

History of world
civilizations since
1700: war between
the chinese
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Describe the long civil war between the Chinese Nationalists and Communists, 1927-1949. Would you credit Mao's political skills and military strategy as the major influence in his party's victory or Chiang's political corruption and unpopularity with the masses of Chinese peasants for his party's defeat? Be sure to explain. The Qing dynasty, the last of the ruling Chinese dynasties, fell in 1911; and China was left to the mercies of the warlords, who had seized large parts of northern China. To counter this the nationalist Kuomintang party's leader Sun Yat Sen, tried to get aid from foreign countries. Unable to get any aid from the western democracies, Sun turned to the Soviet Union for help, and in 1921, to serve their own interests, the Soviets decided to aid both the Kuomintang (KMT) and the newly created Chinese Communist Party (CCP). In 1925 after the death of Sun Yat Sen, the revolutionary army led by Chiang Kai Shek, conquered half of China, but by the next year the KMT was divided into the leftists and the rightists as well as a growing communist bloc. This began the long struggle for supremacy between the KMT and the CCP. The two parties decided to combat the menace of the warlords together, however in April 1927, a split in the ideologies of the KMT and CCP resulted in a long civil war fought between these two parties; commonly known as the " War of Liberation". In early 1927 rivalry between the KMT and the CCP led to a split in the ranks of the revolutionaries. The CCP and the left wing of the KMT rebelled and decided to move the seat of government to Wuhan. Chiang Kai Shek was however leading a successful expedition in the north and he decided to break the back of the Communists by establishing his capital at Nanjing. China now had three capitals - that of the warlords in Beijing, the Communists at Wuhan and the Nationalists at Nanjing. Chiang Kai Shek and other leaders of the

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KMT decided that the socially and economically disruptive activities of the CCP needed to end for the revolutionaries to succeed and hence, the Shanghai Massacre was carried out to purge the KMT of Communist party members. This widened the rift between the two parties and in retaliation an armed insurrection - the Autumn Harvest Uprising led by Mao Zedong was staged by peasants, miners and communist party cadres. However the uprising did not succeed and Chiang Kai Shek resumed his campaign against the warlords capturing Beijing and most parts of northern China. His capital of Nanjing was recognised internationally as the legitimate capital of China. During the 1930's Chiang Kai Shek began a series of campaigns in a desperate bid to root out pockets of communism. However, most of these failed and even when they met with some initial success could not overcome the Communists. In 1934 Chiang Kai Shek launched a new campaign through which he tried to surround Communist areas and cut off their supplies. The Communists took advantage of gaps in the forces who surrounded them and the fact that Chiang's army was preoccupied with another war and retreated. This military retreat of the communist forces lasted a year and covered an estimated 12500 kilometers. During this retreat known as the Long March, the communist army strengthened its appeal among the peasants and also confiscated weapons and property from the warlords. This was the turning point for Mao Zedong who then became the undisputed leader of the Chinese Communist Party. The Communists set up their headquarters at Yan'an from where the party grew and flourished during the next decade. In 1936 the war against the Japanese forced the KMT and the CCP to reunite in order to put internal security before external aggression. Despite the reunion there was distrust between the two parties and the alliance began to crack.

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By 1940 there were constant skirmishes between the two parties. The communists had won over the peasants by their brave guerrilla war tactics against the Japanese as well as through administrative and tax reforms. In the post war peace negotiations, both Chiang Kai Shek and Mao agreed that peaceful reconstruction was the way forward, yet they were unable to stop the battles that continued. By the time the world war ended, a civil war broke out in China that lasted three years. Between 1946 and 1949 a ding dong battle ensued between the KMT and CCP with the upper hand moving from one to the other. Finally in April 1949, the Peoples Liberation army of the Communists captured the KMT capital of Nanjing and thus ended the long civil war in victory for the communists who came to power in Mainland China while the nationalists were restricted to Taiwan. I would credit Mao's political skills and military strategy as the major influence in his party's victory. A true leader requires a strong and loyal following. Throughout the long civil war Mao won over the hearts of the peasantry, by his policy of turning land captured from the warlords over to the peasants. His army also consisted of peasants who had been liberated from serfdom. Mao realised that the majority of the Chinese were peasants and winning them over to his side and building a strong following would be the backbone of his party. Despite having a poorly equipped army, his brave guerrilla tactics of attacking supply lines and using hit and run tactics against the Japanese, were viewed by his countrymen as brave and patriotic. This together with his land and tax reforms in favor of the peasants, won him the undying gratitude and love of his fellow countrymen. Mao's strong national following was one of the largest factors in helping him win the civil war. He taught his party cadres leadership skills, working with them, eating with them and learning

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how they thought about things and winning their hearts. This connect with the people at the grass roots level was the real secret of his victory. In his own words “ The revolutionary war is a war of the masses; only mobilizing the masses and relying on them can wage it.” (Mao Zedong in a speech at Congress of Workers and Peasants representatives) Works Cited Selected Works of Mao Tse Tung Volume 1 From Marx To Mao Digital reprints 2006/2007 Foreign Languages Press Peking 1965 Be Concerned with the Well-Being of the Masses, Pay Attention to Methods of Work" (January 27, 1934), Selected Works, Volume 1 Page 147 This was part of the concluding speech made by Comrade Mao Tse-tung at the Second National Congress of Workers' and Peasants' Representatives held in Juichin, Kiangsi Province in January, 1934. Web 6th. May 2011 [http://www. marx2mao. com/PDFs/MaoSW1. pdf](http://www.marx2mao.com/PDFs/MaoSW1.pdf)