed his own brand of communism and his own power base without Soviet input and control. As with Tito in Yugoslavia, with whom he had split in 1948, this presaged tensions and an eventual split between the two communist regimes. But that was to happen many years later. Furthermore, he probably did not want a strong, united, China on the Russian border in Asia. China had lost much territory there to Imperial Russia and the Chinese communists kept these losses very much in mind.