

NATIONALISM AND REVOLUTION AROUND THE WORLD

Biography

Jiang Jieshi (Chiang Kai-shek) was a major military and political leader in China from 1925 until 1975. Although his long rule was marked by many failures, especially his defeat by the Communists in 1949, today there is a new appreciation of his accomplishments and his leadership. ♦ *As you read, think about the kinds of skills needed to be a successful military commander and an effective political leader. Then, on a separate sheet of paper, answer the questions that follow.*

Jiang Jieshi (1887–1975)

Jiang Jieshi was born into a middle-class family of salt merchants in Zhejiang Province in eastern China. In 1906, he entered military school in China and continued his studies in Japan. He went on to serve in the Japanese army from 1909 to 1911, where he gained a great admiration for the strict discipline of the Japanese troops. He also made friends with other young Chinese with republican ideals.

In 1911, when a revolt against the Manchus broke out, Jiang returned to China to join the fighting. The revolution was successful, ending the Manchu dynasty and imperial rule in China. In 1912, Sun Yixian (Sun Yat-sen), Jiang, and other revolutionaries formed a new political party—the Nationalist party, or Guomindang. After a series of struggles for control, the Nationalists took over the new republic.

Following Sun's death in 1925, Jiang took over the Guomindang. One year later, he allied himself with the Chinese Communists to drive out the warlords who were still holding parts of the country. The campaign was successful, but midway through it Jiang turned against his allies. China was plunged into decades of civil war

as the Guomindang and Communists fought for control.

In 1931 Japan invaded the Chinese province of Manchuria. The Guomindang broke off its civil war with the Chinese Communists and joined forces with them to combat Japan. After many years of fighting, Jiang led the Chinese military to assist the Allies in their victory over Japan in World War II. Its alliance with the Allies improved

China's, and Jiang's, world stature. Along with Franklin D. Roosevelt, Winston Churchill, and Joseph Stalin, Jiang took part in a postwar summit in Cairo, Egypt, in 1943.

Jiang did not have long to enjoy his status as world leader, however. Within a year after World War II ended, the struggle with the Chinese Communists

flared up again. In 1949, the Communists forced Jiang and the Guomindang to flee to the island of Taiwan.

The Communists took control of the mainland under a new government called the People's Republic of China. On Taiwan, Jiang set up a dictatorship, which he ruled as president until his death in 1975.



Jiang Jieshi, about 1930

Questions to Think About

1. Which Nationalist party leader did Jiang Jieshi succeed?
2. How did Jiang's relations with the Communists change over time?
3. **Understanding Cause and Effect** How did Japan's attack on Manchuria shape Jiang's political career?