

Summary: Communism Spreads

Communism Around the World

Americans worried that Soviets would spread communism everywhere. The Soviets helped a communist army in China. China became communist. Now two of the biggest nations in the world were communist.

In 1949, the Soviet Union built an atomic bomb. U.S. leaders wanted their military to be stronger than the Soviets'. An arms race began. People worried this race would lead to a nuclear war. Joseph McCarthy was an anti-communist who claimed that communists worked in the U.S. government.

During the 1950s, anti-communism grew in the United States. Some anti-communists believed communist spies were everywhere. Many government workers were fired. A few spies were found. But most people were innocent.

Cold War Conflicts

After World War II, the Allies formed the United Nations (UN). More than 50 countries joined the UN to try to keep peace in the world.

In 1950, North Korea was communist. South Korea was not. North Korea invaded South Korea. The Soviets supported North Korea. The UN defended South Korea. UN soldiers pushed North Koreans out of South Korea. Then China began to help North Korea. The Korean War did not end until 1953. Neither side won.

In 1959, Fidel Castro led a rebellion in Cuba. Cuba is an island near the United States. The Soviets helped Castro. Cuba became communist. In 1962, the United States learned that Soviets were shipping missiles to Cuba. The missiles could carry atomic bombs. President John F. Kennedy sent U.S. ships to block Cuba. This was called the Cuban missile crisis. People feared it would lead to a nuclear war. Days later, Soviets removed the missiles. The United States promised not to attack Cuba. The Soviet Union and the United States agreed to try to prevent nuclear war together.



Before You Read

Find and underline each vocabulary word.

arms race *noun*, a race between nations to build more powerful weapons

nuclear war *noun*, a war in which powerful nuclear weapons are used

anti-communism *noun*, a movement to stop the spread of communism



After You Read

REVIEW Why did people worry about the arms race between the United States and the Soviet Union?

Highlight the sentence that tells the answer.

REVIEW What did President Kennedy do to end the Cuban missile crisis? What did President Kennedy send to block Cuba? Underline the sentence that tells the answer.