Name: _____

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China's Turbulent Republic

By 1911, it was clear that the Qing Dynasty had lost the Mandate of Heaven. The Empress Dowager was dead, and the throne was occupied by Puyi, a five-year-old child. When a rebellion erupted in the city of Wuchang, province after province quickly declared independence. The imperial army was exhausted, and the fate of the dynasty rested in the hands of its most powerful general, Yuan Shikai.

Yuan avoided another bloody civil war by convincing the imperial court that the young emperor should abdicate, bringing more than two thousand years of imperial rule to a peaceful end. The Qing court would remain in the Forbidden City, but the rest of China moved on to form a republic, a government with elected officials.

Nationalists and Communists

The new republic quickly unraveled when Yuan attempted to crown himself emperor. After his death in 1916, rival warlords divided China. As the country descended into chaos, two competing groups struggled to reunite it. The Nationalists wanted to build a powerful, industrial nation, while the Communists promised land to poor peasants.

The poor found a leader in Mao Zedong, the son of a prosperous farmer. Mao believed China's revolution would be led by millions of poor peasants rather than factory workers. He traveled through the countryside, promising to take land from wealthy landowners and give it to peasant farmers.

The Long March

In 1931, Mao established a breakaway Communist republic about the size of Switzerland in Jiangxi (pronounced Jang-she) in southeastern China. For three years, they governed the region as an independent state—collecting taxes, running schools, printing money, and redistributing land.

To destroy the breakaway state, the Nationalists built thousands of small concrete guard towers around Jiangxi. The blockade gradually cut off cooking salt, clothing, medicine, and other essential supplies while capturing more and more Communist territory.

About 86,000 soldiers, along with doctors, nurses, teachers, printers, clerks, and thousands of civilian supporters loaded what they could carry and disappeared into the mountains. This began the Long March, a grueling 6,000-mile retreat on foot across freezing peaks and deep rivers. Thousands died from starvation, disease, and exhaustion. Others were killed fighting Nationalist troops or in air attacks as they struggled north. Fewer than 8,000 people survived the ordeal, but the Communist movement survived with them.

Japan Invades China

Meanwhile, Japan had emerged as a major military power after defeating China in 1895 and Russia in 1905. With the Nationalists and the Communists busy fighting each other, Japan invaded resource-rich Manchuria in 1931. A new empire would provide the coal, iron, timber, and farmland its islands lacked.

In 1937, Japan launched a full-scale invasion of China. Faced with a common enemy, the Nationalists and Communists temporarily set aside their civil war to resist the Japanese. While the Nationalist army faced the heaviest fighting and lost their best soldiers defending China's major cities, the Communists mostly remained in the mountains. They used the war to quietly grow their power, winning over millions of poor village farmers by organizing small guerrilla attacks against the Japanese.

To force Japan to end its invasion of China, the United States cut off Japan's oil supply. Desperate for fuel, Japan attacked American naval base Pearl Harbor. America's vast industrial power gradually overwhelmed Japan, which surrendered in 1945 and withdrew from China.

The Communists Take Power

With their common enemy defeated, the Nationalists and the Communists resumed their civil war. Battered from fighting Japan, the Nationalist army was exhausted, while Mao's fresh forces had the backing of millions of peasants. Just four years later, Mao's Communist forces captured mainland China, forcing the Nationalists to retreat to Taiwan, an island off China's coast.

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Fill in the Blanks

By 1911, a r__b__l__i__n in Wuchang led several p__o__i__c__s to declare i__d__p__n__e__ce from the Qing Dynasty. Yuan Shikai convinced the i__p__r__al court that the five-year-old emperor, Puyi, should a__d__c__te, ending more than two t__o__s__nd years of imperial rule. After Yuan's death, rival w__r__or__s divided China as the M__t__o__a__i__ts and C__m__u__i__ts struggled to control the country. M__o Zd__ng gained support by promising land to poor p__a__a__ts. The Communists established a b__e__k__w__y republic in Jiangxi. When Nationalist forces s__r__o__n__ed the region, about 86,000 people e__c__p__d on the L__ng M__rch, but fewer than __,000 survived. Meanwhile, Japan invaded M__n__h__ria and later launched a full-scale i__v__s__on of China. The Nationalists and Communists temporarily stopped f__g__t__ng one another to resist J__p__n. After Japan s__r__e__d__r__d in 19____, the c__v__l war resumed. Four years later, Mao's Communist forces captured m__i__l__nd China, forcing the Nationalists to retreat to the i__l__nd of T__iw__n.

Answer in Complete Sentence

1. How did Yuan Shikai avoid a civil war in 1911?

2. Who were the Nationalists? What were their goals?

3. Who were the Communists? What were their goals

*4. Why did the Communists have an advantage over the Nationalists after Japan withdrew from China?

*This is a higher order learning question. You must answer the question to the best of your ability, but any reasonable answer will be graded as correct.

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