The People’s Republic
Under Mao Zedong
1949-1976
(1893-1976)
Mao Ze Dong – Chairman Mao

• Born Dec. 26, 1893 to Hunanese family

• Founder of the People’s Republic of China

• Led Communist Party of China to victory against nationalists “Kuomintang” after 20+ years of civil war

• Died Sept. 9, 1976
Maoism: Revolutionary Ideas Influenced by Karl Marx

• Karl Marx’s book, The Communist Manifesto, influenced Mao’s political ideas: **proletarians must rebel against bourgeoisies to bring about a “classless” society.**

• Marx felt bourgeoisies were exploiting proletarians.

Marx considered “Religion...the opiate of the people” --- proletarians accept their situation instead of taking action against being exploited, thus having to endure their suffering.
Mao’s Long March To Power

- The Long March covered 8,000 miles
- Took 370 days
- 100,000 began march
- 8,000 survived

(1934-35) Mao led the Red Army on The Long March emerging as the most important Communist leader.
Jiang Qing, Mao’s Fourth Wife

One of the “Gang of Four”
WWI & WWII
• Left China a devastated country
• 1949—Chinese Communist party takes over
• 1949-1959—membership in Communist party grew from 4.4 million to 14 million

1950--Agrarian Reform Law
• Land taken from wealthy landowners given to poor
• 500,000 to 2 million people executed to carry out reform
• Poor peasants unable to produce enough food (588 million people in 1953)
• By 1957, 90% of land controlled by cooperatives
Campaign against the “four olds”:
1. Old ideas
2. Old habits
3. Old customs
4. Old culture

“The Five Antis”
1. Bribery
2. Tax evasion
3. Theft of state property
4. Cheating
5. Stealing state secrets

Thought Reform, Propaganda Supports Mao’s Marxism

“The Three Antis” (1951)
1. Corruption
2. Waste
3. Bureaucratism
The Hundred Flowers Campaign (1956)
• Encouraged wide range of opinion
• Allowed criticism of the party

Anti-rightist’ campaign (1958)
• Punished protesters
• Punished low-level officials
• Officials publicly confessed errors
• Sent to work in countryside
Great Leap Forward Anything But

- 1958--Mao launched Great Leap Forward
- Backyard blast furnaces to make iron and steel for tools took away from food production
- Commune leaders falsified production reports
- Program failed; 20 million people starved to death
- Break with Soviet Union cut off aid.

The millet is scattered over the ground. The leaves of the sweet potato are withered. The young and old have gone to smelt iron. To harvest the grain there are only children and old women. How shall we get through the next year?

Peng Dehuai
The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution
1966-1976

• Jolted the economy
• Education system
• Workings of government
• Changed upper party leaders
• Caused bitterness, division within China
Cultural Revolution Continues

Goals of Cultural Revolution

• Mao regain leadership
• Wipe out revisionist ideas
• Rekindle revolutionary spirit of nation
Cultural Revolution Propaganda

- Posters show political adversaries crushed by giant workers.
- Beat our common enemy - reformer like Liu Shao qi!
- Mao is great and he says revolutionary committee is good!
- Hundreds of thousands of copies of posters were distributed.
- Mao was seen like a god

A smiling Mao overshadows all, hovering above crowds carrying red flags and Little Red Books.
Red Guards

- Traveled to schools, universities, and institutions across China spreading Mao’s teachings
- Violent to those who defied Mao’s teachings or criticized him.
- Role of Red Guard: attack the “Four Olds" of society---
  (1) old ideas, (2) cultures, (3) manners, (4) customs
- Ransacked museums, destroyed old books and works of art throughout China.
- Many famous temples, shrines, and other heritage sites were destroyed. In total, 4,922 out of 6,843 were destroyed.
Public Humiliation Trials

- Pull hair
- Force to drink water/other liquids
- Kneel in broken shards of glass
- Have your alleged “crimes” called out while kneeling in front of an audience
- Public beating
- Stoning
- Hanging
1. Senior officials, heads shaved, forced to stand, bowing, with insulting signs hung from their necks
2. “Intellectuals” being humiliated
3. Teachers being forced to beat fellow colleagues
Re-education was demanded of intellectuals who finished high school or even lower school education.

“Intellectuals” sent to countryside where they were educated to live as peasants or low class people.
Banned Items

- Any books, including Chinese, western or any Asian books that weren't about communism and Mao Zedong
- Any items linked to western culture.
Mao’s “Little Red Book” Becomes China’s Bible

Theory Behind Cultural Revolution
• “Redness” More Important Than Expertise
• Rise of experts represents a betrayal of revolution
• Peasants/working-class should hold position of power

Mao greeted by adoring supporters waving copies of “the little red book”
• Also known as Quotations from Chairman Mao Zedong (毛主席语录) published by People’s Republic of China since 1964.
• Divided into 33 chapters, 427 quotations taken from Mao’s past speeches and publications.
• 900 million copies have been sold, second only to the Bible
• Unofficial requirement for every Chinese citizen to own, read, and carry at all times during Cultural Revolution.
• Punishment for failing to produce book when asked: from beating by Red Guards to imprisonment and years of hard-labor
• Studying book required in schools and workplaces.
• Workplaces had specified reading sessions during working hours to study the book.
The Little Red Book Regarded as Source of All Wisdom

• Red Guard declared entire loyalty to Mao
• All loyal followers carried copy of book
Effects of Cultural Revolution

• Placed Mao’s loyal supporters in power
• Damaged China’s economy
• Damaged education, industry, agriculture
• Set China’s development back by a generation
• Left legacy of bitterness
• Most observers judge that Cultural Revolution had no positive effects on China

Top: Burning Buddhas
Bottom: Burning Books
Chaos in the Country

• University students refused to take exams—only revolutionary credentials needed
• Teachers who demanded students study were denounced as counterrevolutionaries
• Universities closed down
• Students forced to countryside to work on farms
• Revolutionary experience became more important than learning
• Writers and scientists attacked by Red Guards
• Red Guards destroyed precious art works of the past because art represented old Chinese empire
Chaos Continued…

- Shrine of Confucius’s home, revered for over 2,000 years, damaged by Red Guards
- China’s cultural heritage was being destroyed
- All insignia of rank in army destroyed
- Mao’s goal for society: elimination of all distinctions of rank in society
- High party officials sent to work in countryside
- Red Guard activity disrupted all China’s economic activities
- Time spent on study of Maoist theory damaged nation’s food production
- Civil war broke out against Red Guard
- In 1969, 20 million youth went to help in countryside
Mao said: "The Chinese people have stood up." The standing up was very meaningful. Chinese people were on their knees.

Xu Xiaobing, eyewitness at Mao's proclamation of the People's Republic.

Listen to Xu Xiaobing's eyewitness report in full.

Listen to Mao Zedong's proclamation of the People's Republic.
The first group of people to call themselves "Red Guards" in China were a group of students at the high school attached to Tsinghua University, led by Zhang Chengzhi; they used the name to sign two big-character posters issued on 29 May and 2 June 1966.

According to Zhang, the group of students originally wrote the posters as a constructive criticism towards the university administration, which was accused of harboring "intellectual elitism".

"The Red Guards" name chosen to create image of a mass student movement.

Soon afterwards, the news of the movements reached Mao Zedong, which organized "work teams" across schools and replaced school administrations.

Zhang's group soon put up more posters calling for radical revolution, which was approved by Mao and published on the People's Daily.

Soon afterwards, students all over Beijing were calling themselves "Red Guards".

Many rival Red Guard groups were formed.