

China Notes – Background to Great Leap Forward

Background:

- Closed country, not liking foreign intervention (**xenophobia**)
- Had opened to West in 1800's
- 1900, anti-foreigner group called "**Society of Righteous and Harmonious Fists**", aka the Boxers, had the **Boxer Rebellion**, was put down by Russian and **Japanese** troops = more Western control afterwards

Civil War:

- **Chinese Communist Party** established in 1921 by a 21 year old librarian **Mao Tse-Tung**, joined with the **Kuomintang** to defeat northern warlords.
- **Chiang Kai-Shek** and Mao controlled China south of the **Yangtze River** by May, 1927 – then turned against each other = 1000's of communists killed (red scarfs left red dye marks on their necks, allowing the Kuomintang to know they were a part of Mao's communists) = communists fled further south.
- Mao reorganized the **Red Army** – different then in Russia, couldn't depend on the individual worker for support as **97%** of the population were **peasant farmers** – therefore they promised to end **feudalism**.
 - o Got their support, created a 10,000 strong **People's Liberation Army (PLA)**
 - o **Guerilla Doctrine** – "The enemy attacks, we retreat. The enemy camps, we harass. The enemy tires, we attack. The enemy retreats, we pursue."
 - o Always treated peasants well = 300,000 strong PLA quickly.
- 1934, Chiang had surrounded communist bases in the South.
 - o Red Army was down to 100,000, had to attack

- **Long March**, 6,000 mile, year-long journey to the capital of **Yenon**, by the end, only 20,000 were still alive.
- While marching they spread the ideas of communism, aided peasants with their farming = new support.
- 1934, Japan had invaded **Manchuria**, Chiang wanted to deal with Mao first, his officers disagreed and forced him to unite with Mao to resist the **Japanese** advance, still skirmished against each other.
- **US** supported Chiang, wife was US educated, one of the **Big-Four** allies in WWII.
- **Kuomintang** were winning, Mao had peasant support, PLA now at **3 million**, began to turn to conventional warfare when WWII was over.
- Decisive battle in central China in 1948 was won by the PLA
- Dec. 10, 1949, PLA attacked **Chengdu**, the last Kuomintang stronghold, they evacuated to **Formosa** (Taiwan)
- Chiang moved government to **Taipei**, called himself the **President of the Republic of China** on March 1, 1950, continued to claim sovereignty over China all the way to the 1970's – the **Cold War** made the US recognize him as the true leader of China (not communist), died in 1975
- Mao announced the creation of the **People's Republic of China** on Oct. 1, 1949 – US was afraid (**Domino Theory**)

Communism:

- **Hundred Flowers Campaign**
 - Mao thought that if all China's **intellectuals** gave input into the communist system, it and China would grow **stronger**
 - Most heavily criticized Mao, by 1957 he ended the campaign as he decided that "**poisonous weeds** were growing instead of **fragrant flowers**"
 - Realized that in a **totalitarian state**, even small amounts of freedoms are unacceptable

- Great Leap Forward

- 1958, needed to accelerate the move to full communism = 2nd **5 Year Plan** (1958-1962)
- Industrial production was to **double**, agricultural production was to increase output by **35%**
- Local planning instead of central
- **Little Steel Program** to out produce British Steel
 - Every village, household, **school**, and factory was to have their own **steel furnace** = lots of steel, poor quality
- Large farm **communes** (4,600 families each) = 28,000 communes established
 - They took the place of local **governments**, built roads, hospitals and schools
 - Not successful as they were too large
 - Make up for a lack of technology in agriculture with hard work, "**Work night and day to catch the stars**"
 - Competition between communes led to lying about their production numbers = problem, as government took **80%** of what they reported, so if the report was more than they actually had = no food left over to feed the people on the commune. (**30 million** peasants may have starved to death due to this)
 - Result – they returned to smaller, **village** run farming