Why Support Shifted

Investigate the reasons people supported the Chinese Communists.

TOT.C.8.3.C "support for Chinese Communists"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB As you read, underline three different reasons people might support the Communists and circle a group connected to each reason. Put a question mark beside one detail that shows why taking part did not always mean giving support.

Support During China's Civil War

1. In the late 1940s, the Chinese Communist Party fought the Nationalist government in a civil war. In many villages, land was the question people discussed most. Wealthy landlords controlled large estates, while some families rented plots and owed heavy payments. In areas held by Communist forces, land reform took land from landlords and distributed it to poorer farmers. A family that gained a field had a reason to welcome Communist rule. Some villagers also joined local militias or carried supplies for Communist armies. The policy did not benefit everyone, and campaigns against landlords could involve violence.

2. Support for the Communists also grew as confidence in the Nationalist government fell. After years of war against Japan, fighting resumed between the two Chinese sides in 1946. Nationalist officials faced charges of corruption, and soaring inflation made wages and savings lose value. A city shopkeeper might sell goods one day and find that the money bought far less the next. In the countryside, Nationalist armies sometimes took grain or forced men into military service. These experiences made Communist promises of fairer government more appealing to some people. Opposition to the Nationalists, however, did not mean agreement with every Communist policy.

3. Memories of the war against Japan shaped another kind of support. Communist fighters had built bases behind Japanese lines and organized village resistance. After Japan surrendered in 1945, some residents trusted organizers they already knew from those years. Communist forces also used meetings, newspapers, and local groups to recruit followers and explain their goals. Yet joining a meeting did not always show genuine belief: in areas under Communist control, people could feel pressure to attend or contribute food and labor. By 1949, the Communists had won the civil war. Their victory reflected many conditions, not one shared reason for support.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why might land reform have won support from poorer farmers but not from landlords?

2. How could inflation make a city shopkeeper more open to Communist promises?

3. Why might some residents have trusted Communist organizers after Japan surrendered?

4. Why would attendance at a Communist meeting be weak evidence that everyone there supported the party?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 75 to 95 word museum label explaining why support for the Communists grew. Compare the reasons of two different groups, use at least two specific details from the passage, and explain why taking part in an activity did not always mean someone supported the party.

ANSWER KEY

Why Support Shifted

HIGH SCHOOL · TOT.C.8.3.C

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

As you read, underline three different reasons people might support the Communists and circle a group connected to each reason. Put a question mark beside one detail that shows why taking part did not always mean giving support. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why might land reform have won support from poorer farmers but not from landlords?	**Poorer farmers could receive land, while landlords lost land and could face violence.**
2	How could inflation make a city shopkeeper more open to Communist promises?	**Inflation reduced what the shopkeeper's earnings could buy, making promises of fairer government more appealing.**
3	Why might some residents have trusted Communist organizers after Japan surrendered?	**They knew the organizers from Communist efforts to organize village resistance during the war against Japan.**
4	Why would attendance at a Communist meeting be weak evidence that everyone there supported the party?	**In Communist-controlled areas, people could feel pressure to attend, so attendance did not necessarily show genuine belief.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Support for the Chinese Communists grew for different reasons during the civil war. Poorer farmers could gain land when Communist forces redistributed landlords' estates, so the policy might change their daily lives. City shopkeepers faced soaring inflation, which made the money they earned buy less, and some found Communist promises more appealing. These were not identical reasons for support: one involved gaining land, while the other involved frustration with Nationalist rule. Participation alone was not proof of belief. In Communist-controlled areas, people could feel pressure to attend meetings or provide supplies.

Accept other passage-supported comparisons, including residents who trusted organizers from wartime resistance. Students should distinguish a reason to support the party from participation that may have resulted from pressure.