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# *Analysing the Chinese Revolution*

Trevor Sowdon

Third Edition



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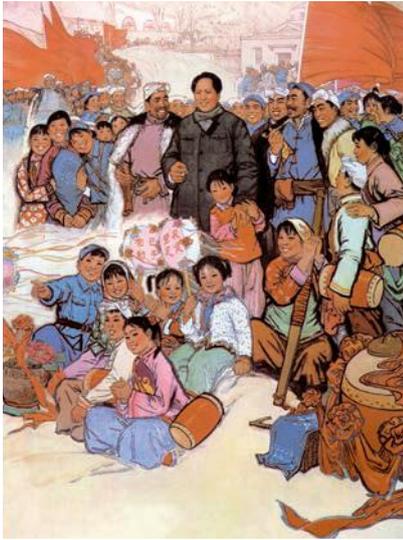
#### Causes of revolution

The development of significant ideas, events, individuals and popular movements in China, 1912–1949

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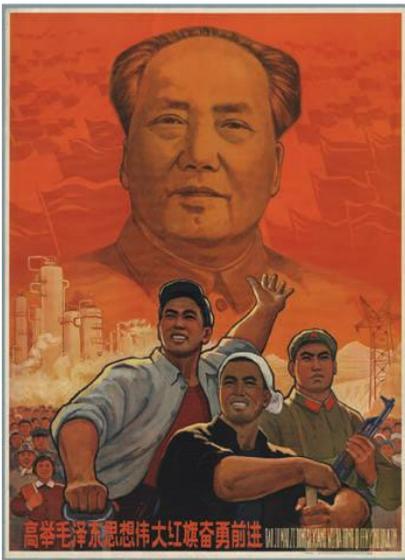
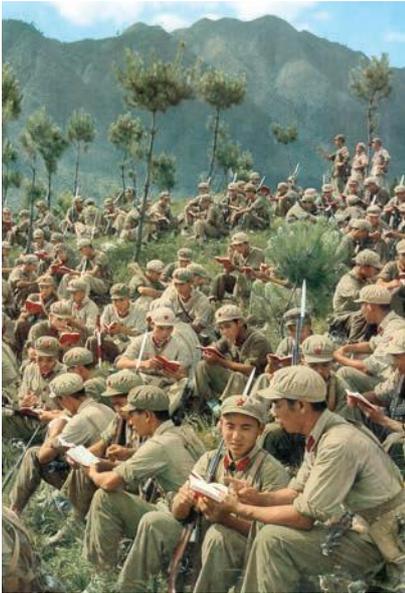
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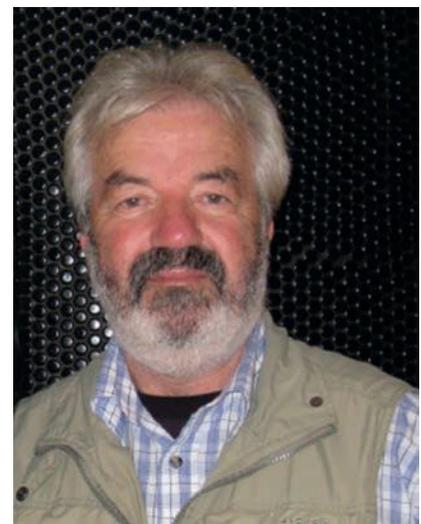


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## About the author

**Trevor Sowdon** studied Chinese history at La Trobe University under Dr Jane Leonard. From 1983 to 1984 he taught at Fuzhou University, where he and his wife adopted a Chinese daughter – an Australian first. They later adopted a second daughter from Hong Kong. He has taught the Revolutions course, had various articles published in *Agora* and has lectured to teachers and students for the HTAV and Engage Education. Currently, he is semi-retired, taking on casual relief teaching at various schools.



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## Author acknowledgments

The author dedicates this book to his father, Norman, who should have had his own sporting histories published; his mother, June, who encouraged her son to have the education she missed; Rhyl, his wife of 48 years, who supported him in so many ways; and their beautiful daughters, Hannah and Pippa, who were his constant inspiration for all things Chinese.

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## Language guide

### Pronunciation guide for Chinese

| Consonants |            |                            |
|------------|------------|----------------------------|
| Pinyin     | Wade-Giles | English equivalent in bold |
| b          | p          | <b>b</b>                   |
| c          | ts'        | cats                       |
| ch         | ch'        | church                     |
| q          | ch'        | church                     |
| d          | t          | <b>d</b>                   |
| g          | k          | <b>g</b>                   |
| h          | h          | <b>h</b>                   |
| j          | ch         | <b>j</b>                   |
| k          | k'         | <b>k</b>                   |
| p          | p'         | <b>p</b>                   |
| r          | j          | <b>r</b> (flat tongued)    |
| t          | t'         | <b>t</b>                   |
| x          | hs         | leisure                    |
| z          | ts         | reads                      |
| zh         | ch         | garage                     |

| Vowels                             |            |                             |
|------------------------------------|------------|-----------------------------|
| Pinyin                             | Wade-Giles | English vowel sound in bold |
| a                                  | a          | car                         |
| ai                                 | ai         | hi                          |
| ao                                 | ao         | how                         |
| e                                  | e          | her                         |
| ei                                 | ei         | say                         |
| er                                 | erh        | uh                          |
| i (after c, ch, r, s, sh, z or zh) | ih         | shirt                       |
| i (other times)                    | ee         | tee                         |
| o                                  | o          | pork                        |
| ou                                 | ou         | toe                         |
| u                                  | u          | shoot                       |
| ui                                 | ui         | way                         |
| ua                                 | ua         | iguana                      |

## Spelling guide for Chinese names and places

| Names             |                  |
|-------------------|------------------|
| Old spelling      | New spelling     |
| Mao Tse-tung      | Mao Zedong       |
| Chou En-lai       | Zhou Enlai       |
| Chu Te            | Zhu De           |
| Teng Hsiao-p'ing  | Deng Xiaoping    |
| Lin Piao          | Lin Biao         |
| Liu Shao-ch'i     | Liu Shaoqi       |
| Chiang Kai-shek   | Jiang Jieshi     |
| Sun Yat-sen       | Sun Yixian       |
| Soong Ch'ing-ling | Song Qingling    |
| Kuomintang (KMT)  | Guomindang (GMD) |
| Chiang Ch'ing     | Jiang Qing       |
| Tzu Hsi/Tse Hsi   | Cixi             |
| Kuang Hsu         | Guangxu          |
| Lao Tzu           | Lao Zi           |
| Ch'ing (Dynasty)  | Qing             |
| P'eng Te-huai     | Peng Dehuai      |
| Yuen Shih-kai     | Yuan Shikai      |

| Place names          |              |
|----------------------|--------------|
| Old spelling         | New spelling |
| Peking               | Beijing      |
| Kwangchow            | Guangzhou    |
| Nanking              | Nanjing      |
| Tientsin             | Tianjin      |
| Kiangsi              | Jiangxi      |
| Tatu (River)         | Dadu         |
| Tsunyi               | Zunyi        |
| Yangtse (River)      | Yangzi       |
| Kwangtung (Province) | Guangdong    |
| Yenan                | Yan'an       |
| Shensi               | Shaanxi      |
| Shantung             | Shandong     |
| T'ienanmen           | Tian'anmen   |
| Tsingtao             | Qingdao      |
| Sian                 | Xi'an        |
| Juichin              | Ruijin       |
| Ching kangshan       | Jinggangshan |



## How to use this resource

### Structure

- This textbook is broken into two sections, each aligning with an Area of Study in the VCAA History: Revolutions Study Design
- **Language guide** explains the pronunciation of the Chinese language and the spelling of key words
- **Area of Study openers** give a broad overview of the chapters to come and a timeline of key events
- **Chapter openers** also include an overview, listing the key issues of the chapter and a flow diagram.
- **QR codes** are included in all chapters for easy access to related videos
- Look out for icons flagging **key events**, **quotes** and **statistics** in the margins for use in revision.
- A **selected bibliography** is supplied at the end of the book for each chapter, offering suggested further reading

### Activities

- **Focus questions** are placed throughout the chapter to assess comprehension and encourage discussion
- **Analysis activities** explore key primary and secondary historical sources. These sources can be visual or text-based, to help develop your understanding of the revolution as well as your skills as a historian.

### Develop your historical thinking skills

The end of chapter review activities include a combination of tasks to help consolidate your learning:

- **Define key terms** encourages you to write definitions of important terms in your own words
- **Activities** can include research work or various creative tasks like role-plays
- **Establishing historical significance** and **Analysing cause and consequence** are exam-style writing tasks that allow you to practise paragraph-length answers
- **Constructing historical arguments** are practice essay questions that allow you to prepare for internal and end-of-year assessments
- **Analysing historical sources** as evidence provides practice for exam-style source analysis, both textual and visual
- **Analysing historian's interpretations** focuses on arguments made by individual historians and encourages you to put forth your own views

**Digital resources**

For a list of links to all the websites referred to in this book, go to: [www.cambridge.edu.au/revchina3ed](http://www.cambridge.edu.au/revchina3ed)

Further digital resources are available in the **Interactive Textbook** and on *Cambridge GO*:

- **PDF textbook** – downloadable, contains note taking and search functions
- **Interactive activities** – (e.g. drag and drop questions) assist recall of facts and understanding of concepts
- **Videos and links to history** – additional sources to watch, read and analyse
- **Pronunciation** – audio files appear at the start of the chapter, and cover any difficult or unfamiliar terms to be introduced

The **Teacher Resource Package** also includes:

- Teaching programs and teaching tips
- Curriculum grids for each topic area
- **Suggested responses**
- **Practice Assessment Material**

**Understanding icons**

The following icons are used throughout the textbook to indicate different activities, resources, or points of view.

|   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
|  | <b>Analysis activity – textual analysis:</b> | Source analysis questions focusing on speeches or text extracts                               |
|  | <b>Analysis activity – visual analysis:</b>  | Source analysis questions focusing on artwork or photos                                       |
|  | <b>Significant Individuals:</b>              | Biographies on significant individuals of the Revolution                                      |
|  | <b>Key historian:</b>                        | Snapshots of important historians and their points of view on the Revolution                  |
|  | <b>Key statistic, events, quotes:</b>        | Indicators of particularly memorable quotes, statistics and events                            |
|  | <b>Historical interpretations:</b>           | Examines the differences between the opinions of historians                                   |
|  | <b>Digital activities:</b>                   | See the Interactive Textbook for access to digital resources                                  |
|  | <b>The story so far video:</b>               | Summary videos on the chapter, available through the Interactive Textbook or through QR codes |



## **BACKGROUND: CHINA'S CHARACTERISTICS**

---

*For a successful revolution it is not enough that there is discontent. What is required is a profound and thorough conviction of the justice, necessity and importance of political and social rights.*

– B.R. AMBEDKAR

# Overview

‘Revolution’ is an easy word to use, but it is much harder to pin down. Advertisers love to describe a ‘revolution’ brought on by a new product or the ‘revolutionary’ nature of an ingredient. In this sense, the word suggests change – and in particular, change of a positive nature. In history, though, the word ‘revolution’ carries more implications.

Predating this period, many countries went through an industrial revolution that reshaped the means of production, as well as the structure of employment and the economy. In this example, ‘revolution’ implies great change and great speed. While it took centuries to achieve, this revolution was fast compared with any economic overhaul that came before.

One change that every political revolution has in common is a replacement of the previous system of government – not just the ruler but the whole system of government, including the philosophy (justification) behind it. Merely replacing the ruler is called a *coup d'état* (or coup). In this instance, no substantial change occurs. In the past, the overthrow of a dynasty by a revolution meant it was replaced by a new dynasty. However, in twentieth-century China, the revolution meant a change in the system and nature of the government that replaced it.

Mao Zedong wrote that ‘a revolution is not a dinner party’. What he meant was that revolutions are never gentle but require a degree of violence to remove the previous government. The image of the French Revolution is of the guillotine working overtime. In the Chinese revolutions, the images are not so obvious, but the scale of the bloodshed is still difficult to fully comprehend.

While some revolutions involve an insurrection of the masses (people), others can involve civil war. In the case of Russia and France, civil war followed the takeovers. However, in the Chinese and American revolutions, civil war was the means of actually removing the former rule. This was true for the Chinese Communist Party, which came to power in 1949 after having defeated the Guomindang in a civil war.

Success – that is, successfully overthrowing the former regime – is a vital ingredient in a revolution. If the attempt fails, then the word ‘revolution’ is not applied. The 1900 upsurge of the Boxers is generally referred to as the Boxer Rebellion. Its ultimate defeat means that ‘revolution’ is not applicable. Similarly, a ‘revolt’ only becomes a ‘revolution’ if it succeeds.

What are the factors that contribute to this success? Oppression alone is not sufficient cause; otherwise, North Korea would have had its revolution by now. B.R. Ambedkar expressed it well in insisting that success requires a ‘profound and thorough conviction of the justice, necessity and importance of political and social rights’. This is the philosophy. The French philosophes gave the French and American revolutionaries their justification; Marxism gave the Russian and Chinese Communists theirs. While we can point to rulers such as George II, Louis XIV, Alexander III and Cixi as supplying the oppression as a cause – often in the form of empty stomachs – the revolutions actually occurred when a weaker ruler supplied the opportunity, with only token reforms. Consequently, the revolutions occurred during the reigns of lesser tyrants such as Louis XVI, George III, Nicholas II and Aisin Gioro Puyi.

Finally, we must consider the irony in the word ‘revolution’. In its scientific or mechanical use, it refers to a 360-degree turn – in other words, it returns to where it began. While in history no nation ever returns to its pre-revolutionary state, there is often the cruel irony (strange twist) that a revolution that aims to overthrow a despotic ruler can often finish with a ruler even more despotic than the one who has been overthrown. Political theorist and writer Hannah Arendt asserted in a *New Yorker* article in 1970 that: ‘The most radical revolutionary will become a conservative the day after the revolution.’ Yet this ruler will claim they are still revolutionary. In Russia, the weak Tsar Nicholas eventually gave way to Joseph Stalin.

◀ Source 0.1 The Great Wall of China

In France, Louis XVI was eventually replaced by Napoleon. In China, the focus of this book, Mao Zedong ruled with more power than most emperors or Jiang Jieshi ever had. In these cases, the wheel had indeed turned full circle – or at least the nature of the ruler had.

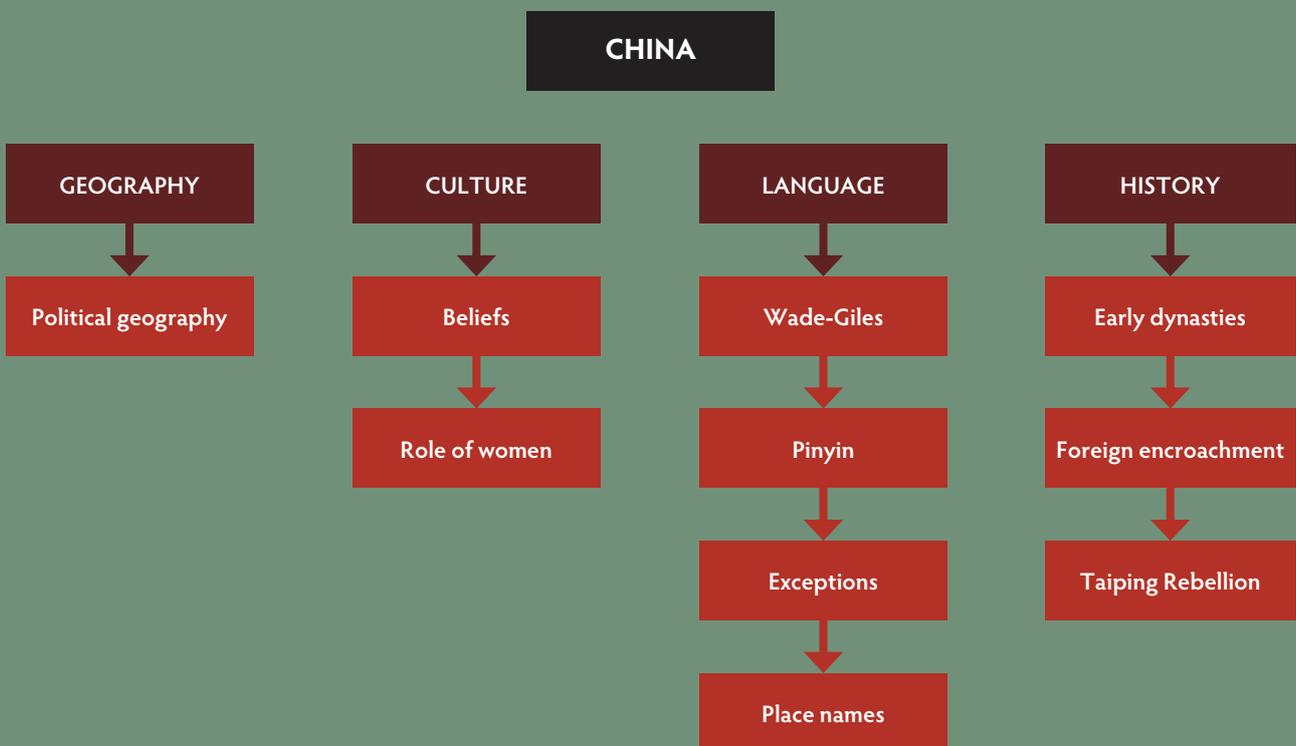
This background chapter is designed to supply the geographical, linguistic, cultural and historical contexts that will help you better understand subsequent chapters.

## Key issues

- What is China's political geography
- What should historians know about Chinese culture?
- What different translations are there of the Chinese language?
- What were the Opium Wars?
- What was the Taiping Rebellion?

4

## Flow of chapter



## 0.1 China's political geography

Larger than Australia and over 9.5 million square kilometres in area, China has an extreme range of natural features and climates. The eastern part, especially on the coast, is the most agriculturally and industrially productive area. The capital has alternated between Nanjing and Beijing. Politically, the divisions are called provinces not states.



◀ Source 0.2 Map of modern China with names in Pinyin



◀ Source 0.3 Huaihai South Road Bridge over the Grand Canal, Huai'an City, Jiangsu Province



## 0.2 What historians should know about Chinese culture

### Traditional family

**Han** the major Chinese ethnic group  
**emperor** one who rules over more than one nation

The majority of Chinese are part of the **Han** ethnic group. Traditional Chinese families were patriarchal, meaning the eldest male made the decisions. Traditionally, a woman was regarded as a lesser being, who after marriage belonged to her husband's family and often suffered at the hand of her mother-in-law. Women were often married at a young age to men they had never seen before. The status of a wife only rose when she gave birth to a son.

#### AMAZING BUT TRUE ...

Zhou Enlai, who became the Communist Premier of China, was born in 1898. When he was six months old, his uncle Zhou Yigan died of tuberculosis. Zhou Yigan left no son to support his wife in her later years or to pray for his spirit. Zhou Enlai was given to his uncle's family and his aunt became his surrogate mother. Zhou Enlai came to regard her as his real mother.

6

▼ **Source 0.4** An example of the results of foot binding

By the time of the Qing Dynasty, most Han women had their feet bound, a painful and crippling process designed to produce the desired 'lily feet'. This unfortunate trend began with a beautiful dancer with small feet who caught the attention of a Song Dynasty **emperor** a thousand years ago.



▲ **Source 0.5** Comparison of an unbound foot and the shoe a bound foot needed to fit into

**Mao Zedong** also known as Chairman Mao; the leader of the Chinese Communists from 1935 onwards and leader of the People's Republic of China until his death in 1976

### Chinese names

Chinese names begin with the family name. This is traditionally followed by the 'generation' name, which is common to all members of that family's particular generation. Then a distinguishing name is added.

**Mao Zedong** (Mr Mao) had three sons: Mao Anlong, Mao Anying and Mao Anqing. Women retain their family name after marriage, so Mao Zedong's last wife was Jiang Qing. During the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), the generation name was often dropped. Either way, the twentieth century saw the growth of patriotic names such as: Aihua ('Love China'), Jianguo ('Build the Country'), Hong ('Red') and Dong ('East').

## Beliefs

Most Chinese subscribe to three belief systems – **Confucianism**, **Daoism** and **Buddhism** – which are often freely integrated.

Confucius is the Latinised name of the scholar Kong Fuzi, or Master Kong (551–479 BCE). He was a teacher of ethics and philosophy, whose writings (the *Analects*) formed the basis of family and governmental relationships. Devotion to parents and ancestors was the model for the greater devotion to the emperor. Confucianism taught the ethics of obedience to those in authority while encouraging rulers to rule wisely and justly. It eventually became a rigid code which revolutionaries would blame for stagnation in China. While Confucianism was not technically a religion, it was a pervasive belief system.

Daoism (The Way) was also a Chinese-born belief. Its founder, Lao Zi, believed that humankind needed to restore the balance with nature. Its concept of Yin and Yang symbolises the balance of opposites: heaven and earth, male and female, good and bad.

In its popular form, Daoism developed a host of gods, immortals and spirit creatures. Superstitions, astrology, fortune telling and rituals for prolonging life developed from the original simpler philosophy. Importantly, the emperor believed that a failure on his part to maintain the balance and please heaven would lead to catastrophes that could signal the end of his reign.



▲ Source 0.6 Confucius

**Confucianism**  
the system of belief taught by Kong Fuzi

**Daoism** (The Way) a Chinese religion based on the harmony of Yin and Yang

**Buddhism**  
a religion imported to China from India



▲ Source 0.7 Yin Yang symbol



Buddhism was imported from India with the philosophy that enlightenment and suppression of desires would halt suffering. In the seventh century CE, a Buddhist monk Xuan Zang, an early convert to Buddhism, made a perilous but successful journey to India to research Buddhism more thoroughly and bring back sacred texts. Over the years, Buddhism received a mix of persecution and support from the emperors. It soon fused with popular culture to join the mix of Confucianism and Daoism.

An example of this fusion occurs in a classic Chinese novel, *Journey to the West* by Wu Cheng'en, which featured a King of the Monkeys and some colleagues to accompany the Buddhist monk on the journey. Monkey, who discovered magical Daoist powers, created havoc in Heaven, and the Heavenly Emperor (another Daoist concept) had to appeal to Buddha to tame Monkey (or Sun Wukong) until he was given the task of escorting the monk. The final restoration of order was a Confucian goal.



▲ Source 0.8 The Monkey King – Sun Wukong

## 0.3 Chinese language

The national language Hanyu, or Mandarin, only became truly national in the twentieth century. There are several dialects, of which Cantonese from Guangdong is the most famous. The written form is not based on an alphabet but on characters, which can be read by all dialect speakers. In history books, two systems have been used to convert the names and words into the Greco-Roman alphabet (transliteration): the Wade-Giles system and Pinyin.

### The Wade-Giles system

This system, introduced by Professor Sir Thomas Wade in 1859 and modified in 1892 by Professor Herbert Giles, was widely used by English-speaking nations and was known as the Wade-Giles system. It used an established phonetic device of using an apostrophe to distinguish the aspirated (breathed) consonants (t, k, p and ch) from their non-aspirated counterparts (d, g, b and j). So *t* without an apostrophe is sounded as *d*, while *t'* is sounded as a *t*.

The Wade-Giles system is technically accurate and provides a reminder that some Chinese characters or radicals occasionally switch between aspirated and non-aspirated consonants in their various pronunciations. However, for those untrained in its use, the Wade-Giles system can be quite confusing. This is why many Westerners pronounce the Chinese mystical concept 'the way' as Tao (*toub*) instead of Dao (*doub*). The last syllable in Mao Tse-tung begins with a *d* sound not a *t*. Similarly, the surname of Teng Hsiao-p'ing also begins with a *d* sound while the last syllable begins with a *p* due to the apostrophe. (Remember that Chinese family names are given first.)

### Pinyin

In the late 1950s, the People's Republic of China introduced its own national system called Pinyin (which means 'phonetic'). While it reduces the use of the apostrophe and makes some pronunciations clear, it too presents difficulties to the novice and is not 100 per cent consistent. Taiwan, Hong Kong and other Chinese communities overseas still tend to use the Wade-Giles system. To help you through this pronunciation jungle, use the guide at the front of this book.

### Place names

Place names can be inconsistent too. Why Peking and Beijing? The Wade-Giles system would romanise it as Peiching. The *k* is derived from southern dialects. As Westerners entered China mainly from southern **treaty ports** they were heavily influenced by local pronunciations. This often placed a *k* instead of a *j* (or *ch* in Wade-Giles). Hence, we read Kiangsi (Jiangxi) and Nanking (Nanjing) in older texts and maps.

Finally, what is the link between Canton and Guangzhou? The Portuguese traders who arrived early in Guangzhou confused the name of the capital city and its province, Guangdong. Their attempts to pronounce the province became Canton, which was then misapplied to the city of Guangzhou (Kwangchow – Wade-Giles).

All of this will initially be confusing, but the charts at the front of this book should help you through the maze. Then you will realise that Tse-hsi and Cixi are the same empress-dowager, the Kuomintang and the Guomindang are the same party, and Chou En-lai and Zhou Enlai are the same person. When writing about China, it is better to use Pinyin as it has been formally accepted by the United Nations, and modern atlases and textbooks have converted to it. Mao Zedong, Zhou Enlai and Deng Xiaoping are the spellings featured in our newspapers. This book will mainly employ Pinyin.

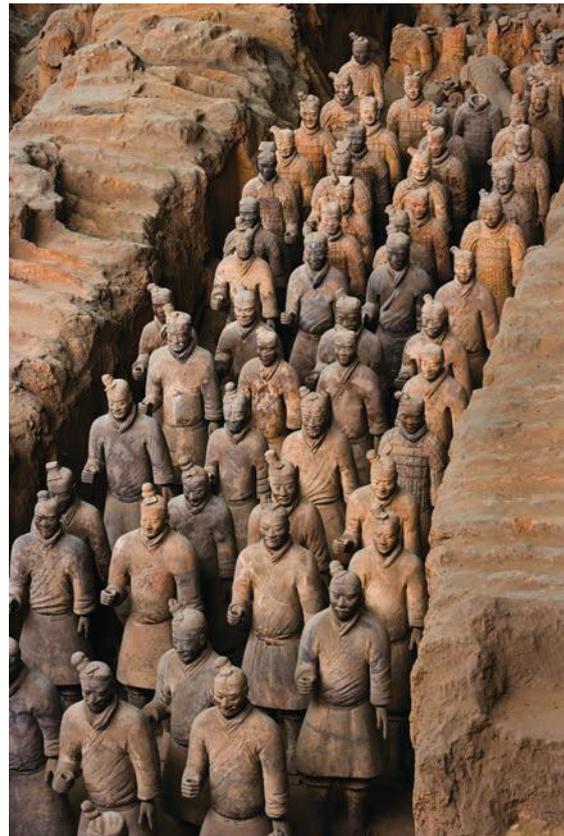
**treaty ports**  
trading ports  
opened to  
Western nations  
after the Opium  
Wars

## 0.4 Background to twentieth-century China

The Chinese can trace their civilisation back almost 4000 years. It is believed to have emerged around the Yellow River (Huang He). The name 'China' is a foreign version of the name of the first dynasty, the Qin (221–207 BCE), established by the first emperor, Qin Shi Huangdi. He brutally united the warring kingdoms, began the Great Wall, unified weights and measures, and was buried with an army of terracotta warriors guarding him at Xi'an.



▲ Source 0.9 Emperor Qin Shi Huangdi



▲ Source 0.10 The army of the terracotta warriors today

### Dragon Throne

**Dragon Throne** reference to the emperor who was considered semi-divine

**Mandate of Heaven** heavenly support for a ruler so long as heaven–earth harmony is maintained

To the Chinese, their country was known as the 'Middle Kingdom', a reference to its central position under heaven. The emperor sat on the **Dragon Throne** and was responsible for maintaining the harmony between heaven and earth. This heaven-supported role was known as the **Mandate of Heaven**. However, heaven could (and sometimes did) withdraw its support for the emperor if he did not rule well.

The majority of those whom the emperor ruled called themselves the Han people, after the glorious empire that succeeded the Qin. The later Tang Dynasty (618–907 CE) was a period of great construction, art, poetry and porcelain. It was succeeded by the Song Dynasty (960–1279 CE), during which the arts continued to grow and the sciences developed. Gunpowder was used for warfare and the compass was perfected. By now, China saw itself as a country and culture without peer, and this view was to contribute to its political decline later.

## Genghis Khan to the Ming Dynasty

Genghis Khan, a Mongol leader, swept across Asia and in about 1212 CE captured China. Despite this violent occupation, the rule of his grandson Kublai Khan – who became first emperor of the Yuan Dynasty – heralded a period of great learning. Kublai Khan was the emperor visited by the famous explorer Marco Polo. However, a foreign dynasty is never popular and a revolt by a Buddhist monk established the Ming Dynasty in 1368 CE, with its capital located in Nanjing. After the death of the first emperor, the capital was moved to Beijing and the emperor ruled from the **Forbidden City**, as the palace became known. Rulership of the Ming was not strong, but Ming porcelain still remains highly valued. The Chinese would look back fondly at this period as the last dynasty with Han rulers.

**Forbidden City** the imperial palace in Beijing

## The last dynasty

The last dynasty to rule China was the Qing Dynasty (1644–1912 CE), which was a result of a successful invasion of China by the **Manzu** (Manchus) from the north. This second foreign dynasty ordered Chinese males to wear their hair long and in a 'queue' (pigtail), as well as to shave the top of the forehead – all in the Manzu style. The Qing (meaning 'pure') emperors were all Manzu, as were their wives and **concubines**. Initially, the Qing Dynasty ruled well, but as the quality of rule declined, the resentment towards Qing rule increased. However, the language, customs and religions followed by the Qing were those of the Han Chinese they had conquered.



▲ Source 0.11 The Forbidden City

▼ Source 0.12 A group of men with the Manzu hairstyle



**Manzu** (Manchu) the northern ethnic group that ruled during the Qing dynasty

**concubine** a woman who officially cohabits with an important man; often a legal arrangement

## Foreign encroachment

It was during the Qing dynasty that the Western nations sought greater access to China's riches, such as silk and porcelain, and the increasingly popular drink available only from China – tea. Other than a few curiosities, China did not really want to buy from Europe, so the Western nations had to trade through the only port open to them, Guangzhou (Canton). In fact, in response to a visit from the British monarch King George III's envoy, the emperor, Qianlong, wrote back: 'Consequently there is nothing we lack, as your principal envoy and others have observed.' Further, the Western nations were forced to deal through a monopoly called the **Cohong** and had to pay with silver.

**Cohong** a group in Guangzhou that had the monopoly on trade with foreigners

This disadvantageous situation was draining the silver resources of countries such as Britain. To counter the imbalance, Britain smuggled opium (grown in India) into China. The emperor appointed a government official Lin Zexu to stop the opium trade, and in 1839 he seized 21 000 chests of opium, which he burnt publicly. This action snowballed into the 1840 First Opium War, which saw China humiliated by European warships dominating Chinese rivers and ports.



▲ Source 0.13 'Gunboat diplomacy' in the Opium Wars

The defeat in the First Opium War greatly humiliated the Celestial Kingdom, as China was also known. Consequently, the Western nations gained certain privileges, which were to inspire resentment for over a hundred years.

In 1842, the Treaty of Nanjing was signed. It:

- ceded Hong Kong to Britain
- gave entry to Amoy (Xiamen), Fuzhou, Ningbo and Shanghai as treaty ports
- made China pay compensation for the opium seized and for the war
- ensured the Cohong was abolished.

## ANALYSIS ACTIVITY 0.1



## A letter from Commissioner Lin Zexu to Queen Victoria, 1839

A view that was typical of the Chinese attitude to the Western nations was that expressed by Lin Zexu, the emperor's commissioner:

*The wealth of China is used to profit the barbarians. That is to say, the great profit made by barbarians is all taken from the rightful share of China. By what right do they then in return use the poisonous drug to injure the Chinese people? Even though the barbarians may not necessarily intend to do us harm, yet in coveting profit to such an extreme, they have no regard for injuring others. Let us ask, where is your conscience? I had heard the smoking of opium is strictly forbidden by your country; that is because the harm caused by opium is clearly understood. Since it is not permitted to do harm to your own country then even less should you let it be passed on to the harm of foreign countries – how much less to China! Of all that China exports to foreign countries, there is not a single thing which is not beneficial to people; they are of benefit when eaten, or of benefit when used, or of benefit when resold: all are beneficial. Is there a single article from China which has done any harm to foreign countries?*



▲ Source 0.14 A portrait of Commissioner Lin Zexu, circa 1843

Source 0.15 Lin Zexu, 'Letter to the English Ruler', in Wm Theodore de Bary (ed.), *Sources of Chinese Tradition, Vol II*, 1960, p. 7.

- 1 Identify the negative term Commissioner Lin uses to describe Westerners.
- 2 Identify the poisonous drug referred to here.
- 3 Summarise the moral argument used by Lin Zexu.
- 4 In your opinion, propose why Queen Victoria did not react to this letter.

In 1843, a special treaty gave Britain 'most favoured nation' status, as well as giving foreigners exemption from Chinese justice. This was called **extraterritoriality**. In 1856, an incident involving a Chinese ship in Hong Kong waters and a failure by the Chinese authorities to placate the British led to the Second Opium War. In the resulting Treaty of Tianjin (Tientsin), several things occurred:

- Six more treaty ports were opened.
- A customs service was set up under foreign control.
- Opium was allowed into China.
- Christian missionaries were given access to China.
- European ambassadors were allowed to live in Beijing.

**extraterritoriality**

Western nations' insistence that their citizens not be subject to Chinese justice



Furthermore, other nations staked their own claims:

- Russia grabbed territory north of the Amur River.
- France gained Guangzhou and control of Annam, a vassal state in Indochina.
- Germany gained influence in Shandong province.

In 1894, Japan declared war and, following victory, imposed the Treaty of Shimonoseki, gaining the Liaodong Peninsula, Taiwan (Formosa), the Pescadores and part of Manchuria. China also had to recognise Korean 'independence' (which really meant Japanese control).

### AMAZING BUT TRUE ...

The man appointed as Inspector General of the Chinese Customs Service was Robert Hart. He was so conscientious and honest that the Chinese government gained more revenue under his command than under its own officials, who were used to siphoning off money. Hart received a knighthood from Britain, awards from many European nations and several honours from the emperor, including the award of the Peacock's Feather and that of President of a Ministry.

## The Taiping Rebellion

**Taiping** the anti-Qing rebels led by Hong Xiuquan

**examination system** the imperial examination system for selecting officials based on Confucianism

The Opium Wars had shown the Qing Dynasty to be internally vulnerable. It came very close to being overthrown by the **Taiping** Rebellion (1851–1864). The short-lived regime was called Taiping Tianguo (Heavenly Kingdom of Great Peace).

Its founder, Hong Xiuquan, three times failed the state **examination system** (for entry into the civil service) and during a nervous breakdown had a vision of his 'elder brother' and a message from the 'heavenly father'. After reading some Christian pamphlets, he came to believe he was the brother of Christ.

Important aspects of the movement were:

- the baptism of followers
- anti-Manchu sentiment
- anti-Confucian and anti-Daoist sentiment
- defying the belief that only the emperor could sacrifice to heaven
- the view that all men (including women) were equal
- men not wearing Manchu (Manchu)-style hair and women not binding their feet
- the promise of land reform to its peasant followers.

The Taiping leadership was militarily disciplined and appealed to the oppressed peasantry and those looking to go beyond mere survival. The government was slow to react to this disturbance in the remote south (Guangxi). In 1853, the Taipings, with 80 000 soldiers, captured Wuchang on the Yangzi (Yangtze) River and, rather than attack Beijing, captured Nanjing, which they made the capital.



▲ Source 0.16 A portrait of Hong Xiuquan, circa 1860

An expeditionary force came close to Beijing while Shanghai was harried by Taiping forces. Meanwhile, **imperial** forces were regrouped under the command of Zeng Guofan, a high-ranking official. A foreign-led rifle corps called the Ever Victorious Army was used successfully against the Taipings. It was effectively led by the British Major Charles G. Gordon (Aka 'Chinese' Gordon). Britain, France and the United States were officially neutral, but they were drawn in by Taiping disruptions to trade. Gordon and Li Hongzhang (Governor-General of several provinces) led armies that captured Suzhou, Hangzhou and eventually Nanjing. Hong Xiuquan poisoned himself before Nanjing was captured. There was wholesale slaughter in Nanjing (approximately 100 000 people were killed). An estimated 20–30 million people died in this rebellion, a staggering figure only matched in the conflicts occurring between 1934 and 1949 in China.

**imperial** to do with the emperor or ruling other countries

The Taiping Rebellion was a sign of Han resentment towards Manzu rule. It also demonstrated Manzu weaknesses, especially as the regime required Western assistance to defeat the Taiping movement. The peasant-based revolt had the power. While the Qing Dynasty limped on for another half-century, its unpopularity with the Han majority and military weakness were problems that never went away.



▲ Source 0.17 The Taiping Rebellion

The rebellion was the embodiment of the growing number of secret societies in China. They took names such as the Big Sword, Small Dagger, Triad or Red Spears. They were formed along the lines of family, and their strict codes were a result of their illegality. Generally, they were anti-government in nature. In the late Qing Dynasty, many of the societies merged to become either reform or revolutionary parties.

## THE STORY SO FAR

The geography and size of China helps to explain why it was difficult to rule consistently and why it was easy for the country to become fragmented. One binding factor was the Confucian culture, which encouraged unquestioning obedience. Buddhism taught the endurance of suffering, while Daoism's emphasis on the balance of heaven and earth allowed for insurrection. Late Qing history serves as a reminder that instability was not just a twentieth-century phenomenon. As far as language goes, the reader should work with the Pinyin system but recognise the alternatives.



**BACKGROUND: FALL OF THE QING  
DYNASTY, 1851–1912**

大事记：清帝国之覆灭

*Guozu bu qian (裹足不前 Bind one's own feet to prevent progress)*

– CHINESE PROVERB

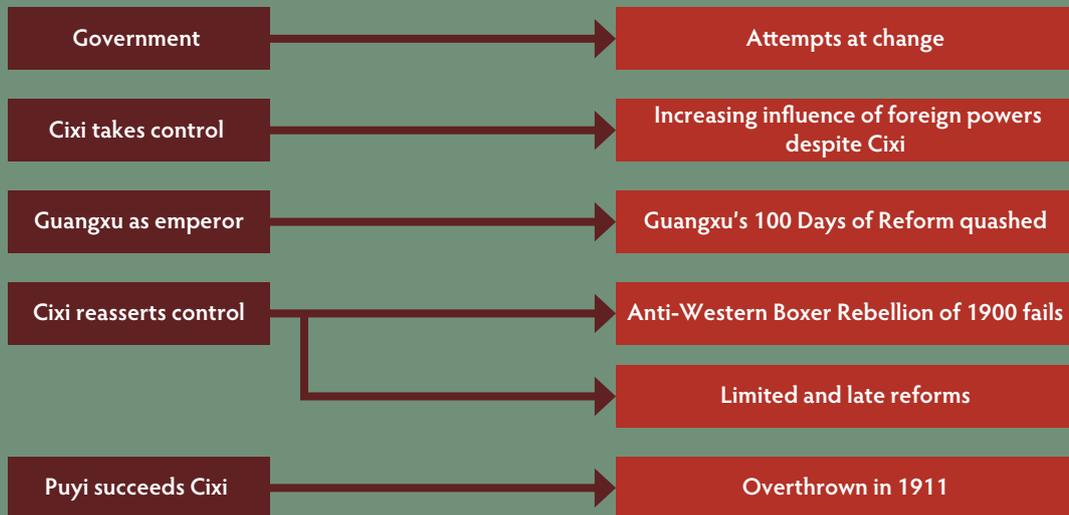
## Overview

Since 1644 CE, the Manzu (Manchu) Dynasty had ruled China with a firm hand. But the cracks were showing by the nineteenth century, and this was not helped by the interventions of foreign powers. A strong ruler can give a sense of unity and strength even when the country is fragmenting. The Empress Dowager Cixi was such a ruler, and she held China together for 47 years through her personal influence and domination of the imperial throne. However, it was the noticeably stagnating nature of society and her failure to allow China to reform that spelled doom for the Qing and the end of a long line of dynasties that shaped the Middle Kingdom. It was left to the second of Cixi's 'adopted' sons, Puyi, to be overthrown by revolutionary movements only three years after her death.

## Key issues

- How did the Western powers humiliate China?
- How and why did Cixi resist reform?
- What was the Boxer Rebellion?
- What reforms was Cixi obliged to implement?
- How did the Qing rulership unravel?

## Flow of chapter



18



▲ Source 0.19 The 17 Arch Bridge, Summer Palace, Beijing

## 0.5 How did the Western powers humiliate China?

Following China's defeats in the Opium Wars and Western assistance in defeating the 1851–1864 Taiping Rebellion that almost overthrew the Qing Dynasty, there was little that could stop the encroachment of European nations, later followed by the United States and Japan. This encroachment took 10 major forms:

- 1 **Treaty ports.** Prior to the Opium Wars, only Guangzhou (Canton) was open to foreigners. Now most of the major seaboard ports were accessible. This greatly reduced Chinese control over trade.
- 2 **Legalisation of the opium trade.** Britain and other nations could now legally sell opium to China, which weakened China financially and morally, as the abundant and cheaper supply encouraged greater addiction among Chinese citizens.
- 3 **Customs service.** As mentioned in the previous chapter, this was now under foreign control. While this was economically more profitable for the emperor, it was a further humiliation.
- 4 **Extraterritoriality.** In essence, this meant that a European citizen who committed a crime could not be tried by Chinese courts, only those of their own nationality.
- 5 **Embassies in Beijing.** Cixi could no longer ignore or dismiss foreign representatives, as their embassies were located just outside the south-eastern wall of her palace.
- 6 **Missionaries.** The intrusion of missionaries greatly upset many Chinese, as their presence (sometimes, along with their wealthy backing) was seen as an attack on Confucianism, Buddhism and Daoism. Furthermore, the missionaries openly criticised the Chinese practice of ancestor worship. For these reasons they did not have many converts, but in times of famine the missionaries' ability to supply food did temporarily convert many 'Rice Christians'.
- 7 **Foreign concessions.** Major cities had foreign quarters or concessions which were run by the foreigners, even to the point of having their own police force patrol the area. European pastimes such as horse racing, night clubs and tennis featured. The concessions in Shanghai were particularly famous as the 'Paradise of Adventurers'.
- 8 **Spheres of influence.** Certain areas of China were seen as trading monopolies for certain nations. France held sway over the south-west, while Germany grasped Shandong province.
- 9 **Annexations.** After the Sino–Japanese War of 1894–1895, Japan took over Taiwan and parts of Manchuria. Russia had grabbed land north of the Amur River. France grabbed much of Indochina. Portugal took a long lease on Macao, as did Britain on Hong Kong.
- 10 **Railways.** Chinese governors did not appreciate foreign (often British) railways running through their provinces. The ordinary people were upset when the lines broke *fengshui*, thereby inviting calamity by blocking the natural pathways of the 'dragons' which controlled the weather.

With these 10 encroachments, it is easy to see why many Chinese resented the presence of the foreign powers.

**foreign concessions** areas set aside for foreigners in major cities of China

**spheres of influence** parts of China where a foreign power had a monopoly on trade

**fengshui** Chinese belief in the balance of the elements of nature



## HISTORY THROUGH OBJECTS



▲ Source 0.20 Embassy wives picnic on the way to the Ming Tombs, circa 1900

The photograph in Source 0.20 was passed down through the family of the women picnicking. This 'Sacred Way' can, even today, be viewed by tourists but is out of bounds to them. Within the year of this photograph being taken, these women were among those embassy officials and families besieged by the 'Boxers' for 55 days before foreign troops brought relief.

## Empress Dowager Cixi

In 1852, Cixi was one of 28 attractive young Manchu (Manchu) women selected to be a concubine for the emperor, Xianfeng. She was then called Yehonala.

In 1856, she gave birth to the only son to be born to the emperor. She was then raised to the rank of concubine of the first class. Her strong nature and increasing influence over the emperor brought resentment in the court. When the emperor died in 1861, she and the empress consort (first wife of the emperor) were contenders for the positions of **regents** for the child emperor. Key members of the court plotted their deaths after the funeral.

**regent** someone who guides an under-age ruler

However, these plotters were bound by tradition to accompany the emperor's coffin back to Beijing from the Manchu city of Jehol. This gave Yehonala the opportunity to slip back before them and, with the help of Prince Gong and a young officer Rong Lu (Junglu), have the conspirators arrested upon their return to the capital. They were punished, three of them with the death sentence.

▼ Source 0.21 Empress Dowager Cixi



▼ Source 0.22 Emperor Guangxu



Against all precedents, the two women became the regents. Yehonala took the title of Cixi ('motherly and auspicious') and the empress consort became Ci'an ('motherly and restful'). In time, Cixi outmanoeuvred Ci'an and took full control of the young emperor, Tongzhi, until he was old enough to rule. After Tongzhi's death in 1875, Cixi maintained her grip by taking the unorthodox step of adopting her nephew, who became the next emperor, Guangxu. When Guangxu died in 1908, she adopted another relative, Puyi. Cixi, the 'Old Buddha' as she liked to be called, died the next day, leaving the three-year-old Puyi, Emperor Xuantong, to be the last emperor of China. While genealogical records list the last three emperors of the Qing Dynasty, it was really the 'Old Buddha' herself who ruled.

**ANALYSIS ACTIVITY 0.2**



**Foreign encroachments in China**



▲ Source 0.23 Foreign encroachments in China

- 1 Identify the parts of China where foreigners had the greatest impact.
- 2 Propose why you think these areas were occupied.
- 3 Why do you think the United States is not featured significantly?

## 0.6 How and why did Cixi resist reform?

**Summer Palace**  
the emperor's  
summer retreat in  
Beijing

Ever since the defeats and humiliations of the Opium Wars, including the destruction of the original **Summer Palace**, Cixi had been firmly anti-Western in her approach, but China was not strong enough to openly oppose the intruding nations. Some saw that the answer to China's plight was not to resist or ignore Western ways, but rather to reform China from within, much as Japan had done. This is known as the Self-Strengthening Movement.

An influential official in this movement was Viceroy (governor of more than one province) Li Hongzhang. His involvement in the defeat of the Taiping Rebellion convinced him of the value of modern weaponry. As an able and far-sighted administrator, he tried to steer China towards modernisation, with limited success.

A later advocate of reform was Kang Youwei. He was a scholar who wanted radical reform comparable to that which had occurred in Japan. He repeatedly petitioned the emperor Guangxu, who had gained his majority (adulthood) and now ruled without Cixi as his regent. Eventually, Kang's 'memorials', as they were called, were brought before the emperor, who was happy to reform China along Western lines from 'above'.

In the space of 103 days in 1898, up to 50 reform decrees were issued in the following areas:

- **Education** – The 'eight-legged' Confucian essay for the civil service exam was replaced by essays on current affairs. Beijing University was established. Schools with Western subjects were established or proposed.
- **Politics** – This basically involved a streamlining of the civil service.
- **Industry** – This was highlighted by the promotion of railway construction.
- **Fiscal** – The government was to work to a budget, along Western lines.
- **Law** – The legal codes were to be simplified.

▼ **Source 0.26** Marble Boat, built with funds designated for a modern navy



▲ **Source 0.24** Li Hongzhang



▲ **Source 0.25**  
Kang Youwei



This period, known as the ‘**100 Days of Reform**’, was ended by Cixi resuming the role of regent, punishing Kang’s supporters, arresting Guangxu and reversing most of the reforms with the exception of retaining Beijing University and some provincial schools. Kang Youwei only just escaped to Japan, thereby avoiding execution. Others were not so fortunate.

The accepted view is that Guangxu became a virtual prisoner of Cixi and was no longer a force in Chinese politics. An important opportunity to reform China had been lost. A common pattern in revolutions is that a failure to reform from ‘above’ leaves only the option of reform from ‘below’. Consequently, within two years a mighty current of nationalism, fired by a hatred of Western intrusions, swept through the northern parts of China.

**100 Days of Reform** refers to the short-lived period whereby Guangxu tried to strengthen China through political reform and modernisation

## 0.7 What was the Boxer Rebellion?

Fear of the West, floods and rumours of missionaries kidnapping Chinese children encouraged popular suspicion and resentment of foreigners – especially the missionaries, who were vulnerable as they were living among the people, not in the foreign ‘concessions’. Near the end of the nineteenth century, there were increasing numbers of attacks on foreign missionaries and engineers. These were particularly encouraged by the governor of Shandong province.

Feeling betrayed by the 1898 reforms, foreign protection of some of the reformers and an abortive attempt by Italy to have China cede an island to it, Cixi ordered her governors to cease appeasing the foreign powers. The 1898 ‘coup’ meant that Cixi now listened to the conservatives and not the reformers. Now officials could give support to the anti-foreign movement usually referred to as the **Boxers**.

‘Boxing’ is an inaccurate term for Chinese martial arts. The Qing Dynasty had seen many anti-Manzu secret societies spring up, such as the White Lotus Society. Inspired by such movements, the Big Sword Society (Dadao Hui) grew in the 1890s and followers came under the banner of the **Yihequan** (Righteous and Harmonious Fists), later to be renamed **Yihetuan** (Righteous and Harmonious Society). Using martial arts training and secret ceremonies, adherents claimed to be immune to weapons, including foreign bullets. They were particularly active in the northern provinces of Shandong, Hunan and Zhili. The conservatives in the court, led by Prince Tuan and Prince Qing, held sway over those advocating suppression of the Boxers such as Rong Lu, Yuan Shikai and Li Hongzhang.

On 13 June 1900, the Boxers swarmed into Beijing and soon laid siege to the foreign legations. They also burned churches and killed Christian converts. For almost two months, the Boxers, with help from imperial troops, attacked the foreign legations, which were defended by only 450 guards. Not all officials supported the Boxers. Governors in the south disobeyed instructions from Cixi and suppressed any Boxer activities. In Beijing, Rong Lu had his soldiers fire blanks and he withheld the heavy cannon. On 14 August, an international force of 18 000 men that had set out from Tianjin reached and occupied Beijing. The Boxer Rebellion was defeated and further entrenched the occupying powers; it also further tarnished the dynasty’s image.

Meanwhile, dressed in the clothes of a commoner, Cixi fled with the court to Xi’an to escape the vengeance of the foreigners. Guangxu was taken as well. When his favourite concubine, Consort Chen, pleaded that Guangxu stay behind to negotiate, Cixi saw this as a plot to reinstate the emperor and had the concubine thrown down a well in the Forbidden City. Li Hongzhang was called in from Guangdong, in the south, to negotiate with the 11 European powers alongside Prince Qing. This resulted in the Boxer Protocol of 7 September 1901.

▼ Source 0.27 Boxer Rebellion



**Boxers** anti-Western Chinese who employed martial arts (see Yihetuan)

**Yihequan** original name of Yihetuan (Righteous and Harmonious Fists)

**Yihetuan** correct name for the Boxers (Righteous and Harmonious Society)



The Boxer Protocol insisted, among other demands, that:

- officials who supported the Boxers be executed, be allowed to suicide or be banished
- an indemnity of 675 million pounds sterling be paid over the next 39 years
- apology missions be sent to Germany and Japan
- a permanent guard be established at the legations
- the Dagu (Taku) forts near Tianjin be destroyed
- the Civil Service exams be suspended for five years in 45 cities that experienced Boxer activity.

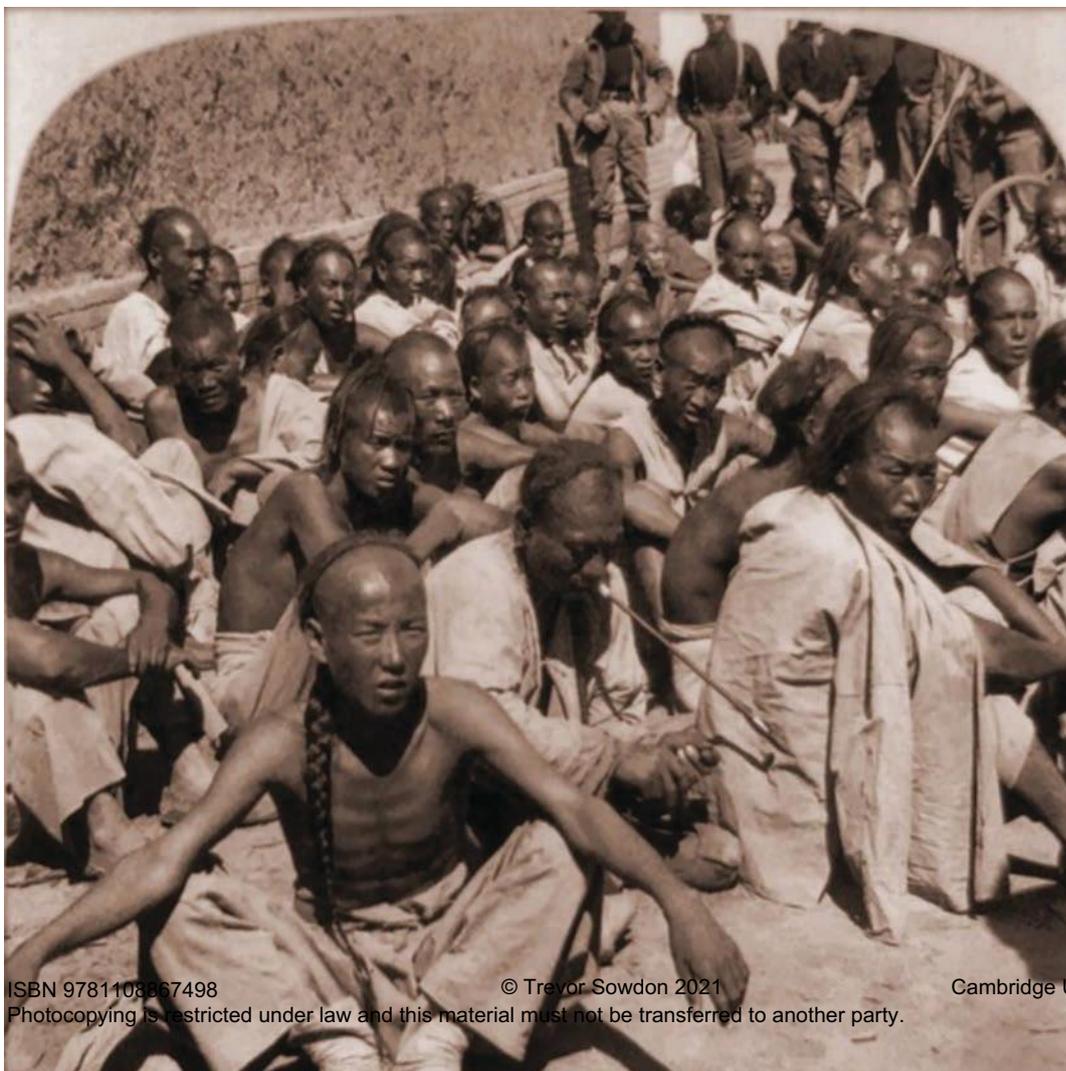
### AMAZING BUT TRUE ...

In 1900, three Australian colonies – South Australia, Victoria and New South Wales – sent two ships from the colonial navies (as Australia was not yet federated) and personnel to assist the foreign powers in suppressing the Boxer Rebellion. These troops were known as 'Bluejackets'. They arrived too late to help relieve the legations in Beijing, but they were given mopping-up operations and guard duty over Boxer prisoners.

### AMAZING BUT TRUE ...

In the Hollywood film *55 Days at Peking*, which was based around the Boxer Rebellion, Prince Tuan was played by the Australian ballet dancer Robert Helpmann. Rather than reconstruct the vast imperial palace for the Empress Dowager, the film used a mock-up of the Temple of Heaven instead.

▼ Source 0.28 Boxer prisoners captured by the 6th US cavalry, Tianjin, China, 1901



## 0.8 What reforms was Cixi obliged to implement?

Following the humiliating defeat of the Boxers, it became obvious to Cixi that the ‘Hairy Men’, as the Boxers had dubbed the foreigners, were in China to stay. To placate demands for reform, she allowed certain liberal measures to be announced or promised. Some of the reforms instituted were:

- a Ministry of Foreign Affairs was established (1901)
- a Bureau of Military Training was established (1903)
- a Ministry of Education was established (1905)
- the Confucian ‘eight-legged essay’ was abolished as the assessment for provincial and metropolitan examinations
- marriage was allowed between Manchu and Han Chinese (1902)
- foot-binding was abolished.

## 0.9 How did the Qing rulership unravel?

Sometimes the ruler largely responsible for a revolution is no longer on the scene when the revolution occurs. This is the case with the fall of the Qing Dynasty. In 1908, the Emperor Guangxu died under suspicious circumstances and Cixi selected her three-year-old grand-nephew to be the next emperor of China. His name was Aisin Gioro Puyi, and his reign name was Xuantong. Two days after Puyi entered the palace, the ‘Old Buddha’, Cixi, died. Puyi’s father, Prince Qun, was the regent while Guangxu’s widow was the official **Empress Dowager**. However, the new leadership was indecisive and was unable to prevent the coming revolution.

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**Empress Dowager** mother of the emperor; often used to refer to Cixi



▲ Source 0.29 Emperor Puyi



## HISTORICAL INTERPRETATIONS 0.1

### Was Cixi the villain as she is so often portrayed?

While most historical accounts portray Cixi as a manipulative and cruel ruler, at least one historian has come to her rescue. Sterling Seagrave, in his controversial history *Dragon Lady*, blames four men for this blackened image of Cixi: the reformer Kang Youwei; the Australian journalist Dr G.E. Morrison; another journalist, J.O.P. Bland; and a linguist, Edmund Backhouse.

*Their portrait of Tzu hsi [Cixi] was of a ruthless, single-minded tyrant, an iron-willed, over-sexed Manchu concubine who usurped power in 1861 to rule China with perversion, corruption, and intrigue for half a century until her misrule caused the collapse of an empire that had endured more than two thousand years. Here for all to see was 'that odious woman', as Morrison called her, 'that awful old harridan', the wicked witch of the East; a reptilian dragon lady who had arranged the poisoning, strangling, beheading, or forced suicide of anyone who had ever challenged her autocratic control.*

**Source 0.30** Sterling Seagrave, *Dragon Lady: The Life and Legend of the Last Empress of China*, 1993, pp. 11–12.

Here are some alternative comments on Cixi:

*Tzu Hsi [Cixi] was a person who would devote the greatest pains to dealing with any situation that posed the slightest threat to her security: she had Kuang Hsu's [Guangxu] Pearl Consort drowned in a well before her flight in 1900 out of fear that she might cause trouble for her later. In any circumstances, her first consideration was always the protection of her own rule.*

**Source 0.31** *From Emperor to Citizen: The Autobiography of Aisin-Gioro Pu Yi*, 1989, pp. 15–16.

*Tz'u-hsi [Cixi], seeing in the strong-willed concubine the shadow of her former self at the time when she too had been in her twenties, hearing in the Pearl Concubine's words that pride and dignity that she had now so conclusively forfeited, flung a furious order to the eunuchs standing by. And they in their terror at the horrors of the moment, obeyed. Before the very eyes of the emperor who it seems had loved her, the Pearl Concubine was thrown down the well and drowned ...*

**Source 0.32** Marina Warner, *The Dragon Empress: Life and Times of Tz'u-Hsi, 1835–1908, Empress Dowager of China*, 1974, p. 245.

- 1 Assess whether Seagrave's attack on the credibility of contemporary critics of Cixi is sufficient to clear her name.
- 2 Is Puyi's version unreliable because of who he was, and because he only met Cixi once, at the age of three?
- 3 Given what you have read about Cixi so far, which of Seagrave's, Pu Yi's or Warner's analysis do you agree with the most?"



► **Source 0.33** A photograph of Empress Cixi's funeral procession in 1908

## ANALYSIS ACTIVITY 0.3



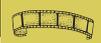
## Civilisation to China



▲ Source 0.34 The first duty: Civilisation (to China) – ‘That dragon must be killed before our troubles can be adjusted. If you don’t do it I shall have to.’

- 1 As this is a Western cartoon, outline the implied threat to China from ‘Civilisation’.
- 2 Propose which nations you assume are represented by ‘Civilisation’.
- 3 Beside the word ‘Boxer’, describe what else links the dragon to the Boxers (Yihetuan).
- 4 In your opinion, suggest what ‘our troubles can be adjusted’ refers to.
- 5 Discuss how the cartoon is in error when it has ‘Civilisation’ address the young emperor, Guangxu.

## THE STORY SO FAR



The Qing Dynasty was too set in its ways to change or modernise. This allowed foreign powers to use military might to humiliate China. The encroachment of the foreign powers that had so rankled the Boxers – particularly the building of railways – still continued to anger the general population. This brought resentment against the foreign powers and the dynasty itself. The one genuine effort to reform ‘from above’ – Guangxu’s reforms – was quashed. Consequently, the secret societies that permeated Chinese society began to take anti-Manzu feeling, republican ideas and democratic aims on board.

# Area of Study 1

## Causes of revolution: The development of significant ideas, events, individuals and popular movements in China, 1912–1949

*A reform is a correction of abuses;  
a revolution is a transfer of power.*

– EDWARD G. BULWER-LYTTON

### Overview

**Qing** the 'pure' dynasty of the Manzu conquerors (1644–1912)

**Northern Expedition** the 1926–1928 campaign led by Jiang to subdue warlords and unite China

**Guomindang (GMD)** National People's Party founded by Sun Yixian

You will find Chinese history very different from Australian history. This is not just because of the differences in language and culture: the scale is important too. During wars, revolutions and campaigns, the victims number in the millions. It is difficult to fully absorb the dimension of the various calamities that have hit China over the last century and a half. With this in mind, it is possible to appreciate just how out of character is the current period of peace and prosperity in China.

While the 'Chinese Revolution' of the book's title is the one that occurred in 1949, there is no intention of downplaying the significance of the 1911 Revolution.

In Area of Study 1, you will look at the collapse of the once great **Qing** Dynasty. What makes a dynasty fall? You will observe that corruption and stagnation had set in. A new dynasty is usually dynamic, but over time the forces and personalities that shaped the dynasty dissipate. Another factor that will help bring down a government is national humiliation, usually through defeat in war. Famine is a strong argument for revolt, as hungry people have nothing to lose. However, for people to revolt they need new ideas and theories to justify their actions. Finally, for a revolution to occur, the people must glimpse the opportunity to succeed. It is difficult to overthrow a strong government, but a weakened one is vulnerable.

A successful revolutionary is not necessarily a good leader. The overthrow of the Qing Dynasty created its own problems. The brief experiment in democracy was overthrown by men with military backing. It was only by a military campaign, the **Northern Expedition**, that these warlords were defeated or subdued.

Maybe the subsequent Nationalist (**Guomindang**, or **GMD**) government would have survived, but the invasion of China by Japan turned the balance in favour of the Chinese Communist Party, which was able to successfully harness the power of the predominantly peasant population.

The period from the late nineteenth century to 1949 was one of great intensity and determined leaders. Use the suggestions for further work and reading, the chronologies and regular revision to develop a sound grasp of what transpired.

◀ **Source 1.0** Warlord General Feng Yuxiang's cavalry fighting Manchurian forces, China, 1 December 1925  
© Trevor Sowdon 2021

Cambridge University Press



## Timeline of key events 1911–1949

### –1911

- ▶ Fall of Qing: the end of the 267-year Manchurian rule of China – the final dynasty

### 1911

- ▶ 1911 Revolution: an accident in Wuhan leads to the unseating of Emperor Puyi

### 1912–1915

- ▶ Republic of China: a short-lived attempt to bring democracy to China

### 1915–1927

- ▶ Warlord period: a time of great division and factional fighting in China

### 1920–1921

- ▶ Founding of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP): Marxism established in China, inspired by the 1917 Bolshevik revolution in Russia

### 1921–1949

- ▶ Growth of the CCP: the tortuous growth, survival and eventual victory of communism

### 1926–1928

- ▶ Northern Expedition: the Guomindang-led unification of China by military means

### 1927–1949

- ▶ Guomindang (GMD) rule: Jiang Jieshi's failure to vanquish his enemies: within the GMD, the Communists, and the Japanese

### 1934–1936

- ▶ The Long March: a remnant of the communist Soviets survive an attempt to annihilate them

### 1937–1945

- ▶ War with Japan: the Second Sino–Japanese War, which devastated China and tarnished Jiang Jieshi's reputation

### 1946–1949

- ▶ Civil War: despite early successes, the GMD armies eventually suffer defeat by the CCP

### 1949

- ▶ CCP victory: the GMD flee to Taiwan and the People's Republic of China is established

▶ **Source 1.1** A lithograph representing the battle at the Da Ping Gate at Nanjing, 1911



# 1 **FRAGILE REPUBLIC TO WARLORD ERA, 1912–1927**

从民主共和到军阀割据

*Qu er dai zhi (取而代之 To step into the emperor's shoes)*

– CHINESE PROVERB



## Overview

It is one thing to overthrow a dynasty, but replacing it is harder in practice than it is in theory. Dr Sun Yixian (Sun Yat-sen) was a dedicated and popular revolutionary, but he was not a shrewd politician. As founder of the Guomindang, he was made **provisional** president of the **Republic** of China following the 1911 Revolution. He was expected to step into the presidency, but instead he handed it to Yuan Shikai (Yuen Shih-kai), a Han official to the Qing Dynasty. Yuan was quick to oust the Gemindang from the parliament and to turn against Sun. He even attempted to install himself as emperor. This failure of the fledgling democratic experiment opened the way after Yuan's death to the divisive **warlord** era.

The death of Yuan Shikai signalled the death of the first realistic attempt to replace imperial rule with democracy. China then fragmented, with local governors and military leaders establishing their own power bases. Sometimes they cooperated and sometimes they fought each other. As usual, the ordinary people – which in China generally meant the peasants – suffered most.

**provisional** acting or temporary

**republic** country without a hereditary ruler

**warlord** someone with military command under the Qing, who established personal control by force over a part of China following the collapse of a central government

## Key issues

- Who was Sun Yixian?
- What 'sparked' the 1911 Revolution?
- How did Yuan Shikai betray the revolution?
- Who was Yuan Shikai?
- What was the nature of warlordism, 1916–1927?

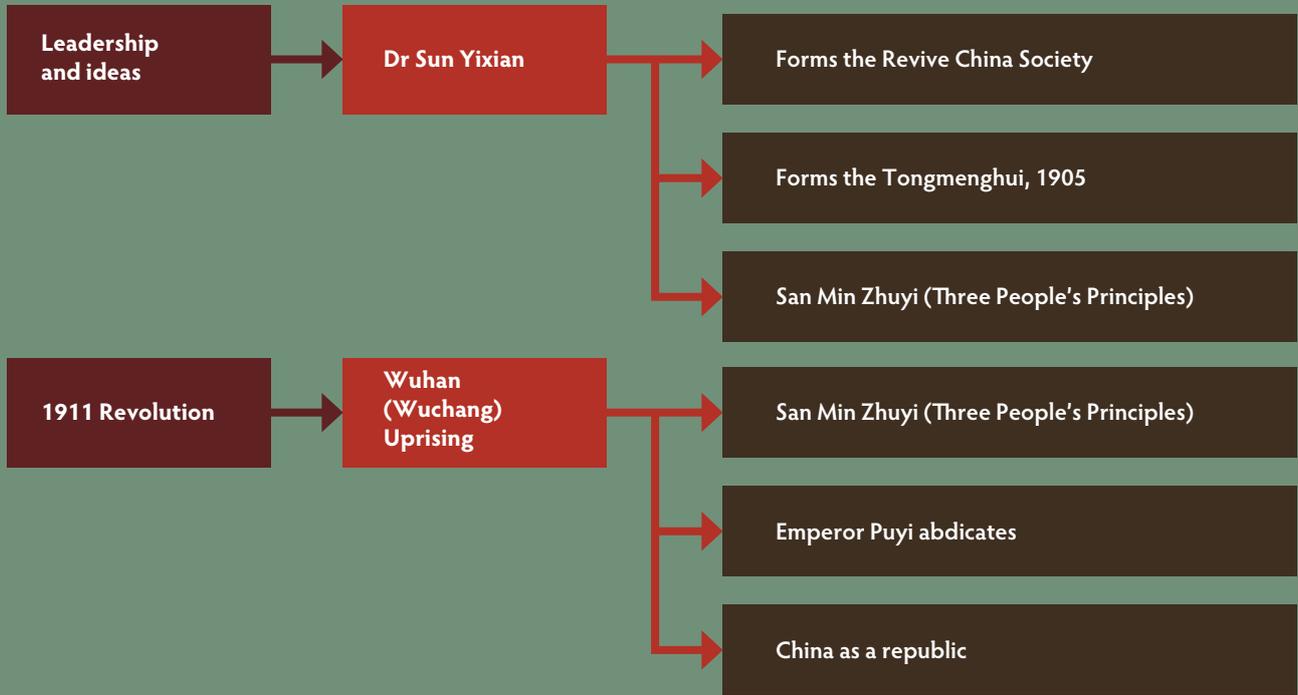
## Digital resources for this chapter

In the *Interactive Textbook*:

-  Video and audio sources and questions
-  Digital activities

◀ Source 1.2 Police stand guard in front of a portrait of Sun Yixian in Tian'anmen Square

# Flow of chapter



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# Timeline

1912

*Puyi abdicates*  
*Sun Yixian becomes provisional president*



1915

*Yuan Shikai declares himself emperor*



1917

*Sun Yixian sets up military government in Guangzhou (Canton)*

1922

*Sun Yixian organises Northern Expedition*



1925

*Sun Yixian dies*



1913

*Yuan Shikai orders dissolution of the Gemindang*

1916

*Yuan Shikai dies*

1919

*May Fourth Movement begins*  
*Sun Yixian changes name of party from Gemingdang to Guomindang*



1924

*Sun Yixian appoints Jiang Jieshi as Commandant of Huangpu Military Academy*

## 1.1

## SIGNIFICANT INDIVIDUAL

**Sun Yixian (Sun Yat-sen) (1866–1925)**

Born in Cuiheng village near Guangzhou (Canton), Sun was brought up as a Christian and cared for by his older brother in Hawaii. In 1892, he graduated as a Doctor of medicine in British-controlled Hong Kong. He founded the Xin Zhong Hui (**Revive China Society** or New China Society) in Honolulu in 1894. After a failed uprising against the Qing Dynasty in Guangzhou, Sun was forced to live in exile in Japan, Britain and the United States. Ten planned revolts failed, but in 1911 the Wuhan uprising started a chain of events that saw the Qing Dynasty fall. In a move that was to rebound on him, Sun handed over the presidency to Yuan Shikai in an attempt to unite China. Sun's revolutionary group, the **Tongmenghui**, incorporated further dissenting groups and was eventually renamed the Guomindang (GMD). However, Yuan turned against Sun and the GMD, which he dissolved in 1913. The 'Father of the Republic' went back into exile and formed new revolutionary groups with other former GMD members.

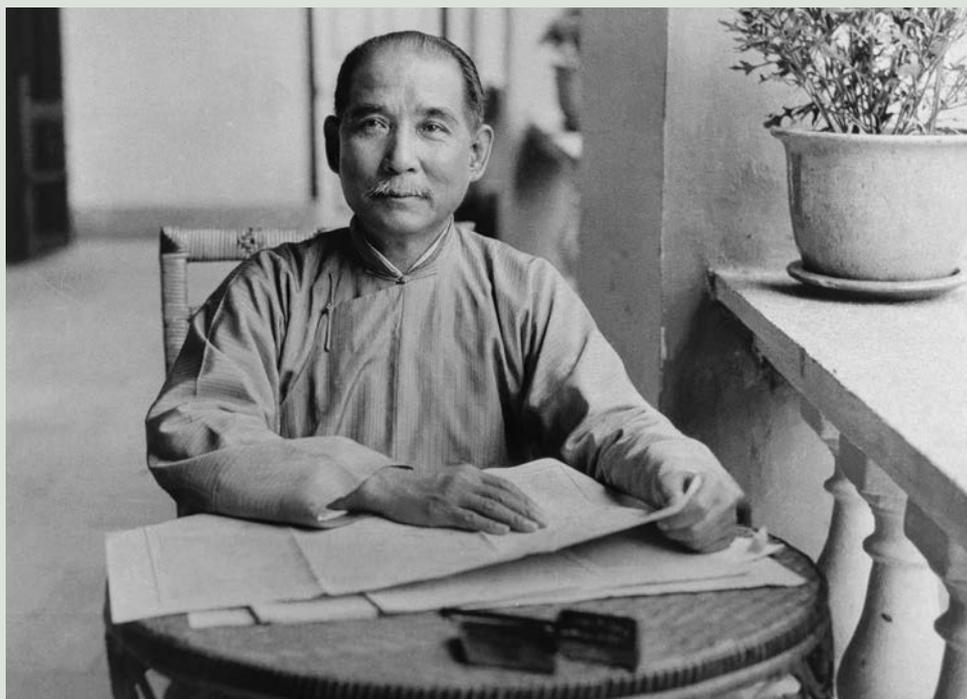
In 1915, Sun married his secretary, Song Qingling (Soong Ch'ing-ling), one of the three famous Song sisters (see Chapter 5). In 1919, Sun revived the Guomindang, which re-established itself as the Chinese government in 1920. By 1923, Sun had returned to Guangzhou as president of the southern republic. With the help of money from Soviet Russia, he established the **Huangpu (Whampoa) Military Academy**, which was later to be instrumental in uniting China under the Guomindang flag.

However, Sun died of cancer in 1925 while attending a meeting in Beijing. Three years later, his body was exhumed and placed in a magnificent marble mausoleum in Nanjing, which was the new capital of the new Guomindang government under Jiang Jieshi. Even today he is greatly revered by both the Guomindang and the Chinese Communist Party.

**Revive China Society** a movement by Chinese officials and intellectuals to reform China

**Tongmenghui** a revolutionary alliance formed by Dr Sun; forerunner to the Guomindang (GMD) also known as the Nationalist Party

**Huangpu Military Academy** (Whampoa) a military academy set up by Sun with Soviet backing



▲ Source 1.3 Sun Yixian in 1923

## 1.2 Sun Yixian – ‘Father of the Chinese Revolution’

Dr Sun Yixian was not trained in traditional Confucian schooling; instead, he was educated mainly in Western schools. His secondary training was in a Hawaiian missionary school while his medical training occurred in British-controlled Hong Kong. As an anti-Qing revolutionary, he was forced to agitate from abroad, including Japan and Britain. Sun’s ideas were distinctly Western liberal in their nature. He was a republican and opposed to Manzu (Manchurian) rule.

**San Min Zhuyi**  
(Three People’s Principles) advocated nationalism, democracy and people’s livelihood

Even though he was abroad, Sun Yixian was a marked man – the Qing government had put a price on his head which placed him at risk even in other countries. For example, in London in 1896, on his way to a friend’s house to accompany him to church, he met some compatriots and was supposedly so engrossed in conversation with them that he did not realise until too late that he had been led into the Chinese Legation by Qing agents. Sun was held there until he could be smuggled back to China for execution. Fortunately, Sun was able to smuggle a note out through an English attendant. A clamour from the English press forced the Foreign Office to demand that the legation hand Dr Sun over, which it did. This gave Sun Yixian wonderful publicity for his cause.

From abroad, Sun inspired many failed revolts in China. As a revolutionary, he was not always practical, but his skills in oratory and his enthusiasm impressed many. In 1905, Sun was able to combine many revolutionary groups under the umbrella organisation the Tongmenghui (Common Alliance League), and in this way gave anti-Manzu feeling a common voice. Sun put together the platform for this organisation with his 1905 **San Min Zhuyi** (Three People’s Principles), which were revised and republished in 1924 and 1927. The Three People’s Principles advocated nationalism, democracy and people’s livelihood.

- 1 Initially, **Nationalism** was basically anti-Qing but after 1911 became a call for national unification. Under the emperors, the people were told their allegiances and duty belonged to the Dragon Throne. The idea of loyalty to one’s country was, in theory, a new concept to the inhabitants of the Middle Kingdom.
- 2 **Democracy** was not to be instantaneous but would come after a period of ‘tutelage’. No doubt Dr Sun felt that it would take time establishing and preparing (tutelage) the people for the rights and responsibilities of a democratic government. However, this ‘period of tutelage’ did allow Jiang Jieshi, who seized power after Sun’s death in 1925, to rule China from 1928 to 1945 as a dictator.
- 3 **People’s livelihood** was, for the majority, to take the form of equitable land ownership through peaceful means. Dr Sun did not want to lose the support of the wealthy landowners, so his plan was not explicit. It was this policy which allowed the Communist Party to later claim Sun Yixian was a communist, despite the fact he never joined the party.



▲ Source 1.4 Inside Sun Yixian’s tomb in Nanjing. The flowers commemorate the 91st anniversary of his death on 12 March 1925.

### FOCUS QUESTIONS

- 1 Identify two areas in which Sun Yixian contributed to the revolution.
- 2 Which social class would most appreciate the equal division of land?

## 1.3 What 'sparked' the 1911 Revolution?

While the long-term causes of a revolution can be debated, the 'spark' that sets off a revolt can usually be tied down to a specific time and place. On 10 October 1911 (Double Tenth), in the Triple City of **Wuhan** on the Yangzi River, a bomb accidentally exploded in a revolutionary group's secret headquarters in the Russian concession of Hankou. Police tried to track down the revolutionaries, who, in order to protect themselves, seized the city of Wuchang and within three days all of Wuhan. This had a snowball effect, and within six weeks two-thirds of China's provinces had declared independence from the Qing Dynasty.



**Wuhan** the 'triple city' of Wuchang, Hankou and Hanyang on the Yangzi River

**New Model Army** the Qing army led by Yuan Shikai, based on modern, Western lines

Sun Yixian was in the United States when he heard the news. Before returning to China, he persuaded key foreign powers not to interfere with or oppose the revolution. A new republic was proclaimed on 1 January 1912: the Republic of China, with Sun as its provisional president, and Nanjing as its capital.

However, the Qing monarchy was still enthroned in Beijing and protected by Yuan Shikai, a Han Chinese who had risen high in the imperial structure. The monarchy bestowed on Yuan the title of premier to try to appease the population and retain his loyalty. Yuan had used his Beiyang (Northern Provinces) section of the **New Model Army** to strike hard at the revolutionaries, but he soon realised the dynasty was in trouble and likely to fall. He did a deal with Sun to ensure the abdication of the child emperor Puyi, and the conclusion of the dynasty, in return for Sun offering Yuan the presidency. Yuan put pressure on the dowager (Guangxu's widow), bringing to an end the Qing Dynasty after 268 years of ruling China. In return for his abdication, the Republic allowed Emperor Puyi to continue to live in the palace with a substantial pension, which was enough for him to continue his extravagant lifestyle.

### FOCUS QUESTIONS

- 1 What event 'sparked' the revolution?
- 2 How was Yuan Shikai in a position to control the revolution?

## 1.4 How did Yuan Shikai betray the revolution?



Yuan Shikai was keen to ensure that the presidency was a powerful position and not under the control of the parliament. Against Sun's wishes, Yuan moved the capital back to Beijing. The Tongmenghui was reorganised under the new name of the Guomindang (Nationalist Party) and in the parliamentary elections of February 1913 it won decisively. Yuan had the parliamentary leader, Song Jiaoren, assassinated in March 1913. In November 1913, he had the Guomindang members of parliament evicted, making him a dictator in practice. He had the constitution redrafted and virtually became president for life.

Yuan's ultimate goal was to become emperor, so to prevent foreign complications in 1915 he agreed to Japan's infamous Twenty-one Demands, which recognised Japanese interests in Manchuria and Shandong. However, when he proceeded to 'give in' to 'requests' for him to become emperor, there was too much opposition from officials, who started to withdraw their support for the republic and Yuan himself. Sun Yixian, who had left China in 1913, organised resistance from his base in Japan. Not long after being forced to relinquish the dream of being an emperor, Yuan Shikai died, leaving China to be partitioned by warlords.

◀ Source 1.5 Yuan Shikai

## 1.5

### SIGNIFICANT INDIVIDUAL



▲ Source 1.6 Yuan Shikai in 1915

#### Yuan Shikai (Yuen Shih-kai) (1859–1916)

Born in Henan province, Yuan became a soldier after having twice failed the official civil service exams. He rose in prominence as a protégé of Li Hongzhang and became a high-ranking representative of the Qing government in Korea, despite not being a Manzu. Following China's defeat in the 1894–1895 Sino–Japanese War over Korea, Yuan was placed in charge of the New Model Army. Emperor Guangxu asked for his support, and that of the Beiyang army, to gain independent rule from Cixi in 1898. Yuan betrayed this confidence to Cixi and became a favoured adviser to the Empress Dowager after Guangxu's overthrow.

In 1908, following Cixi's death, Yuan was forced into retirement as punishment for his betrayal of Guangxu. However, he was called back to suppress the 1911 revolutionaries, which he agreed to do after being named prime minister of the Imperial Court. Yuan soon realised the revolution would succeed, so he negotiated with Sun Yixian for the presidency of the Republic of China if he could secure the abdication of the Qing Emperor.

As president, Yuan resisted moves to transfer to the new capital of Nanjing away from his Beiyang Army in the north. He dismissed members of the newly re-formed GMD from parliament, and by 1913 he was virtually a dictator. In 1914, Yuan was planning to become emperor but was forced to back down in 1915 when his own officers and governors of various provinces withdrew their support. In 1916, he died of natural causes.

#### FOCUS QUESTIONS

- 1 Which actions of Yuan Shikai's would have greatly displeased Sun Yixian?
- 2 How did Yuan Shikai destroy any popularity he may have had?

## 1.6 What was the nature of warlordism, 1916–1927?

There were attempts to revive the Beijing government, but they failed as there was too much warlord interference. Sun Yixian had set up an alternative government in the south, but he too was severely limited by the local warlords, and eventually he was cast out by warlord Chen Jiongming.

Warlords were not a new phenomenon in China. Reasons for their increase include the following:

- As the Manzu rule declined, governors and military leaders were able to assert more independence from Beijing.
- The Qing reliance on provincial armies to defeat the Taiping Rebellion (1851–1864) aided their growth. These were largely the new armies that were under Han officials and not the banner armies of Manzu soldiers directly loyal to the emperor.
- Victories by Western-style armies helped remove the traditional stigma associated with a military career. Many warlords adopted European-style uniforms, often with all the pomp and ceremony attached.

In fact, Yuan Shikai was the greatest of the warlords. However, without effective central control, the other warlords established authority in their own regions.

Warlord armies were supposed to be loyal to the warlord himself, so it only took an assassination to change the balance. Warlords often fought against each other or formed alliances. Thus the ordinary citizen was fearful of these armies, which could loot, kill or conscript the villagers. Such uncertainty encouraged the growth of secret societies, which later encouraged peasant support for the Communists.

Some warlords remained powerful until the Communist victory in 1949, but after 1928 their continued existence depended on their cooperation with the Nationalist government.



▲ Source 1.7 Warlord Feng Yuxiang



▲ Source 1.8 Warlord Yan Xishan



▲ Source 1.9 Warlord Zhang Zuolin

ANALYSIS ACTIVITY 1.1



Warlord locations in 1928



▲ Source 1.10 Warlord locations in 1928

- 1 Suggest why warlord divisions roughly match provincial divisions.
- 2 Suggest why warlords are not marked in the more remote western areas.
- 3 Give reasons why such a map is accurate only for a specific moment of the warlord era.

**THE STORY SO FAR**



The Qing Dynasty fell relatively easily, but replacing it was no simple task. Sun Yixian made the mistake of trusting Yuan Shikai, who shifted his allegiances readily, turned on Sun's party and tried to make himself emperor. After Yuan's death in 1916, the void was filled by warlords who constantly fought each other, in between shifting alliances. In 1924, with money from the Soviet Union, Sun set up a military academy in Guangzhou. He never saw the result – the unification of China – as he died in 1925.



Use the QR code or visit the digital version of the book and watch the video summarising the chapter.

## Develop your historical thinking skills

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### Define key terms

Write your own definition of each of the following key terms:

- Tongmenghui
- San Min Zhuyi
- Guomindang
- Huangpu Military Academy
- warlord.

### Activities

- 1 Research warlords who operate today in the 'Horn' of Africa, Afghanistan and elsewhere. Determine what makes them warlords.
- 2 On a computer, using 'Inspirations' or text boxes, place Yuan Shikai in the centre. After some further research, link this centre box to all the other movements and persons of this time. This will show how central he was to the political manoeuvrings of this period.

### Establishing historical significance

Outline the ways in which Yuan Shikai was a warlord.

### Analysing cause and consequence

- 1 Explain why Sun Yixian, after working so hard for the revolution, handed power over to Yuan Shikai.
- 2 Outline which factors encouraged the growth of warlords and their armies between 1916 and 1927.

### Constructing historical arguments

- 1 Discuss why Sun was universally regarded as the 'Father of the Chinese Revolution'.
- 2 To what extent can one argue that China was not ready for democracy?

## Analysing historical sources as evidence

- 1 Compare the clothing in this image with that Dr Sun Yixian wore towards the end of his life.
- 2 In his left hand, the statue is holding a document starting with the Chinese number '3'. What do you think the document is in this hand? Justify your response.
- 3 What do you think the document could be in his right hand? Justify your response.
- 4 In Chinese, the statue is labelled 'Mr Sun Zhongshan'. Zhongshan (Middle Mountain – a place in Guangdong) is the pseudonym by which he is most famous in China. What is the likely reason for using the dialect name (Yat-sen) in the English version?



▲ Source 1.11 Statue of Sun Yixian in Toronto, Canada

## Analysing historian's interpretations

*Who was a warlord? The answer depends upon one's own perspective about a military leader, and certainly no warlord ever referred to himself as a warlord. If the reliance on military power for personal influence characterized a warlord, most political leaders since history began would have to be described as warlords, and no political leaders of any importance, including Chiang Kai-shek [Jiang Jieshi] and Mao Tse-tung [Mao Zedong] (the latter of the two declared that 'power comes from the barrel of a gun'), could escape such a characterization ... The most important factor seems to be the degree of social redemption, or the extent to which personal power had been exercised to advance national well-being – the larger this degree or extent was, the less likely would a military leader be characterized as a warlord. Since this evaluation can be very subjective [personal], one man's notorious warlord might be another man's great statesman. By the same token, one nation's military heroes might be another nation's war criminals, since national interests not only differ but are also often contradictory.*

Source 1.12 Dun J. Li, *Modern China: From Mandarin to Commissar*, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1978, p. 150.

- 1 Outline Dun J. Li's definition of a warlord.
- 2 Explain why this is a difficult definition to apply.
- 3 Identify who, in your opinion, are the warlords of today.
- 4 Can you come up with a better definition of a warlord?



# 2

## **NEW POPULAR MOVEMENTS, 1915–1927**

### **新民主主义运动**

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*Lies written in ink can never disguise facts written in blood.*

– LU XUN

## Overview

While China was being carved up by warlords, there was a movement designed to unite China, known as the New Culture Movement. This coalesced into the **May Fourth Movement**. It was this desire for unity and a new path for the nation that eventually brought about the decline and later end of warlord control.

### May Fourth Movement

an upswelling of anger following Shandong being handed to Japan in 1919

## Key issues

- What was the New Culture Movement?
- What was the significance of the May Fourth Movement?

## Digital resources for this chapter

In the *Interactive Textbook*:

-  Video and audio sources and questions
-  Digital activities

# Flow of chapter



# Timeline

1917  
1 JANUARY  
*Hu Shi advocates baihua in New Youth magazine*



1919  
4 MAY  
*May Fourth Movement begins*



1919  
DECEMBER  
*Society for the Study of Socialism begins at Beijing University*

1925  
30 MAY  
*Nine Chinese demonstrators shot by British police*



1925  
19 JUNE  
*General strike in Hong Kong over 30 May shootings*

1919  
6 APRIL  
*Translation of The Communist Manifesto published in Weekly Critic*

1919  
28 JUNE  
*Government ministers refuse to sign Treaty of Versailles*

1920  
MARCH  
*Ministry of Education adopts baihua as language of textbooks*

1925  
3 JUNE  
*30 000 people protest over 30 May shootings*

## 2.1 What was the New Culture Movement?

Traditional Chinese literature as promoted by the ‘eight-legged’ essay (a rigid eight-part essay on Confucian ethics) required in the imperial civil service exams was very flowery and made great use of classical allusions. The common people found it difficult to understand. Several Chinese writers tried to make literature more accessible to the general population.

### Cai Yuanpei (Tsai Yuen-p’ei), 1876–1940

A scholar from Zhejiang province, Cai Yuanpei did very well in the imperial civil service exams and was admitted to the prestigious Hanlin Academy. He then went to a German university to study in 1907. Cai returned to participate in the 1911 Revolution and was offered the post of Minister for Education in Sun Yixian’s government, but resigned when Yuan Shikai became president. He then went to Germany and France only to return in 1916 to become president of Beijing University.

Beijing University (commonly abbreviated as Beida) was a conservative institution where students took their studies casually and only as a step towards a career. As president, Cai changed the university. It became an institution for research that was open to new ideas and encouraged free expression of differing philosophies. Consequently, academics such as Chen Duxiu, Hu Shi and Li Dazhao took up posts at Beida. Cai made Beijing University the focus of and catalyst for the New Culture Movement.



▲ Source 2.1 Cai Yuanpei

### Chen Duxiu (Ch’en Tu-hsiu), 1879–1942

Chen Duxiu was born in Anhui province. He also passed the civil service exams in 1896. After study in Japan and France, he returned in 1910 to help the republican resistance to the Qing. In 1915, Chen protested against Yuan Shikai’s acceptance of Japan’s **Twenty-one Demands**.



▲ Source 2.2 A cover of Chen Duxiu’s *New Youth* magazine

Chen then started a magazine, which he originally called *Youth Magazine* then renamed *New Youth*. It was an appeal to youth to break away from the old culture and establish a new China. His main target was Confucianism, particularly its requirement for the individual to conform to the codes of filial piety (absolute loyalty to family elders), even at the individual’s expense. Instead, Chen argued that happiness was a goal and that individuals should attain it and pass it on to following generations.

With education for youth becoming increasingly available and more liberal, *New Youth* became a beacon for many students. Chen later went on to become a key spokesman for the May Fourth Movement and then a founder of the Chinese Communist Party.

**Twenty-one Demands**  
Japanese demands for land and control accepted by Yuan Shikai



## Hu Shi (Hu Shih), 1891–1962

**baihua**  
plain speech  
advocated by  
the New Culture  
Movement

Hu Shi, also a scholar from Anhui province, went to study in the United States, where he was profoundly affected by liberal movements, especially those advocating a plainer style of writing. He itemised the principles of a simpler, non-classical approach to writing, called **baihua**. His eight points were:

- 1 Write with substance.
- 2 Do not imitate the ancients.
- 3 Emphasise grammar.
- 4 Reject melancholy (despair).
- 5 Eliminate old clichés.
- 6 Do not use allusions (references to classical literature).
- 7 Do not use couplets and parallelisms (traditional literary techniques).
- 8 Do not avoid popular expressions or popular forms of characters (avoid archaic words).

Hu Shi's articles on *baihua* found support both at Beijing University and in *New Youth* magazine.



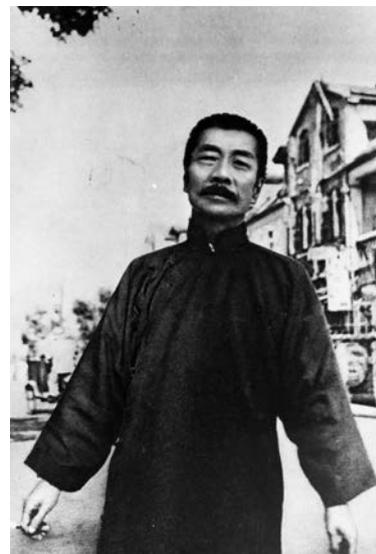
▲ Source 2.3 Hu Shi

## Lu Xun (Lu Hsun), 1881–1936

Lu Xun was born in Zhejiang province. He was the son of a poor scholar and was educated in Western technical schools. His real name was Zhou Shuren, but he adopted the pen-name of Lu Xun among others; however, Lu Xun is the name by which he is best known. (Lu was his mother's family name, while Xun means 'swift'.) He trained in medicine in Japan and could speak Japanese and German. He became a writer who wrote in the *baihua* (vernacular) style. In fact, his first fictional work, *A Madman's Diary* (1918), was the first to be written in the *baihua* style. It was with this book that he adopted the name Lu Xun.

He later joined the editorial board of *New Youth*, where he met Chen Duxiu and Hu Shi. Lu Xun's most famous work was *The True Story of Ah Q*, about a homeless labourer who could not establish his own family name so uses Q instead. Despite his miserable circumstances, he fools himself by mentally converting each humiliation he suffers into a perverted victory. Even when he is executed at the end as a revolutionary, it is a mistake. The crowd that witnesses his execution is disappointed by the lack of any heroic gesture. It is generally agreed that Ah Q represents China's willingness to suffer humiliation at the hands of other powers while still being convinced she is superior to her enemies.

Writers such as Lu Xun and Hu Shi, and the others, were not just interested in literature but also in using literature to expose the old-fashioned ideas, customs and culture that kept both men and women – and China for that matter – downtrodden. This was the impetus for uniting them and many other Chinese, and it culminated in the May Fourth Movement.



▲ Source 2.4 Lu Xun in 1935

### FOCUS QUESTIONS

- 1 What aspects of the old culture did these reformers reject?
- 2 What did they offer as an alternative?

## 2.2 What was the significance of the May Fourth Movement?

While Yuan Shikai's acceptance of Japan's Twenty-one Demands in 1915 spurred protest and great resentment against Japan, there was another event that inflamed the Chinese and united many of its intellectuals.

### Origins

In 1919, the victorious nations of World War I met at Versailles (France) to work out a peace settlement. Both Japan and China had been nominal allies of the victors. It was expected that Germany would relinquish control of Shandong province, its sphere of influence. The Chinese expected it to return to Chinese control. Instead, it was given to Japan as another sphere of influence. This was considered an insult to all patriotic Chinese.

On 3 May 1919, student representatives from Beijing universities and colleges met at Beijing University and brought forward a protest planned for 7 May (National Humiliation Day, the fourth anniversary of Japan's issuing the Twenty-one Demands) to 4 May. That day the students met at the south gate of the Forbidden City, Tian'anmen (Gate of Heavenly Peace), in an orderly manner. Politicians spoke and advised them to disperse. The students then marched through the streets with banners and pamphlets protesting the treaty that handed Shandong province to Japan, before heading to the Foreign Legations Quarter. Some split off and became violent, with one group attacking and burning a pro-Japanese government minister's house. The government responded with arrests and declared martial law. This might have been the end of it if the students had not planned a program of appealing to the literary figures of society and to the ordinary people.



45

▼ Source 2.5 Protesters outside the Gate of Heavenly Peace (Tian'anmen), 4 May 1919



## Long-term causes

**Treaty of Versailles** the 1919 peace treaty that followed World War I, which handed Shandong province to Japan

The initial cause was the **Treaty of Versailles** handing over control of Shandong province to Japan. However, this was just the breaking point. There were several long-term factors that contributed to the outbreak of the May Fourth Movement. Some of these were:

- the humiliation of the Twenty-one Demands of 1915
- the weakness of the Beijing government and its representatives at Versailles
- the role of Beijing University as a centre for new ideas
- the growth of student societies and student unions
- the writings of the New Culture Movement
- continued resentment of foreign powers influencing Chinese politics
- the failure of the 1911 Revolution to bring a lasting democracy
- students returning from overseas studies with liberal ideas
- anti-Japanese sentiment dating back to the Sino–Japanese War of 1894–1895
- the example of the October 1917 Revolution in Russia.

### ANALYSIS ACTIVITY 2.1



#### Deng Yingchao's participation in the 10 October protests



▲ **Source 2.6** Deng Yingchao and Zhou Enlai on the Great Wall of China in 1955

*We shouted loudly, trying desperately to convert brutal police into compassionate compatriots. But the police refused to be converted as they hit us with their rifle butts and systematically broke the eyeglasses of many students. In retaliation we hit them with bamboo placards and knocked hats from their heads. When they bent down to pick up their hats, we pushed forward so as to continue our march.*



*Nevertheless, the police were much stronger and also better equipped than we female students, and we were losing the battle fast. At this critical point, fortunately, the automobile team of propaganda arrived and quickly attacked the police from the rear ... We marched through the city streets until we finally arrived at police headquarters. We demanded to see Commissioner Yang and protested against his cruelty toward the students. Not until dawn the next day did we finally disperse and proceed home.*

*Angered by the October Tenth Incident ... we female students in Tientsin [Tianjin] decided that no longer did we wish to honour the feudal custom in China and that we, female students in*

*Tientsin, had as much right to speak in the street as our male counterparts. The very next day we began to make speeches in the street.*

**Source 2.7** Deng Yingchao, 'My Experience in the May Fourth Movement' (1949), in Dun J. Li, *Modern China: From Mandarin to Commissar*, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1978, p. 157.

- 1 Determine which section of Chinese society features significantly in this extract.
- 2 Propose to what extent the females have been 'liberated' from Chinese tradition.
- 3 After reading later chapters, suggest why this was published in 1949 and why Deng Yingchao was not regarded as important prior to then.

## Growth and consequences

After the events of 4 May, the intellectuals of China felt there was an opportunity to rescue China. Many schools gave free night classes to the poor. May Fourth was more a patriotic movement than the 1911 Revolution, which was more anti-Manzu than pro-China.



▲ Source 2.8 Beijing University students holding banners during the May Fourth demonstrations

While the movement eventually split between those who saw literary form as the key need and those who saw politics as the solution, both approaches encouraged a rethinking of the old values. Confucianism, which had dominated for two thousand years, was now being openly questioned. Women, who had been downtrodden for even longer, now had writers arguing their cause. Many student societies sprang up; some were political, while others encouraged Western literature and culture. It is ironic that Western ideas were promoted by the people who most sought to remove foreign control of China, but they were aware that one can use fire to fight fire.

It is no coincidence that the regrowth of the Guomindang (Nationalist Party) and the formation of the Chinese Communist Party date from this period. In fact, key members of both parties either participated in or supported the May Fourth Movement.

### FOCUS QUESTIONS

- 1 What event precipitated the May Fourth demonstrations?
- 2 What long-term factors were also at work?
- 3 How might the May Fourth Movement have contributed to political change?

### THE STORY SO FAR

Just when China had suffered political setbacks and division, a movement arose – both literary and political – that used ideas as its weapons. While not immediately successful, the New Culture Movement and its successor, the May Fourth Movement, helped to produce the two parties that were to fight for control of China – both in the name of unity.

Use the QR code or visit the digital version of the book and watch the video summarising the chapter.





## Develop your historical thinking skills

### Define key terms

Write your own definition of each of the following key terms:

- New Culture Movement
- May Fourth Movement
- *baihua*
- Twenty-one Demands.

### Activities

- 1 Ask a teacher of history or English about how the Renaissance changed attitudes to language and literature. They may be able to guide you to a good source for the information.
- 2 In a similar vein, find out how Vatican II changed the language of Catholic worship in the mid-twentieth century.

### Establishing historical significance

Determine which group of people the May Fourth Movement would have appealed to, and discuss why.

### Analysing cause and consequence

Explain the impact of new ideas in China in the 1920s.

### Constructing historical arguments

Evaluate how the New Culture Movement and the May Fourth Movement promoted Chinese nationalism.

### Analysing historical sources as evidence

In 1920, Sun Yixian wrote the following to overseas members of the Guomindang:

*After the May Fourth Movement was initiated by the students of the National University of Peking [Beijing], all patriotic youths realized that intellectual reform is the preparation for reform activities in the future. By this means public opinion develops rapidly and publications become prosperous with public support. Numerous and varied new magazines and newspapers are established by enthusiastic youths, growing as fresh and beautiful flowers each at its best. Society thus has been considerably influenced by the movement. Even the extremely corrupt and reactionary puppet Beijing government dares not run counter to it. This kind of new culture movement reflects indeed an unprecedented change among the intellectuals of China today. As for the origin of the movement, it started only by the advocacy of one or two enlightened publications in the beginning. As a result, public opinion has developed rapidly and gloriously; students' strikes erupt all over the country ... There is no doubt the movement will produce great and everlasting effects if it continues to grow and expand ... Therefore the new culture movement is really a most valuable thing.*

**Source 2.9** 'A Letter to the Overseas Comrades of the Guomindang', 29 January 1920 as in: Chow Tse-tsung, *The May Fourth Movement: Intellectual Revolution in Modern China*, Stanford University Press, Stanford, CA, 1960, p. 195.

- 1 Describe how Dr Sun feels about the New Culture Movement.
- 2 Propose the reasons he would be critical of the Beijing government.
- 3 Infer why Dr Sun would show such interest in something that began as a literary movement.
- 4 Discuss why a cultural shift was required to bring political change.



▲ Source 2.10 1976 Painting of the May Fourth Movement

- 1 Determine which famous Beijing landmark is in the background of this painting.
- 2 Describe what you notice about the nature of the protestors.
- 3 Propose why they are so angry that they break the social and gender norms of their day.
- 4 Compare this to the photo of the May Fourth Movement protests (Source 2.5). What differences do you note?
- 5 To what extent do you think the 58 years between the two images has influenced this image?



# 3

## THE GUOMINDANG, 1923–1928

### 国民党统治时期

*Luo ye gui gen (落叶归根 Falling leaves return to their roots)*

– CHINESE PROVERB



## Overview

After 1912, Sun Yixian's plans for a united and **egalitarian** China went astray. The manipulations of Yuan Shikai and the selfish interests of the warlords were huge obstacles to overcome. It was also obvious that his party, the Guomindang (GMD), lacked cohesion and discipline. Things did not look promising until an offer of assistance came from the Soviet Union. With Soviet money and advisers, Sun re-established a base in the south and established the Huangpu (Whampoa) Military Academy. After Sun's death, the new leader, Jiang Jieshi (Chiang Kai-shek), with help from the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), led a campaign against the warlords. In 1927, they triumphantly entered Shanghai where Jiang turned against the Communists and had many of them slaughtered. He then moved on to capture Beijing. The Guomindang now ruled a somewhat united China. Those warlords who did not meet defeat at the hands of this Northern Expedition wisely decided to cooperate with the GMD.

**egalitarian**  
the political  
view expressing  
equality for all  
citizens

## Key issues

- Why did Sun Yixian accept aid from the Soviet Union?
- How did Jiang Jieshi become leader?
- What was the First United Front?
- Why did the Northern Expedition succeed?
- What was the Shanghai Massacre?
- How did Jiang consolidate his control of China?
- Who was Jiang Jieshi?

## Digital resources for this chapter

In the *Interactive Textbook*:

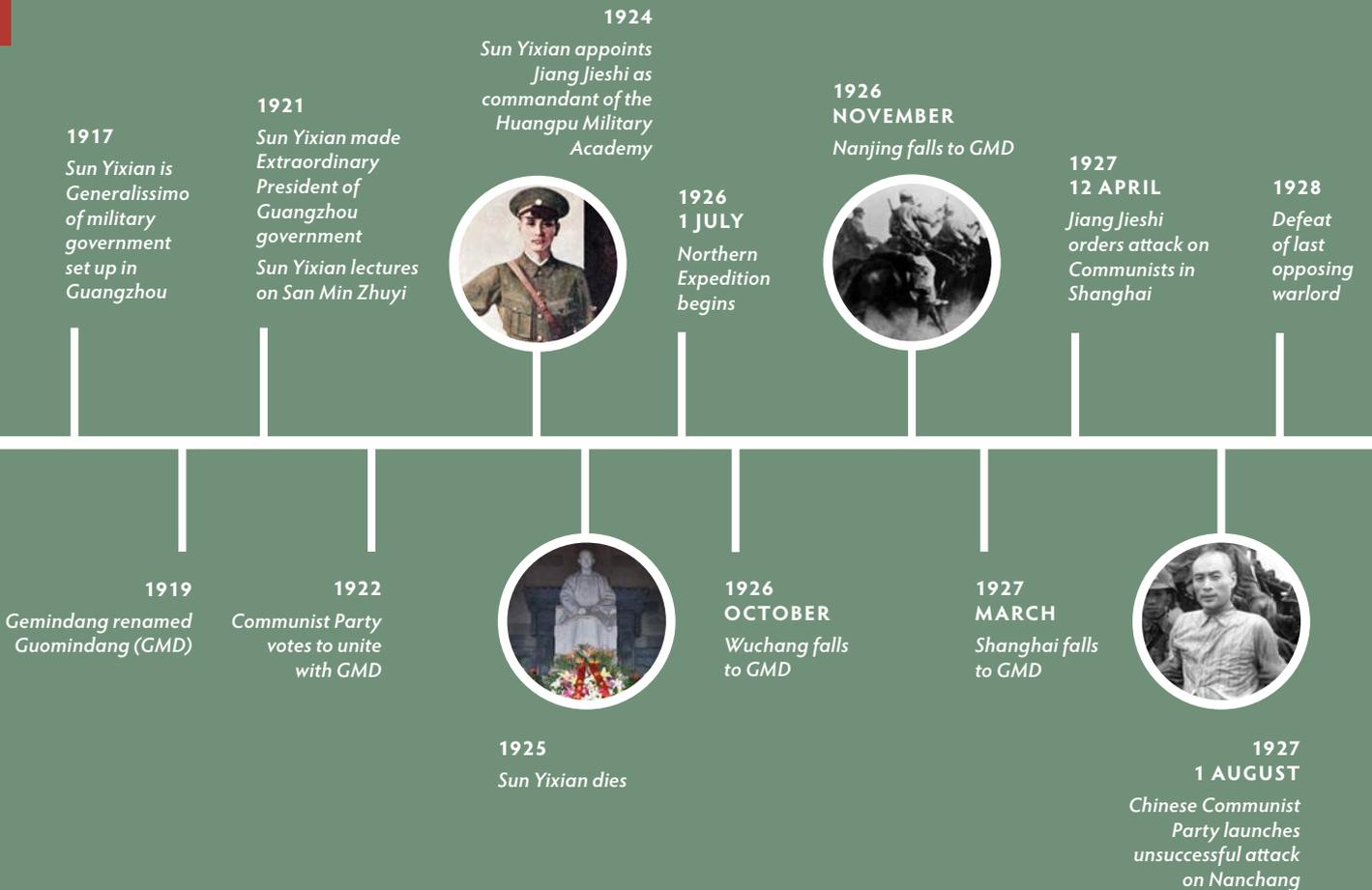
-  Video and audio sources and questions
-  Digital activities

◀ **Source 3.0** The troops of Jiang Jieshi in Guangzhou, 1927

# Flow of chapter



# Timeline



## 3.1 Sun Yixian accepts aid from the Soviet Union

The Guomindang was ready to emerge from its earlier failures. Some of the indications for future success included:

- Sun being ready to tighten discipline in the party
- the emerging nationalism of the May Fourth Movement giving Sun greater momentum
- the example of the founding of the Chinese Communist Party in Shanghai
- the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia in 1917.

The last point became a crucial factor. While Sun was quick to congratulate the Bolsheviks on their success, they were slow to recognise him. In fact, they had earlier tried to work through the Beijing government and later the warlords, but they were snubbed due to pressure from Britain and Japan.

In 1921, the **Comintern** (Russia's 'Communist International', an agency set up to spread communism worldwide), sent a Dutch agent, H. Maring, to negotiate with Sun. He was impressed and recommended that the newly formed Chinese Communist Party (**CCP**) work with, and even join, the GMD. This suited Sun, as it would strengthen his support base. Soon an agreement was signed whereby the GMD accepted Communists as individual members and agreed to accept Russian aid. This cooperation between the GMD and CCP later became known as the **First United Front**. Russia sent Mikhail Borodin to help reorganise the GMD and General Galen (real name Vasily Blyukher) to train its army. Sun sent a young general Jiang Jieshi to Russia to seek military assistance and then return to run the Huangpu Military Academy (Guangzhou).

The academy was run with tight discipline. Communists joined and many of them worked in the field of **propaganda**. Soon the GMD was in control of the two southern provinces of Guangdong and Guangxi.



▲ Source 3.1 Mikhail Borodin



▲ Source 3.2 Vasily Blyukher

**Comintern** an abbreviation for 'Communist international', a Soviet Union body given the task of promoting global communism

**CCP** Chinese Communist Party

**First United Front** the cooperation between the GMD and CCP, 1922–1927

**propaganda** doctrines, arguments or ideas spread intentionally through a population to advance a cause or belief or damage an alternative cause

### FOCUS QUESTIONS

- 1 How did the arrangement between the Comintern, the CCP and the GMD suit all parties?
- 2 Can you surmise why a military option was chosen to unite China?



## 3.2 Jiang Jieshi succeeds Sun as leader

On the last day of 1924, Sun Yixian arrived in Beijing, as he had been invited to mediate in a dispute between warlords from the north-east of China. In the interests of promoting unity, he went to Beijing despite suffering from liver cancer. Within weeks, his condition worsened, and he died on 12 March 1925. His wife, Song Qingling, wanted him to have a Christian burial, but others thought a traditional burial would be more suitable for a revolutionary hero. As a compromise, there were two ceremonies, and his body was placed in a temple west of Beijing. So ended the career of the man who had fought for the unity of China but who never saw it accomplished.

Back in Guangzhou, there was a battle to wrest complete control of Guangdong from the warlords, as well as to decide who was the heir to Sun Yixian's leadership of the GMD. There were three main contenders: Jiang Jieshi, Wang Jingwei and Hu Hanmin. Through his ability to be both decisive and ruthless, Jiang outmanoeuvred the other two, who eventually found themselves on a boat to Hong Kong and surrendering their claims to the leadership of the GMD.

### FOCUS QUESTION

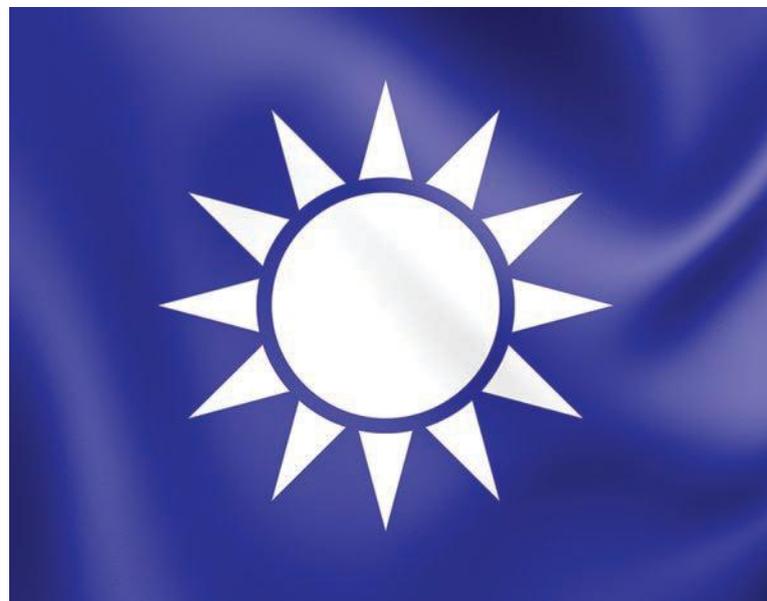
What does Jiang's rise to power suggest about his character?

### AMAZING BUT TRUE ...

Jiang Jieshi had several given names over the course of his life. When he was born, his grandfather gave him the 'milk name' of Ruiyuan (meaning Auspicious Beginning). A milk name was a pet name for a young child, often used to confuse evil spirits that may seek to harm the child. His mother later called him Zhongzheng (Balanced Justice). When he went to school, Jiang's scholar name was Zhiqing (Seek Clarity). Finally, he assumed the name Jieshi (Between Rocks), which he maintained until his death. However, when he went to Guangzhou his name was pronounced Chiang Kai-shek in the local dialect. Many Westerners knew him by this name, and it appears in many textbooks.



▲ Source 3.3 Portrait of Jiang Jieshi and Sun Yixian



▲ Source 3.4 Guomintang flag

### 3.3 The First United Front

The Huangpu (Whampoa) Military Academy was a fort set on an island in the Pearl River that runs through Guangzhou (Canton). With military advisers sent by the Soviet Union, such as Mikhail Borodin and Vasily Blyukher, and his own Japanese training, Jiang trained the soldiers in the modern Western style.

One condition of Soviet funding for the military academy was that the CCP be included in the academy. This was the first co-operation between the GMD and CCP.

The CCP talent was in using propaganda to inspire the Huangpu troops and undermine the enemy. For instance, Zhou Enlai, a political commissar, was able to build on the fact that the Huangpu army did not conscript soldiers or loot villages as it passed through. This, as well as the promise of land reform, encouraged peasant support for the GMD.

The Huangpu soldiers and leaders soon proved their worth by defeating a local warlord who had harassed them. The GMD and CCP were now uniting against the divisive warlords. Now that Guangdong province was secure, the next stage was to unite China under the GMD flag.

### 3.4 Why did the Northern Expedition succeed?

In 1926, Jiang's army left from Guangzhou Railway Station to take on the warlords in what was to be known as the Northern Expedition. While the warlords combined had greater numbers, the Northern Expedition had several factors in its favour:



- The rivalry among the warlords prevented them from uniting against the GMD.
- The Northern Expedition advanced with Sun's three principles, San Min Zhuyi, as its philosophy.
- The Guomindang had supporters in all provinces.
- The GMD troops were well trained and led by experienced professionals.

With 6000 Huangpu cadets (in training) and 85 000 regular troops, the Northern Expedition advanced with the aim of defeating the warlords one at a time. The Northern Expedition became a three-pronged attack, with the western prong advancing rapidly through Hunan province until it captured the triple city of Wuhan (significantly, the site of the outbreak of the 1911 Revolution). The other two prongs, directly under Jiang's control, travelled through Jiangxi province and then up the Yangzi River to Nanjing and also through Fujian province to capture the city of Hangzhou. Within months, the Northern Expedition had captured the eastern and central provinces south of the Yangzi River.



However, as the expedition progressed, the Guomindang began to divide. The left wing of the party, with the support of the Communists (including Song Qingling, Dr Sun's widow), established a government in Wuhan and implemented radical reforms that worried landlords, cooperative warlords, businessmen and even Jiang himself. In fact, the British Concessions in Jiujiang and Hankou had been occupied, and Britain agreed to forfeit them – representing a great moral victory for the GMD left wing. The right wing of the GMD, including Jiang, was becoming increasingly conservative. Jiang was critical of the influence of the Russian-inspired CCP and was looking to future allies from the conservative classes. This also made him more palatable to the Western powers, who, at first, regarded the GMD as a dangerous revolutionary party. Jiang announced that the new capital of China would be Nanjing. He later changed the name Beijing (Northern Capital) to Beiping (Northern Peace). The GMD left wing and the CCP did not want to leave Wuhan and join Jiang in Nanjing.



ANALYSIS ACTIVITY 3.1



The Northern Expedition



▲ Source 3.5 Map of the Northern Expedition

- 1 Identify the source (beginning) of the Northern Expedition.
- 2 Identify the two main thrusts (directions) of the Northern Expedition.
- 3 Using your own understanding, explain why the attention was on the eastern seaboard.

FOCUS QUESTION

What advantage might this new army have had over warlord armies?

## 3.5 Jiang unleashes the Shanghai Massacre on the CCP

On 26 March 1927, Jiang Jieshi and his troops entered Shanghai to find the city ready to welcome him. The CCP-inspired unions had revolted and handed over control to Jiang and the GMD army. It was a concern to Jiang that the CCP and unions were able to achieve so much so easily.

On 6 April, troops belonging to the warlord Zhang Zuolin, loyal to Jiang, raided the Soviet Embassy in Beijing, arrested CCP members, captured Communist documents and executed Li Dazhao, founder of the CCP. Back in Shanghai, Jiang decided to act with the aid of Du Yuesheng (Big-Eared Du), the leader of a Shanghai gang called the Green Gang. On 12 April, armed members of the Green Gang, acting on Jiang's signal, raided CCP cells, union offices and private homes. Communists were rounded up and executed in the streets. Thus the White Terror, or Shanghai Spring, had broken the back of the CCP in Shanghai. A few leaders, including Zhou Enlai, managed to escape to Hankou. Soon Communists in cities already conquered by the Northern Expedition were suffering similar massacres.



### FOCUS QUESTIONS

- 1 Why did Jiang Jieshi fear the CCP?
- 2 Would Jiang have been satisfied with the Northern Expedition outcome? Why?

▼ Source 3.6 1927 Shanghai Massacre





## 3.6 How did Jiang consolidate his control of China?



▲ Source 3.7 Wang Jingwei

The GMD left wing in Wuhan, led by Wang Jingwei, denounced Jiang as leader of the National Revolutionary Army as well as his Nanjing government. Wang was supported by Song Qingling, Borodin and the Communists. There was a stalemate, as Jiang did not recognise the Wuhan government either. Both groups considered completing the Northern Expedition by capturing Beijing. However, back in the Soviet Union, Stalin had ordered the CCP to stage some uprisings and this undermined the GMD left wing, which decided that one could not be a member of both the CCP and the GMD. The CCP retreated to Jiujiang just before the Wuhan government started reprisals against Communists in the areas it controlled.

Now that both wings of the GMD were anti-Communist, it was easier to achieve reconciliation. The Wuhan government was dissolved and Nanjing became the undisputed capital. Jiang Jieshi was officially reappointed Commander-in-Chief of the National Revolutionary Army. He then proceeded north and – in a pincer movement of GMD troops supported by those of allied warlord generals Feng Yuxiang (the Christian General) and Yan Xishan (the Model Governor) – captured Beijing. The Northern Expedition was complete: China was seemingly united and Jiang Jieshi was in charge.

## 3.7 SIGNIFICANT INDIVIDUAL



▲ Source 3.8 Jiang Jieshi in 1957

### Jiang Jieshi (Chiang Kai-shek) (1887–1975)

Jiang was born in the village of Xikou in Zhejiang province in 1887. At the age of 14, he went through an arranged marriage to Mao Fumei, who was 19. A farmer's son, he became an officer cadet and trained in a military school in Japan. While in Japan, he met an agent for Sun Yixian's Tongmenghui (later the GMD) and became a follower. Jiang fought in the 1911 Revolution against the Qing Dynasty. In 1920, having divorced his first wife, he married Jennie Chen, who was only 15. He was appointed by Sun to be commander of the Huangpu Military Academy. After Sun's death, Jiang was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Northern Expedition, which had so far secured all areas south of the Yangzi River for the GMD.

It was during the GMD split, which delayed the completion of the Northern Expedition, that Jiang divorced his second wife and married Song Meiling, the sister of Dr Sun's widow, Song Qingling. This marriage gave Jiang financial and political clout. Because Meiling was educated in the United States and was a Christian, there was more sympathy for Jiang from Western powers.

After the Shanghai Massacre of the Communists, Jiang completed the unification of China and set about ruling from Nanjing and exterminating the CCP. In 1931, he made a humiliating peace with Japan (which had occupied Manchuria) in order to wipe out the Communist base in Jiangxi province, eventually forcing the famous Long March. As Jiang seemed more preoccupied with the Communists than the Japanese, he was arrested by one of his own warlord generals in the Xi'an Incident of 1936. He was released on condition that he work with the Communists to fight the Japanese.

...continued

continued...

When the Japanese invaded in 1937, Jiang was forced to move his capital west to Chongqing in Sichuan. Japan surrendered in 1945 and there was an uneasy truce between the GMD and CCP. Civil war broke out, with early successes for the GMD, but GMD troops were eventually defeated. In 1950, Jiang and his GMD government and army retreated to Taiwan (Formosa), where he presided over a GMD government until his death in 1975.

### ANALYSIS ACTIVITY 3.2



#### Jiang's marriage to the Songs

*Though [Ailing's] husband was a minister in the Wuhan government, she felt no loyalty to the regime up the Yangtze. According to Jennie's [Jiang's second wife] record of what Chiang [Jiang] told her immediately afterwards, Ailing warned that, unless he acted first, it would only be a matter of time before the left eliminated him. But Ailing could save him by getting her brother, T.V. [Song], to rally his side and bring with him the Shanghai bankers and businessmen. Naturally, there was a price attached: Chiang would have to marry Meiling and become wedded to the Soongs [Songs] – politically, economically and personally.*

Source 3.9 Jonathan Fenby, *Generalissimo: Chiang Kai-shek and the China He Lost*, Free Press, London, 2003, p. 165.

- 1 In this extract, determine which political group is concerning Jiang.
- 2 Suggest two reasons why Jennie Jiang was not included in the negotiations.
- 3 Traditionally, Jiang's marriage to Meiling Song was seen as his initiative. Discuss how this extract challenges that view.

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### HISTORY THROUGH OBJECTS



◀ Source 3.10 Jiang Jieshi's third wife Song Meiling, depicted on a Taiwanese postage stamp commemorating her life (1899–2003)

### THE STORY SO FAR



With aid from the Soviet Union, Sun Yixian was able to establish a military base in Guangzhou as a counter to the warlords. After Sun's death, Jiang Jieshi led the Northern Expedition, which successfully united the south-east of China under the GMD. A split in the GMD and Jiang's massacre of Communists delayed the completion of the Northern Expedition until 1928. Jiang was determined to wipe out the Communists, seeing them as the enemy even more than the encroaching Japanese.

Use the QR code or visit the digital version of the book and watch the video summarising the chapter.





## Develop your historical thinking skills

### Define key terms

Write your own definition of each of the following key terms:

- Comintern
- propaganda
- CCP.

### Analysing cause and consequence

- 1 Discuss why military action was needed to unite China by 1926.
- 2 Explain how vital the assistance from the Soviet Union was.

### Constructing historical arguments

Discuss to what extent Jiang Jieshi was prepared to go to achieve his aims.

### Analysing historical sources as evidence



▲ Source 3.11 A contemporary propaganda poster circa 1926. The heading reads “National Revolutionary Army Northern Expedition”

- 1 Determine the features in this Northern Expedition poster that identify it as a Guomindang (Nationalist) poster.
- 2 In this poster, identify the factors that will lead to the Northern Expedition's success against the warlord armies.
- 3 Using your knowledge, explain key factors that are *not* in this illustration.

## Analysing historian's interpretations

*The behaviour of the southerners [Northern Expedition soldiers] was not as exemplary as the legend has it, while Chiang's [Jiang Jieshi] wife recorded him as dismissing the militarists who had joined the Nationalists as 'stinking opportunists' who were 'willing to ally with me or anyone else, just so they could save their skins'. Even if the core Kuomintang [Guomindang] soldiers distinguished themselves from warlord troops by paying shopkeepers and farmers, their money was often military scrip\*. In one incident in Nanchang, officers were shot and banks attacked by troops unhappy with the low value of their wages. Nor were their political leaders always a model of behaviour.*

*... Still, this was a new model army. Its best units had fought with bravery, determination, speed and skill. It even had a female 'Dare to Die'\*\* unit led by Foo Foo-wang [Fu Fuwang], Canton's 'Joan of Arc', who was photographed in jodhpurs, knee boots, belted tunic and army cap. There was no doubting the popular support the NRA [National Revolutionary Army] enjoyed. As one of its songs proclaimed: 'Soldiers and the people are like one family, so never take advantage of them. If we sing the song of love for the people every day, heaven, earth and man will be at peace'.*

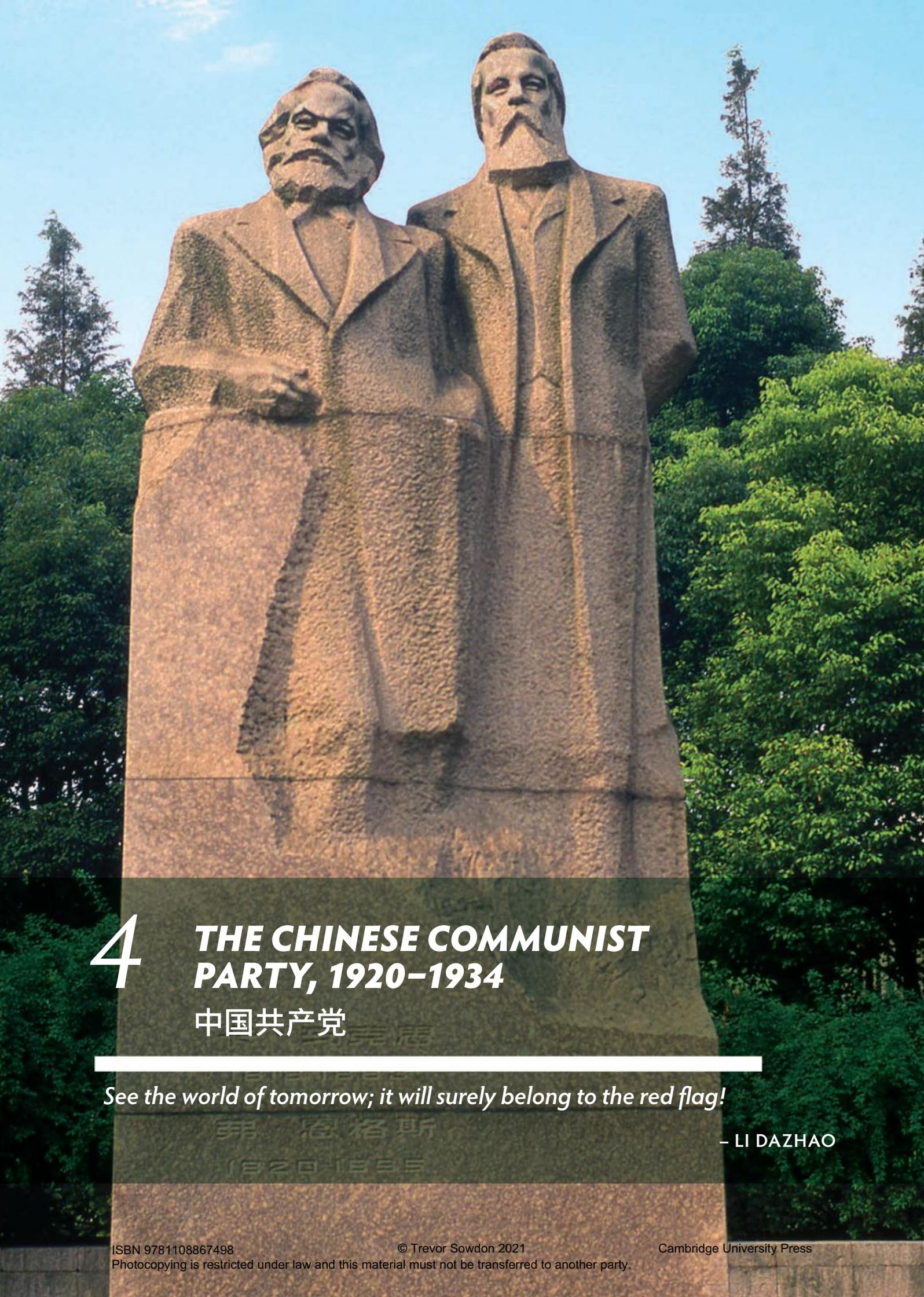
\*Military scrip – temporary notes of currency for use within the army

\*\*Dare to Die – suicide squad

**Source 3.12** Jonathan Fenby, *Generalissimo: Chiang Kai-shek and the China He Lost*, Free Press, London, 2003, pp. 123–124

- 1 Identify the negative points Fenby raises about the Northern Expedition soldiers.
- 2 Identify the positive points he notes.
- 3 Consider how this army would compare to imperial or warlord armies.

NB. When you complete Chapter 4, return to this extract and compare it to the rules of Zhu De's Red Army.



# 4

## **THE CHINESE COMMUNIST PARTY, 1920–1934**

中国共产党

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*See the world of tomorrow; it will surely belong to the red flag!*

– LI DAZHAO

## Overview

At much the same time as the Guomindang was in revival, the CCP was born and began its growth. While the CCP was initially successful and benefited from support from the Soviet Union, and hence Sun Yixian, it was soon to run into violent and unrelenting opposition. Following the collapse of the brief First United Front with the GMD and massacres in the cities, some elements of the CCP took refuge in the mountainous rural areas and set up **soviet**s (Russian for 'council'), the most famous being the Jiangxi Soviet established by Mao Zedong. The Central Committee of the CCP eventually moved to the Jiangxi Soviet and displaced Mao as leader.

**soviet** (Russian for 'council'); in China, a rural area ruled by the CCP

## Key issues

- What was the basis of communist theory?
- How did Marxism enter China?
- Who was Mao Zedong? (Part 1)
- How did the CCP ally itself with the GMD?
- Who was Zhou Enlai? (Part 1)
- The CCP after the Shanghai Massacre
- Why did Mao establish the Jiangxi Soviet?
- Why was Mao moved aside?

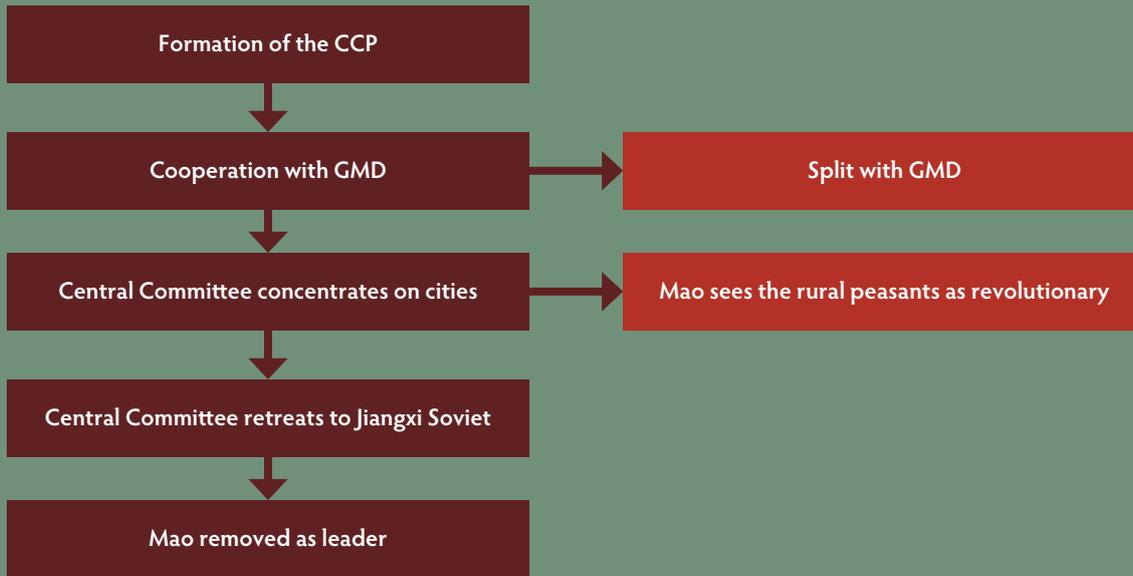
## Digital resources for this chapter

In the *Interactive Textbook*:

-  Video and audio sources and questions
-  Digital activities

◀ **Source 4.0** A statue of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in Fuxing Park, Shanghai

# Flow of chapter



## Timeline

1918  
15 OCTOBER

Li Dazhao publishes 'Victory of Bolshevism' in New Youth



1919  
DECEMBER

Society for the Study of Socialism is set up at Beijing University

1921  
JULY

Reported first Congress of the CCP

1923  
JUNE

Mao Zedong is elected to CCP Central Committee



1927  
12 APRIL

Jiang Jieshi turns on the Communists and massacres them in Shanghai



1919  
MAY

Li Dazhao publishes 'My Marxist Views' in New Youth



1920–1921  
Chen Duxiu and others form the Chinese Communist Party (CCP)

1922  
JULY

CCP votes to work with GMD

1923  
6 OCTOBER

Mikhail Borodin arrives from Comintern to assist Sun Yixian

1927  
28 APRIL

Li Dazhao is executed in Beijing

## 4.1 What was the basis of communist theory?

The theory behind **communism** is found in *The Communist Manifesto*, published by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in 1848. This text argues that all history is the story of **class struggle** and that a series of revolutions (past and future) will bring a classless society – a utopia. The final stages of this process were:

- 1 **The capitalist revolution.** Here, the middle classes (**capitalists**, or bourgeoisie) overthrow the aristocracy. They create and exploit the urban working classes (or proletariat, formerly peasants) through their factories, mines, shops and banks. **Marxists** point to the English Industrial Revolution, the 1789 French Revolution, the failed European revolutions of 1848, and the February 1917 revolution in Russia as examples of this stage.
- 2 **The socialist revolution.** In this stage, the working classes overthrow the capitalists and the government runs industry on behalf of the workers. The November 1917 Russian Revolution, establishing the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, was the first successful revolution claiming to be a socialist revolution.
- 3 **The communist revolution.** In the final stage, the workers overthrow the government and a classless, communal society emerges. Such a revolution has not occurred. Can you suggest why?

### FOCUS QUESTION

How would a Marxist classify the 1911 Chinese Revolution?

Marx and Engels argued that the French Revolution of 1789 was a capitalist revolution and that the failed revolutions of 1848 were an attempt at the next stage. Marxist theory taught that the socialist revolutions were inevitable and would be led by the urban working classes. Neither Marx nor Engels lived to see the first socialist revolution in Russia in 1917.

**communism** the belief that by eliminating class divisions and then government a utopia will result

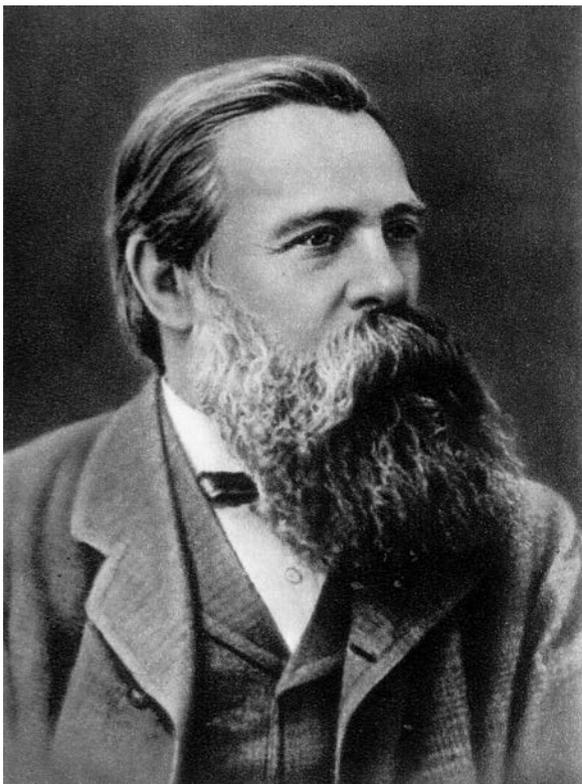
**class struggle** the Marxist belief that history consists of struggles between different classes of people

**capitalist** a term for one who lives on investments (bourgeoisie); a negative word in Marxist terminology

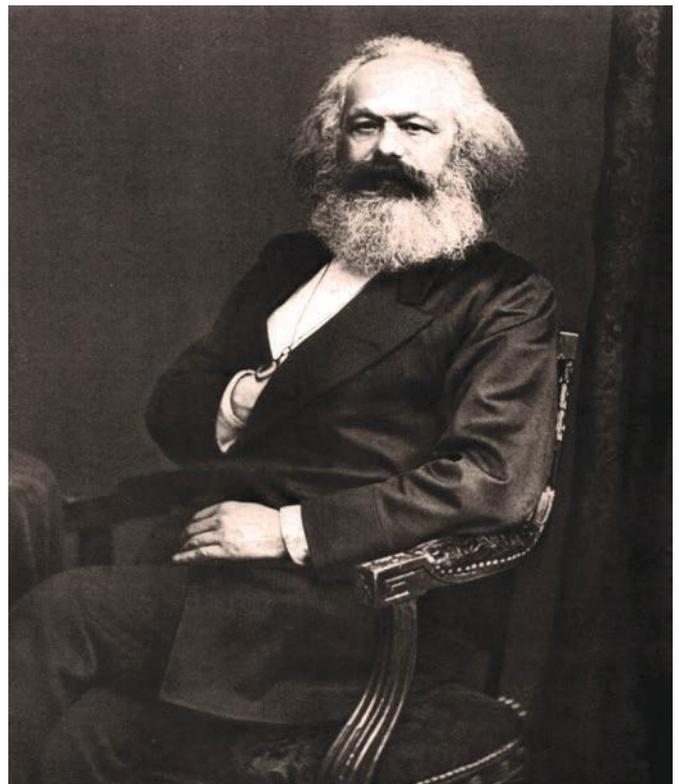
**Marxist** one who follows Marx's theories on communism

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▼ Source 4.1 Friedrich Engels



▼ Source 4.2 Karl Marx





## 4.2 How did Marxism enter China?

**Bolshevik** a reference to Lenin's Russian Communist Party which took power in 1917 Russia

The 1911 Revolution and the May Fourth Movement of 1919 encouraged new ideas, especially from Western sources. The writings of Marx and Engels had been translated into Chinese. Besides this, the **Bolshevik** Revolution in Russia and Lenin's establishment of the Comintern (the Communist International, designed to promote Marxist revolution in other countries) helped promote Marxism in China. These factors proved inspirational for certain academics at Beijing University, which had become a receptacle for new ideas.

The librarian at Beijing University, Li Dazhao, began a Marxist study group in 1918. His assistant Mao Zedong and Chen Duxiu were soon also converted into Marxists. With the help of Comintern agent Grigorii Voitinsky, Li and Chen established the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), which is believed to have held its first meeting of 12 or 13 delegates in Shanghai in 1921 in the French Concession. The Party was not strongly united. Li's base was in Beijing while Chen's was in Guangzhou. The expression 'Nan Chen, Bei Li' (Southern Chen, Northern Li) summed up the geographical divide. More crucial was Chen's orthodox view of Marxism that the proletariat would lead the revolution and Li's view that the peasants could be the vanguard. While Chen's orthodox view dominated the Party, Li's view greatly influenced that of his assistant – Mao Zedong.



▲ Source 4.3 Li Dazhao, co-founder of the Chinese Communist Party

Many of the men who later rose to prominence in the CCP were either studying in Paris and became converts to communism (such as Zhou Enlai and Deng Xiaoping) or were existing members who went to the Soviet Union for training (such as Liu Shaoqi).

### FOCUS QUESTION

Although both were Marxists, how did Chen Duxiu and Li Dazhao differ?

### AMAZING BUT TRUE ...

When Zhou Enlai was studying in Paris in the early 1920s, he converted to Marxism. In his zeal, he broke off his relationship with the attractive Zhang Ruoming and sent a postcard to his friend Deng Yingchao, which featured the French revolutionary Robespierre, who died in the manner of so many of his victims – at the guillotine. The postcard read, 'Some day we too will meet together to confront the guillotine arm-in-arm.' This was Zhou's grim and obscure proposal of marriage to a fellow revolutionary.

### HISTORICAL INTERPRETATIONS 4.1



#### The founding of the CPP

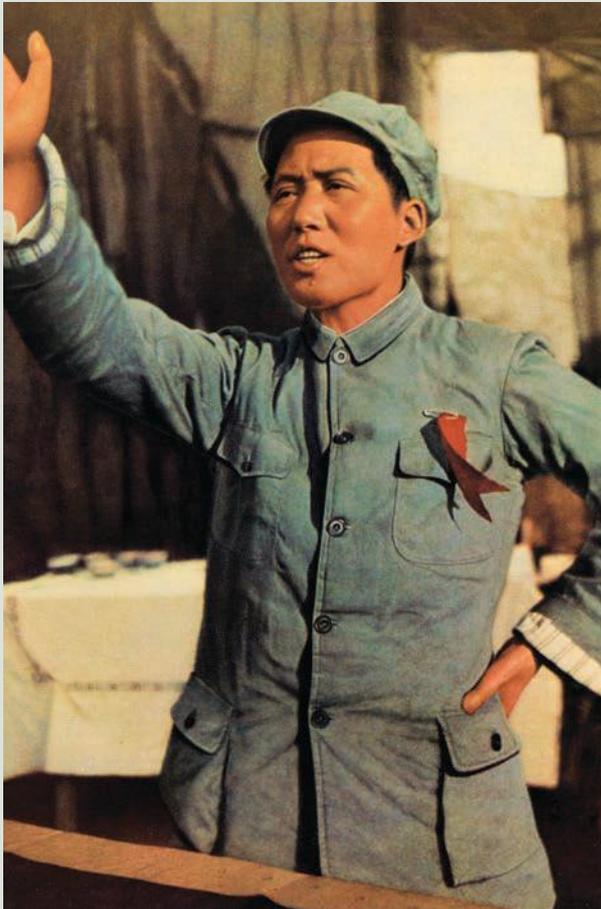
No minutes of the meeting founding the CCP exist, so there is some controversy about whether 1921 was the first meeting. Jung Chang and her husband, Jon Halliday, believe the initial meeting was in 1920. They wrote, in a footnote:

*This has been a delicate point for Mao and his successors, and as a result official history dates the founding of the Party to 1921, as that was the first time Mao could be verifiably located at a Party conclave, the 1st Congress. This is duly commemorated with a museum in Shanghai which enshrines the myth that Mao was a founding member of the Party. That the Party was founded in 1920, not 1921, is confirmed both by the official magazine of the Comintern and by one of the Moscow emissaries who organised the 1st Congress.*

Source 4.4 Jung Chang and Jon Halliday, *Mao: The Unknown Story*, Jonathan Cape, London, 2005, p. 19.

## 4.3

## SIGNIFICANT INDIVIDUAL



▲ Source 4.5 Mao Zedong

**Mao Zedong (Mao Tse-tung)**  
毛泽东 (1893–1976)

**Theorist, revolutionary leader and  
Chairman of the Chinese Communist  
Party**

**Part 1**

Born in Shaoshan in Hunan province, Mao was the son of a wealthy peasant. Unlike his future revolutionary colleagues, Mao did not study abroad, instead working as a library assistant at Beijing University. It was there that he was influenced by Li Dazhao and his idea of a peasant-led revolution. In 1921, both became members of the Chinese Communist Party under the leadership of Chen Duxiu. Soon after, the CCP cooperated with the Guomindang (GMD, or Nationalist Party). Working in Hunan, Mao wrote his *Report on an Investigation of the Peasant Movements in Hunan*, which was to be his diversion from orthodox Marxism – presenting peasants and not the proletariat as the revolutionary vanguard.

After the failure of an uprising in Changsha, Mao established a soviet in the Jinggang Mountains in Jiangxi province. His wife (Yang Kaihui) and her sister had been living in

Changsha at the time of the uprising and were imprisoned following its failure. Mao had made no effort to extricate them prior to the uprising and in 1930 they were executed by the local warlord.

The Stalinist CCP sent Zhu De to Jinggangshan to discipline Mao, but instead Zhu joined him. Under GMD pressure, the Soviet shifted south-east to Ruijin. The CCP, having failed in the cities, joined Mao in the Jiangxi Soviet but denied him a role in the Bolshevik-trained Central Committee, possibly because of the infamous Futian massacre.

In 1934, facing defeat by the GMD, the Long March began with uncertain goals and huge losses. Mao, suffering malaria, was lucky to be included. By the time they reached Zunyi, Zhou Enlai and others had shifted allegiance from the Stalinist faction and included Mao in the Central Committee. With careful manoeuvring, Mao became Chairman of the CCP, a post he retained until his death.

Mao instituted an erratic route with the goals of reaching Shaanxi, being closer to Soviet Union support and taking on the encroaching Japanese (the last a retrospective claim). With Yan'an as the new headquarters, Mao and the CCP won the propaganda war, attracting young patriots to the cause. This included the Shanghai actress Jiang Qing, who soon replaced Mao's second wife, He Zizhen, who had suffered shrapnel wounds in the Long March.

Following Japan's defeat in 1945, the CCP and GMD ended their truce and civil war ensued; Mao's armies won the war in 1949.

For Part 2 of this profile on Mao Zedong's life between 1949–1976, see Chapter 10.



## 4.4 How did the CCP ally itself with the GMD?

Under orders from the Russian Comintern, the newly founded CCP was ordered to cooperate with the re-emerging Guomindang, which was also receiving assistance from the Soviet Union. This was a direct result of negotiations between Comintern agent Adolf Joffe and Sun Yixian in 1922. Sun held firm on two matters: first, the CCP members were to join the GMD and not vice versa; and second, his Three Principles were not to be replaced by 'communism'. Sun hoped that the CCP would soon be absorbed into the GMD, while Moscow was hoping the CCP would, like a parasite, eventually dominate its host.

The most powerful body in the new GMD was the Central Executive Committee. Three of its 24 regular members were Communists. Communists were well represented in other key bodies of the GMD too. Significantly, the deputy head of the Huangpu Military Academy's Political Education Department was Zhou Enlai. The Communists stayed within the GMD until the Shanghai Massacre of 1927 (see Chapter 3 for details).



▲ Source 4.6 Adolf Joffe

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## 4.5 SIGNIFICANT INDIVIDUAL



▲ Source 4.7 Zhou Enlai

### Zhou Enlai (Chou En-lai) 周恩来 (1898–1976)

#### Part 1

Zhou Enlai was born in Huai'an in Jiangsu province to a declining Mandarin family. Zhou's grandfather, who had failed the provincial examinations for entry into the civil service, gave him the classical name Enlai, meaning 'benevolence comes'. Zhou's uncle (deceased) and aunt had no children, so he was given to them as a son and he grew up regarding them as his parents. He followed an uncle to Tianjin, where he entered the Nankai Middle School, which was run along Western lines and where classes were conducted in English.

Zhou lived and studied in Tokyo between 1917 and 1918. In 1920, he travelled to Paris where he studied until 1924 and supplemented his income by working in a Renault factory. By now he was fluent in English and French, as well as speaking an educated Mandarin Chinese.

However, studies soon took a back seat to politics. In 1922, Zhou became a founding member of the Overseas Chinese Communist Party. On his return to China in 1925, he married a fellow revolutionary, Deng Yingchao. Zhou then became active in Guangzhou and soon found himself as the political commissar for the Huangpu Military Academy, a cooperative effort of the Guomindang and Chinese Communist Party.

After the massacre of the Communists in Shanghai in 1927, Zhou barely escaped as he now had a price on his head. He led the CCP, and defecting GMD generals, in their short-lived takeover of the city of Nanchang. While others fled to Jinggangshan, Zhou went to Guangzhou. When other city uprisings also failed, Zhou and the rest of the '28 Bolsheviks' Central Committee journeyed to the Ruijin Soviet in Jiangxi. Mao was a token inclusion in the new leadership, which included Comintern agent Otto Braun.

... continued

*continued...*

It was when the Long March reached the city of Zunyi that Zhou switched allegiance and supported Mao's promotion to the Central Committee. By the time Mao had grabbed the Long March leadership, Zhou was subordinate to Mao, but still a leader.

For Part 2 of this profile on Zhou Enlai's life between 1949 and 1976, see Chapter 15.

## 4.6 The CCP after the Shanghai Massacre

With Jiang Jieshi severing ties with the CCP in a brutal fashion, the Communists increasingly became reliant on the Russian Comintern for direction. While they briefly allied with the left wing of the GMD in Wuhan, they eventually split and set up headquarters in Jiujiang in Jiangxi province. Back in Russia, Stalin – anxious to prove his strategic skills to his rival, Trotsky – ordered a series of Communist uprisings in key Chinese cities.

The Nanchang uprising of 1 August 1927 was to prove that the CCP could not hold onto the cities, and the CCP soldiers fled to the border areas for safety, setting up soviets, or mini- Communist governments. Chen Duxiu, who led the CCP at that time, had to shoulder the blame. In 1927, Chen Duxiu was removed as CCP leader. He was replaced by Xiang Zhongfa who was reliant on Li Lisan and Zhou Enlai. When Zhou was called to Moscow, Li was able to implement his aggressive campaign against urban centres, which became known as the 'Li Lisan Line'. The Red Army was put under the command of Peng Dehuai and in 1930 he was ordered to take the capital of Hunan province, Changsha. He succeeded but was only able to hold it for three days before fleeing with the remnants of the attacking forces to the Jinggang Mountains (Jinggangshan) in Jiangxi. With the continued failure of these tactics, the Comintern replaced him and Xiang Zhongfa with Wang Ming (one of the 28 Bolsheviks who had recently returned from Moscow).



▲ **Source 4.8** Chen Duxiu, a leading figure in the May Fourth Movement and co-founder of the Chinese Communist Party



## 4.7 Why did Mao establish the Jiangxi Soviet?

Influenced by Li Dazhao, Mao was quick to embrace the idea of a peasant-led revolution. In September 1927, he had been directed by the Party to lead the uprising in Hunan province known as the Autumn Harvest Uprising. It was initially successful but was soon crushed. However, Mao was inspired by the ferocity of the Hunanese peasants.

### ANALYSIS ACTIVITY 4.1



#### A studious Mao



▲ Source 4.9 This painting depicts Mao editing 'Political Weekly' in Guangzhou in 1925.

- 1 How would you describe the way Mao is portrayed?
- 2 As a portrait of someone who was later to destroy old culture, identify the traditional elements in this painting.
- 3 Why is it appropriate, considering the date and location, that Mao is editing this weekly for both CCP and GMD soldiers?

KEY EVENT 

KEY STATISTIC 

After the failed uprising, Mao and his soldiers escaped and established a soviet in Jinggangshan, striking a bargain with the local bandits who joined his Red Army. He was soon joined by Zhu De, in January 1928, as he retreated from the Changsha failure. Together they became a formidable pair, fused under the collective name of 'Zhu-Mao'. Their force of 10 000 soldiers became the Fourth Red Army. Mao was the political leader, while Zhu was the military commander. By January 1929, they were under GMD pressure, so they moved to south-east Jiangxi where they re-established the Jiangxi Soviet in the mountains near the Fujian border, with Ruijin (Juichin) as the new capital.

## ANALYSIS ACTIVITY 4.2



### The importance of the peasant problem

From Mao's 'Report on an Investigation into the Peasant Movement in Hunan', 1927:

*During my recent visit to Hunan, I made a firsthand investigation of conditions in the five counties of Hsiangtan, Hsianghsiang, Hengshan, Liling and Changsha. In the thirty-two days from January 4 to February 5, I called together fact-finding conferences in villages and county towns, which were attended by experienced peasants and by comrades working in the peasant movement, and I listened attentively to their reports and collected a great deal of material. Many of the hows and whys of the peasant movement were the exact opposite of what the gentry in Hankow and Changsha are saying. I saw and heard of many strange things of which I had hitherto been unaware. I believe the same is true of many other places, too. All talk directed against the peasant movement must be speedily set right. All the wrong measures taken by the revolutionary authorities concerning the peasant movement must be speedily changed. Only thus can the future of the revolution be benefited. For the present upsurge of the peasant movement is a colossal event. In a very short time, in China's central, southern and northern provinces, several hundred million peasants will rise like a mighty storm, like a hurricane, a force so swift and violent that no power, however great, will be able to hold it back. They will smash all the trammels that bind them and rush forward along the road to liberation. They will sweep all the imperialists, warlords, corrupt officials, local tyrants and evil gentry into their graves. Every revolutionary party and every revolutionary comrade will be put to the test, to be accepted or rejected as they decide. There are three alternatives. To march at their head and lead them? To trail behind them, gesticulating and criticising? Or to stand in their way and oppose them? Every Chinese is free to choose, but events will force you to make the choice quickly.*



Source 4.10 *Modern History Sourcebook: Mao Zedong*

- 1 Determine the target audience of this report.
- 2 Describe the attitude to peasants that Mao is countering.
- 3 Explain what it is about the peasants that appeals to Mao.

Stalin's policy in China was failing, and a scapegoat was needed. First it was Chen Duxiu, who was removed as leader. After Peng Dehuai's failure at Changsha, Li Lisan was criticised and removed. This left leadership of the CCP to the 28 Bolsheviks (those trained by Moscow) under the guidance of Wang Ming and Bo Gu.

Meanwhile, the only places where communism was thriving or surviving were in the rural soviets, of which the Jiangxi Soviet was predominant. By virtue of the soviet's remoteness and having its own army, it was able to survive when party cells in the cities suffered. Even Moscow was forced to recognise the achievements of the Jiangxi Soviet while still criticising Mao's deviant line.

Here, Mao and Zhu had implemented radical land reforms and changes. The Red Army was put under political control and the soldiers were educated in Communist politics. Part of that training was for them to consider themselves an army for the people. Traditionally, armies in China looted and ransacked any villages they passed through. So their commander, Zhu De, drew up the Red Army Rules of Conduct. These began with three rules of discipline in Jinggangshan:

- 1 Prompt obedience to orders.
- 2 No confiscations from poor peasants.
- 3 Prompt delivery directly to the government, for its disposal, of all goods confiscated from the landlords.



In 1928, according to Edgar Snow, the following principles were added:

- 1 Replace all doors when you leave a house. [These were unhinged and laid flat for beds.]
- 2 Return and roll up straw matting on which you sleep.
- 3 Be courteous and polite to the people and help them when you can.
- 4 Return all borrowed articles.
- 5 Replace all damaged articles.
- 6 Be honest in all transactions with the peasants.
- 7 Pay for all articles purchased.
- 8 Be sanitary and, especially, establish latrines (toilets) a safe distance from people's houses.

To this list were added three duties:

- 1 Struggle to the death against the enemy.
- 2 Arm the masses.
- 3 Raise money to support the struggle.

Zhu's tactics were summed up with:

- when the enemy advances, we retreat
- when the enemy halts and encamps, we harass them
- when the enemy seeks to avoid battle, we attack
- when the enemy retreats, we pursue.

Mao and Zhu also began a land redistribution program. At first it was severe on landlords and other landowners, but after a while it was moderated to avoid scaring off poorer peasants as well. Mao was later to be criticised for this more moderate view.

▼Source 4.11 Mao with Zhu De



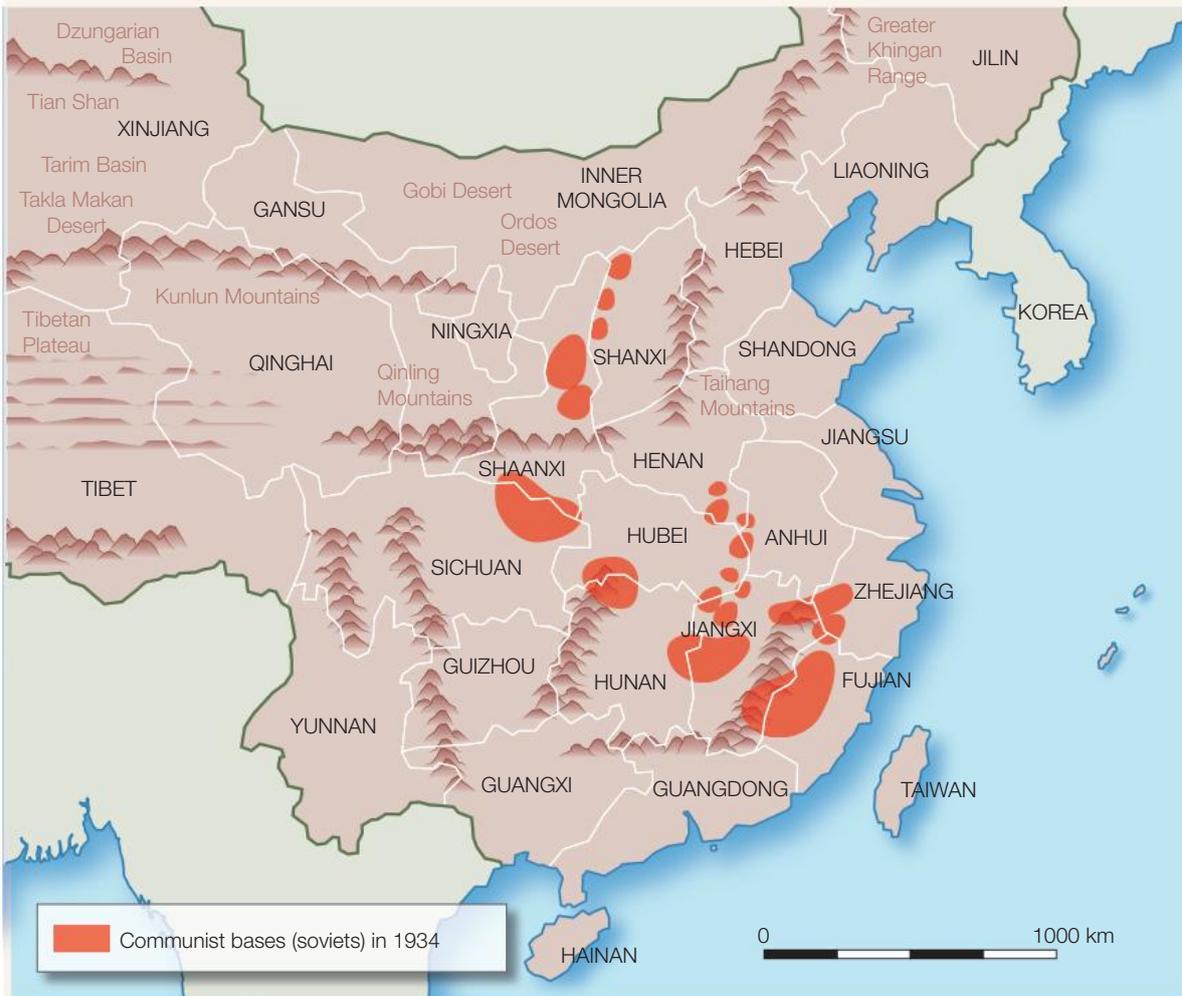
**FOCUS QUESTIONS**

- 1 How had the soviet experiment helped prove that Mao's unorthodox views were worth listening to?
- 2 What policies won support for Mao and the Red Army?

**ANALYSIS ACTIVITY 4.3**



**CCP soviets**



▲ Source 4.12 Map of CCP soviets

- 1 From the map, identify common factors in the location of the soviets.
- 2 Using the map and your understanding, explain the difficulties the GMD would have had in dislodging a soviet.

**FOCUS QUESTION**

What lessons would the CCP have learned up to 1931?



## 4.8 Why was Mao moved aside?

Following the massacre of CCP members in Shanghai in 1927 and the failure of CCP uprisings in various cities, the Communist Party executive (the 28 Bolsheviks) was forced to retreat to Mao's Jiangxi Soviet to take stock and work out how to rebuild the Party's program.

While Mao retained his title as Chairman of the Soviet Republic, by 1934 he was not included in the Politburo (the chief policy-making body of the CCP) and was replaced by Zhou Enlai as political head of the Red Army. Zhou took military advice from the Comintern representative, Otto Braun (who was given the Chinese name of Li De). Mao was now only a figurehead, and by July 1934 he was confined to a house in the town of Yudu where he spent his time recovering from malaria and calculating how he could be included in the approaching Long March.



▲ Source 4.13 GMD preparing to attack the Ruijin Soviet

### AMAZING BUT TRUE ...

Despite the CCP's support for women's rights and its opposition to arranged marriages, the view was that the Comintern agent Otto Braun, or Li De, should have a wife. So a peasant girl by the name of Xiao Yuehua was selected to be his bride. This arranged marriage lasted until 1938, when he married an actress named Li Lilian. A year later, Braun was sent packing back to Moscow, leaving behind two women and a son.

## Dispute over Mao's removal

Western historians have tended to agree with the Maoist view that Mao was removed because the Moscow, or Li Lisan, line was unable to see the importance of peasants in a Chinese Marxist revolution. Chinese history books later worded it along these lines:

'left' in the CCP, a label for one with extreme ideas

*The 'Left' deviationists ... underestimated the decisive role of the peasants' anti-feudal struggle in the Chinese revolution ...*

Source 4.14 Liu Po-Cheng et al., *Recalling The Long March*, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, 1978, p. 2.

The view here is that Moscow and the Moscow-trained CCP leaders could not see that Mao's interpretation was superior to theirs. Their more orthodox view of Marxism is then given the negative label of that of 'deviationists'.

However, another view has been put forward that focuses on Mao's style of leadership rather than just his political theories. Sun Shuyun made a personal pilgrimage to Jiangxi and made a startling observation in her account. When Mao and his soviet moved from the Jinggang Mountains to Ruijin, there was a Communist cell already operating with its headquarters in Futian Village. They did not like Mao's style and remained separate. In June 1931, after a period of tension, Mao invited 200 officers from the Futian Army to a meeting. They were arrested and shot. A purge then followed. Ms Sun observed:

*At Futian, in front of that dilapidated hall, I began to understand why Mao lost his power – he had himself destroyed the very source of it.*

Source 4.15 Sun Shuyun, *The Long March*, HarperCollins, London, 2006, p. 63.

In other words, she implies, the Politburo removed him because of the untold damage he had done to the Party.

## HISTORICAL INTERPRETATIONS 4.2

**Socialist terms for dissidents**

A problem for students of history is how socialist governments deal with dissidents (those with differing ideas). If they can apply the term 'rightist' they will. Otherwise, they use the term 'left deviationists' or 'left extremists'. What they cannot call them is 'revolutionary' as this, in the 'communist lexicon', is considered a positive term that the rulers like to apply to themselves.

## THE STORY SO FAR



The Chinese Communist Party was inspired by the Russian Comintern but was set up by Chen Duxiu and Li Dazhao. Immediately, there were disputes over which social class would be the basis of the revolution. A period of cooperation with the Guomindang ended in 1927 when Jiang Jieshi turned on the CCP and massacred them in Shanghai and other cities. Communist uprisings in the cities failed. The rural soviets, which clung to the mountainous provincial borders, survived. The Jiangxi Soviet in Ruijin, with the 'Zhu–Mao' army, was a success story of resistance, despite internal purges. The Politburo was forced to retreat to this soviet and took political control.

Use the QR code or visit the digital version of the book and watch the video summarising the chapter.



▲ Source 4.16 A 1934 poster of Mao, then leader of the Jiangxi Soviet



## Develop your historical thinking skills

### Define key terms

Write your own definition of each of the following key terms:

- capitalist
- class struggle
- communism
- Marxist
- soviet.

### Activities

- 1 Using this chapter and Chapter 3, draw a parallel timeline showing the growth of the two key parties of this time – the GMD and the CCP. Make sure you show where they intersect.
- 2 Ask a mature-aged adult about what he/she remembers about the fall of communism post 1980. Suggested topics to discuss: the Polish Solidarity movement, the fall of the Berlin Wall, Mikhail Gorbachev's reforms in Russia and the dissolution of the Australian Communist Party.

### Establishing historical significance

- 1 Evaluate whether Mao was an orthodox Marxist in using peasants as the basis of the revolution.
- 2 Explain how a rural soviet was able to model socialism better than an urban one.

### Analysing cause and consequence

- 1 Determine how important the Comintern was in CCP policies.
- 2 Outline the causes of the CCP Central Committee's decision to abandon the cities and flee to the Ruijin (Jiangxi) Soviet.

### Constructing historical arguments

- 1 To what extent was Mao proved correct in seeing peasants as the basis for the Chinese Communist revolution?
- 2 How reasonable was it for Marx and Engels to see history as solely a matter of class struggle? Justify your response.

## Analysing historian's interpretations

Andrew Mertha, in his article on *Rectification*, focuses on the scope and nature of the Futian massacres of 1930 to 1931. Mertha is the George and Sadie Hyman Professor of China Studies and Director of the China Program at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies.

*Prior to 1930, violent measures adopted by the CCP and the Red Army targeted individuals and groups outside the Party. However, this key norm was broken by Mao in the 'Conclusion of the Joint Conference and Announcement of the Establishment of the Front Committee' of 16 February 1930: 'There is a severe crisis in the Party in western and southern Jiangxi ... the local leading organs of the Party at all levels [are] filled with landlords and rich peasants ... The Joint Conference calls on all revolutionary comrades within the Party to arise, overthrow the opportunist political leadership [within the Party], eliminate the landlords and rich peasants from the Party, and see to it that the Party is rapidly bolshevised.' The reasons for this are debated by scholars – land reform, conflict between the Jiangxi and Hunanese wings of the Party, disagreements over the Li Lisan Line, and seepage of Stalinism into the Party ranks being just a few explanations that have been put forward – but the result was an intense factional struggle that began in October 1930 and led to the widespread torture and execution of CCP members identified as part of an 'AB' (Anti-bolshevik) 'League' (tuan). A lack of institutional 'checks on both the leadership and the security organisations contributed greatly to the ... [subsequent] expansion of the purges' which completely bypassed judicial process ('except as theatre') with execution as the only possible outcome ...*

*Over the course of a week, some 4,400 First Front Army officers and men confessed to having ties to the AB tuan; 2,000 or more were shot. These confessions provided information targeting leaders in the Jiangxi Provincial Action Committee and officials in the Twentieth Army allegedly opposed to Mao. Five weeks later, in the Futian Affair, these officials were tortured with the goal of forcing them to provide the names of their co-conspirators. This continued well into 1931.*

*The overall death-toll from the purge in the summer and early autumn of 1931 can only be guessed at. Four hundred officers and men from the 20th Army perished, and probably several hundred from the 35th Army ... From other Red Army units, there were many more. In the local Jiangxi Party, 3,400 were killed in just three of the more than twenty counties. By the beginning of September, a CCP Central Inspector reported that '95 percent of the intellectuals in the south-west Jiangxi Party and Youth League' had confessed to AB tuan connections. Today the best-informed Chinese historians say merely that 'tens of thousands died.'*

**Source 4.17** Andrew Mertha, 'Rectification', pp. 208–209 as printed online in: *Afterlives of Chinese Communism*, ANU Press and Verso, Acton ACT, 2019.

- 1 Describe how, according to Mertha, the violence and targets of the Red Army and the Chinese Communist Party changed after 1930.
- 2 Name two reasons traditionally given by scholars for the purges.
- 3 Explain how Mertha's explanation differs and list the reasons he offers for this divergence.



# 5

## **THE NATIONALIST DECADE, 1927–1936**

### 国民党统治下的十年

*Li* (礼 *decorum*), *Yi* (义 *righteousness*), *Lian* (廉 *integrity*),  
*Chi* (耻 *self-respect*)

– JIANG JIESHI'S FOUR CONFUCIAN VIRTUES FOR  
THE NEW LIFE MOVEMENT

## Overview

Maintaining power requires different abilities and tactics from those needed to gain power. Jiang Jieshi was tested by the problems facing the new **regime**. The Northern Expedition had created the appearance of unity, but Jiang had many obstacles to overcome before China could be united under a single political system. There were four major areas of dissent. One area was that while the warlords had been beaten or subdued, many still held considerable power within their provinces.

Another area was that despite the purges of the Communists in the cities, the CCP still had control of significant rural bases, particularly in the south-east. A third area of dissent was **factional** division within the Guomintang as not all members saw Jiang as the best leader for the country. Finally, and most importantly, Japanese designs on Chinese territory were destabilising GMD control. Beyond the political problems, there was an economy to be revived, the ongoing peasant unrest and a destabilised society.

**regime** a period of rulership

**factional** referring to defined groups within an organisation with different agendas

## Key issues

- What political problems beset Guomintang control?
- Who was Big-Eared Du?
- What was the New Life Movement?
- Who were the Song family?
- How did the new government tackle the economy?
- What was life like under the Guomintang?

## Digital resources for this chapter

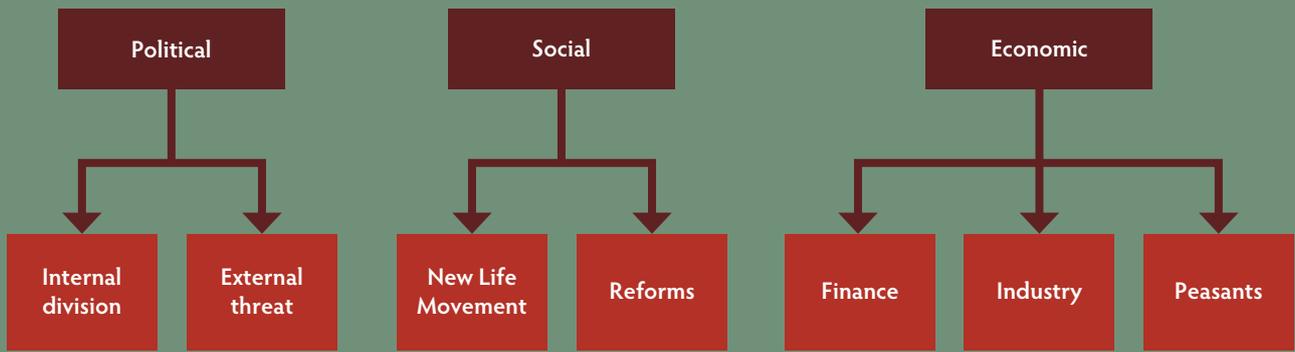
In the *Interactive Textbook*:

-  Video and audio sources and questions
-  Digital activities

◀ **Source 5.0** The famous Bund or riverside walk in Shanghai, featuring trading houses, banks and hotels

# Flow of chapter

## LIFE UNDER THE GUOMINDANG



80

# Timeline

1929

Sun Yixian's body is brought from Beijing (Beijing) to Nanjing  
Warlord revolts in Henan and Hebei provinces

1931

Mukden Incident is fabricated by Guandong Army (Japanese) to conquer Manchuria



1933

Fujian mutiny by Guandong 19th Route Army (Chinese) that had defended Shanghai in 1932

1936

Xi'an Incident  
Jiang Jieshi released



1930

Warlords Yan Xishan and Feng Yuxiang are defeated with help of Zhang Xueliang

1932

Japanese troops fabricate a war in Shanghai to distract from Manchurian campaign



1934

Jiang Jieshi launches New Life Movement  
Former Chinese Emperor Puyi is placed on Manzugu throne by Japan

## 5.1 Political problems beset Guomindang control

While the warlords had either been defeated by the Northern Expedition or had agreed to support the Guomindang government, their loyalty was often just duplicity, with the warlords willing to obey only if their own interests were not compromised. In an attempt to reduce the warlord armies, Jiang proposed that the combined number of warlord and GMD soldiers be reduced from about two million to 800 000. This never eventuated, and the aim of a unified central army was put on hold. In 1929, there was a series of revolts, encouraged by warlords, in the provinces of Hunan, then Henan and finally Hebei. Again, in 1930, the warlords Yan Xishan and Feng Yuxiang revolted against the GMD government. Ironically, this uprising was put down with the valuable assistance of the ‘patriotic warlord’, Zhang Xueliang.

A sense of unity and nationalist feeling was invoked when, in 1929, Jiang had Sun Yixian’s body brought ceremoniously from **Beiping** to Nanjing. After much ceremony, the body was placed in a white marble mausoleum with a cobalt blue roof, where it remains undisturbed today.

While Jiang gave honour to Sun’s three principles, the GMD government was more of a dictatorship than a democracy. Using war and unrest as justification, Jiang extended the ‘period of tutelage’ beyond Sun’s intentions. In June 1936, there was another warlord revolt in the ‘two Guangs’: Guangdong (Chen Zhitang) and Guangxi (Li Zongren). Again, ‘the Young Marshal’, Zhang Xueliang, was vital in its suppression. However, because he used his Manchurian troops to suppress revolts further south, Manchuria was exposed to the Japanese military.

**Beiping** to help people accept the new capital of Nanjing (‘southern capital’), Jiang changed Beijing (‘northern capital’) to Beiping (‘northern peace’)

▼ Source 5.1 Zhang Xueliang (left) and Jiang Jieshi (right) circa 1930





While Jiang was obsessed with the Communist ‘menace’ (see Chapter 6), a very real danger was factionalism within the GMD itself. In fact, some of the aforementioned warlord revolts had been encouraged by **dissident** left-wing members of the party. Even though Jiang had won over some of the Wuhan **splinter group**, there remained a faction that was clearly against the **Generalissimo**. This left-wing group was led by Wang Jingwei and was constantly causing problems for Jiang, especially since it had the backing of Sun’s widow (and Jiang’s sister-in-law), Song Qingling. The right-wing faction was led by Hu Hanmin. In his ever-shifting move to conservatism, Jiang gave more support to this factional group.

**dissident**

someone who challenges established institutions like governments

**splinter group**

members of a body, usually political, who break away from the main group to form a new, smaller unit

**Generalissimo**

supreme general – a title given to Jiang Jieshi

**fascist**

the general term for extreme right-wing undemocratic beliefs such as Nazism, which oppose communism, support capitalism and use death and torture as means to an end

**AMAZING BUT TRUE ...**

In China today, they have a saying about the famous Song sisters: ‘One loved money, one loved power, one loved her country’. They are, respectively, Ailing, Meiling and Qingling. Ailing married a banker, Meiling married Jiang Jieshi and Qingling married Sun Yixian.

**ANALYSIS ACTIVITY 5.1**



**Mowrer’s views on Jiang Jieshi**

*Most Chinese are quiet in manner and eschew facial expression. Chiang Kai-shek [Jiang Jieshi] was inscrutable, a habit doubtless acquired in the labyrinth of plot and counterplot that used to constitute Chinese politics. No poker player ever kept a closer mask. His head was closely shaved on the Russian or German model, accentuating his hollow temples. His thin lips barely moved as he uttered his polite grunts. As a conversation, the interview was not a great success. He was obviously used to receiving foreign newspaper men; used and resigned and anything but communicative.*

*Yet I could not imagine that face trusting too much to any human being, although it obviously welcomed approval. A paradoxical character, so I judged. Limitless ambitious, yet not precisely self-seeking. Really caring for principles, really believing he was leading China through the ‘period of tutelage’ prescribed by Sun Yat-sen [Sun Yixian] toward ‘democracy’, while at the same time furthering and organizing private and secret societies that foreigners were bound to call **Fascist** in character. Watching him, I understood the subtle politician who stood by and watched the heroic Nineteenth Route Army massacred by the Japanese at Shanghai in 1932 rather than engage prematurely in a death struggle with Japan, yet who, less than two years later, was giving lectures to the Officers’ Training Corps at Kuling, on the urgency and manner of preparing for the coming war with arrogant Nippon [Japan]. Endlessly proud, willing to die rather than submit to the conditions of his 1936 kidnappers, yet voluntarily fulfilling their demands when released and scrupulously observing the unwritten pact with his former communist enemies. Doubtless as ‘boundlessly vindictive’ as his opponents said, perhaps cruel, yet capable of the greatest generosity and kindness. Utterly patriotic, self sacrificing, immediately ready to die for China, yet somehow unable to divorce China’s cause from his own eminence. Insensitive to popular suffering, socially obtuse, despite the New Life Movement with its emphasis on toothbrushes for which he accepted responsibility. Above all, a leader, simple in intellect, subtle in intuition, swift in action beyond his fellow Chinese, therefore their proper choice and their idol at a time of crisis.*

**Source 5.2** Edgar Ansell Mowrer, *Mowrer in China*, Penguin, Hammondsworth, 1938, pp. 77–8.

- 1 To what extent does the interview, observation or history form the basis for Mowrer’s views on Jiang Jieshi?
- 2 Outline the contradictions Mowrer observes in Jiang’s character. Read about the Xi’an incident in Chapter 7 for an explanation of the ‘1936 kidnappers’.
- 3 Find an example outside of this excerpt of Jiang being ‘boundlessly vindictive’.
- 4 Determine where Mowrer implies support for Jiang as the saviour of China.

## 5.2 The Japanese occupation of Manchuria

Sometimes a threat from a foreign power can unite a country, but in the face of continued Japanese encroachment, Chinese politics remained divided. As a result of the Opium Wars, Japan had a concession in Shanghai. Following the Russo–Japanese War of 1904, Japan had gained influence in Korea and Manchuria. From the Sino–Japanese War of 1894–1895, Japan gained the island of Taiwan, which was renamed Formosa. With the 1919 Treaty of Versailles, Japan replaced Germany in the Shandong ‘sphere of influence’.

In the 1930s, the Japanese military gained increasing control over the Japanese government and greater influence over the emperor. The Japanese war machine believed that to conquer the world it must first conquer China, and to conquer China it must first take Manchuria. One obstacle to controlling Manchuria was the Manchurian warlord Zhang Zuolin, who supported a united China and was against Japanese expansion. In 1928, he was killed when his train was bombed under orders of the Japanese local military. The Japanese generals then tried to bribe his son Zhang Xueliang, who responded on 29 December 1928 by flying the Chinese national flag throughout Manchuria.

The Japanese military presence in Manchuria was known as the **Guandong Army** (a renaming of the former Russian-held areas and not to be confused with the Chinese province of Guangdong). This army was already impatient with the reluctance of the Japanese government to let it off its leash. Some Guandong soldiers, disguised as railway guards, ‘attacked’ Japanese railway lines in Mukden, causing minimal damage. Thus the Mukden Incident of 18 September 1931 provided the pretext for a military takeover of Manchuria. The Japanese government had little choice but to ratify these actions.

To distract Chinese and international attention from what was happening in Manchuria, another pretext was fabricated in Shanghai. Hired by Japanese officials, in January 1932, a group of thugs beat a small group of Japanese monks in Shanghai, with one dying of his wounds. This was regarded as a sufficient excuse for Japanese soldiers to attack the Chinese quarters of the city. When they met resistance, the Japanese air force was brought in to indiscriminately bomb Chinese residences.

▼ Source 5.3 Japanese soldiers enter Manchuria



**Guandong Army**  
the name of the  
jingoistic Japanese  
army unit based in  
Manchuria



**Green Gang** the powerful Shanghai criminal unit led by Big-Eared Du (Du Yuesheng); used by Jiang in 1927 to purge the Communists

**puppet emperor** a ruler with no power of his own; a figurehead

**Manzuguo** (Manchuguo) literally Manzu or Manchu Country; an attempt by the Japanese to pass off this colony of Japan as an independent ally

Resistance to this onslaught was the task of the 19th Route Army operationally led by Cai Tingkai. The soldiers' bravery rallied workers, warlords, the **Green Gang** and even the Song sisters to their cause. Jiang was reluctant to commit his elite 5th Route Army to the defence of Shanghai, as he feared an all-out war with Japan. However, under pressure, he secretly inserted some of them into the 19th Route forces. Eventually Japanese forces withdrew to their normal boundaries, but tens of thousands of soldiers and civilians had been killed – the counts ranged from 6000 to 35 000. However, Japan had used the distraction to complete its subjugation of Manchuria in five months. On 1 March 1934, the farce was complete when the last emperor of China, Henry Puyi, was made a **puppet emperor of Manzuguo**.

▼ Source 5.4 Manzuguo officials and Henry Puyi (center) around 1935



### 5.3

#### SIGNIFICANT INDIVIDUAL



▲ Source 5.5 Du Yuesheng (Tu Yue-sheng), or Big-Eared Du

#### Big-Eared Du (1888–1951)

Du Yuesheng was born in 1888 in the poor fishing village of Pudong, which was just across the Huangpu River from Shanghai. He was orphaned when young and beaten by his uncle. He gained entry into the Red Gang led by Pockmarked Huang, who commissioned Du to bring the other gangs into an opium-smuggling cartel. The boss of the Green Gang was not cooperative, so Big-Eared Du killed him and took over leadership of the Green Gang. Soon the Green Gang absorbed other gangs. Those who did not cooperate with Du would be sent a coffin as an intimidatory gesture. Strangely enough, Du became friends with Song Ailing and her banker husband, and their children grew up together. The power of the Green Gang, the influence of the Song name and the financial power of the Kong banking empire was a formidable combination, which soon brought Jiang Jieshi into its web. Big-Eared Du was Jiang's sponsor and helped him rise to power. The Green Gang was instrumental in the massacre of the Shanghai Communists in 1927. Jiang had a powerful and nefarious ally, but he was not allowed to forget his debt to Du. His last act of assistance to Jiang was to help him empty the Shanghai Bank of China in 1949 before the Communist armies arrived. Du then retired to Hong Kong, where he died in 1951 from the effects of lifelong drug addiction.

## 5.4 The New Life Movement

Two initial changes of the new GMD government were the official abolition of foot-binding and the replacement of the Chinese lunar calendar by the more universal solar calendar. Jiang Jieshi's wife, Song Meiling, had been educated in the United States. She had been brought up a Christian and with her help Jiang converted to Methodism. They both pushed for a cleaner and more courteous China. Nevertheless, Jiang still held to reformed Confucian values such as those promoted by the nineteenth-century scholar-official Zeng Guofan. So a strange amalgam of Western practices and traditional ideas was put to Jiang by his wife, and he readily adopted them in 1934. This was the New Life Movement.

The New Life Movement seems to have been concocted by Song Meiling, who was probably concerned with bringing China up to Western standards of hygiene and courtesy. Members of the public were encouraged to wash their hands daily, brush their teeth and not smoke or spit in public. Girls could be humiliated for wearing lipstick, and many restaurateurs served brandy from teapots rather than risk the ire of the New Life boy scouts. Big Character Posters were pasted on walls promoting the four neo-Confucian virtues of *Li* (decorum), *Yi* (righteousness), *Lian* (integrity) and *Chi* (self-respect). Mass marriages were conducted to discourage the very expensive traditional weddings. Funerals were simplified. There was even some improvement to sewerage and water supplies.

For Jiang, the New Life Movement represented an opportunity for more social cohesion and obedience. If it created honest public officials and zealous military leaders, it would serve his purposes. Like Hitler's Brown Shirts and Mussolini's Black Shirts, Jiang encouraged a following of Blue Shirts, even though he officially denied their existence. Like their fascist counterparts, the Blue Shirts were generally thugs who were prepared to do Jiang's secretive and dirty assignments, including murdering his perceived enemies. The New Life Movement had some appeal to some of the Christian missionaries, but generally the foreigners and Chinese did not take it too seriously.

### AMAZING BUT TRUE ...

Song Meiling, as an example to the New Life Movement, made a strong effort not to smoke in public. In private, however, she chain-smoked her English cigarettes.

▼ Source 5.6 The busy Suzhou Creek about to enter the even busier Huangpu River in Shanghai



ANALYSIS ACTIVITY 5.2



Why is a new life needed?

KEY QUOTE



The general psychology of our people today can be described as spiritless.

What manifests itself in behavior is this: lack of discrimination between good and evil, between what is public and what is private, and between what is primary and what is secondary. Because there is no discrimination between good and evil, right and wrong are confused; because there is no discrimination between public and private, improper taking and giving [of public funds] occur; and because there is no distinction between primary and secondary, first and last are not placed in the proper order. As a result, officials tend to be dishonest and avaricious, the masses are undisciplined and calloused, the youth become degraded and intemperate, the adults are corrupt and ignorant, the rich become extravagant and luxurious, and the poor become mean and disorderly. Naturally it has resulted in disorganisation of the social order and national life, and we are in no position to prevent or remedy natural calamities, disasters caused from within, or invasion from without. The individual, society and the whole country are now suffering. If the situation should remain unchanged, it would be impossible even to continue living under such miserable conditions. In order to develop the life of our nation, protect the existence of our society, and improve the livelihood of our people, it is absolutely necessary to wipe out these unwholesome conditions and to start to lead a new and rational life.

Source 5.7 'Jiang Jieshi', in Wm Theodore de Bary (ed.), *Sources of Chinese Tradition, Vol II*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1964, p. 139.

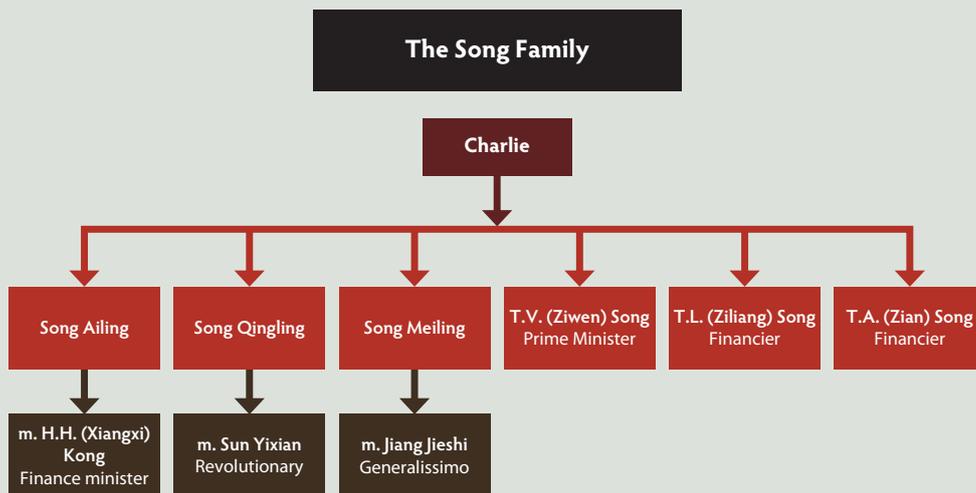
- 1 Explain which historical events would have contributed to some of these problems.
- 2 Determine if corrupt public officials were new to China.
- 3 Determine what in this document suggests the influence of Jiang's Methodist wife, Song Meiling.

5.5

SIGNIFICANT INDIVIDUALS



The Song family



Charles (Charlie) Song was a merchant who had lived in the United States and converted to Methodism. His three daughters were schooled in the United States and spoke excellent English. His eldest daughter, Song Ailing, married a banker H.H. Kong who (due to his later connection to Jiang Jieshi) became Finance Minister of China. Charlie Song's second daughter, Song Qingling, had been a secretary to Sun Yixian until he divorced his wife and married Qingling. She was later revered as Sun's widow. Jiang Jieshi, for political reasons, would have liked to have married Sun's widow, Song Qingling, but she rejected him. Instead, he talked his current wife, Jennie (Jieru) Chen, into divorcing him so he could marry the youngest Song daughter, Meiling. T.V. Song, the eldest son, became one of China's richest bankers and one of the most powerful men in China. His brothers were lesser lights in the world of finance, but still influential. The family became sarcastically known as the Song Dynasty.

## Perspectives on the Song Sisters

(Note: Different authors use varying spellings for Ailing, Qingling and Meiling.)

Sterling Seagrave described Ailing as:

*perhaps the wealthiest woman to ever put it all together with her own cunning, the broker of May-ling Soong's marriage to Chiang Kai-shek [Jiang Jieshi], the principal contriver of the Soong legend, and the true architect of the dynasty's rise to power.*

Of Qingling, he wrote:

*She was protected by her widow's weeds but imprisoned by them as well. She could take risks and speak out in ways others could not.*

*She had been a symbol of China for most of her life.*

Of Meiling:

*Mayling had negligible impact on the Chinese people, but attracted enormous attention among foreigners.*

Seagrave also gives credit for Jiang's release at Xi'an to Zhou Enlai, not Meiling (see Chapter 7).

**Source 5.8** Sterling Seagrave, *The Soong Dynasty*, Harper and Row, New York, 1985, pp. 288, 451, 457.

Hannah Pakula, in her biography of Song Meiling, quotes Bart Barnes of the *Washington Post*:

*Supporters of the Chiangs [Jiangs] tended to see them as the embodiment of all that was good in China ... To their enemies the Chiangs were the opportunistic overseers of a corrupt and decadent political apparatus that had little or no regards for human life or the well-being of China. Madame Chiang was the 'Dragon Lady', imperious, hard-boiled and calculating.*

Pakula does give Meiling the credit for keeping Taiwan safe from a communist invasion.

Of Qingling, Pakula wrote:

*Although she sided with the communists, Ching-ling seldom hesitated to allow her sisters to provide her with luxuries from the capitalist world.*

As for her attraction to Dr Sun, Pakula comments:

*Just as it is easy to see how Ching-ling's love for Sun's ideals slipped over into infatuation with the man himself ...*

Pakula has surprisingly little to say about the eldest sister, Ailing.

**Source 5.9** Hannah Pakula, *The Last Empress: Madame Chiang Kai-shek and the Birth of Modern China*, Simon and Schuster Paperbacks, NY, 2009, pp. 63, 456, 679.

Jung Chang's first book was a biography of women of three generations. Her latest book is of three women of the same generation – the Song sisters. Of Qingling, Chang dwells on her affair with Deng Yanda, who Jiang Jieshi had arrested and killed, thus providing extra motive for her hatred of Jiang.

Of Meiling, Chang views her as aware of Jiang's crimes, but in her rescue of him from the Xi'an capture and avoiding a civil war she claims:

*May-ling, it could be said, saved her country as well as her husband.*

Chang reaffirms Ailing as the protector of the siblings, especially saving Qingling from Jiang Jieshi's wrath:

*Thanks to the protection of May-ling – and Big Sister – Chingling lived through her internal exile unscathed.*

**Source 5.10** Jung Chang, *Big Sister, Little Sister. Red Sister: Three Women at the Heart of Twentieth Century China*, Jonathan Cape, London, 2019, pp. 168, 193.

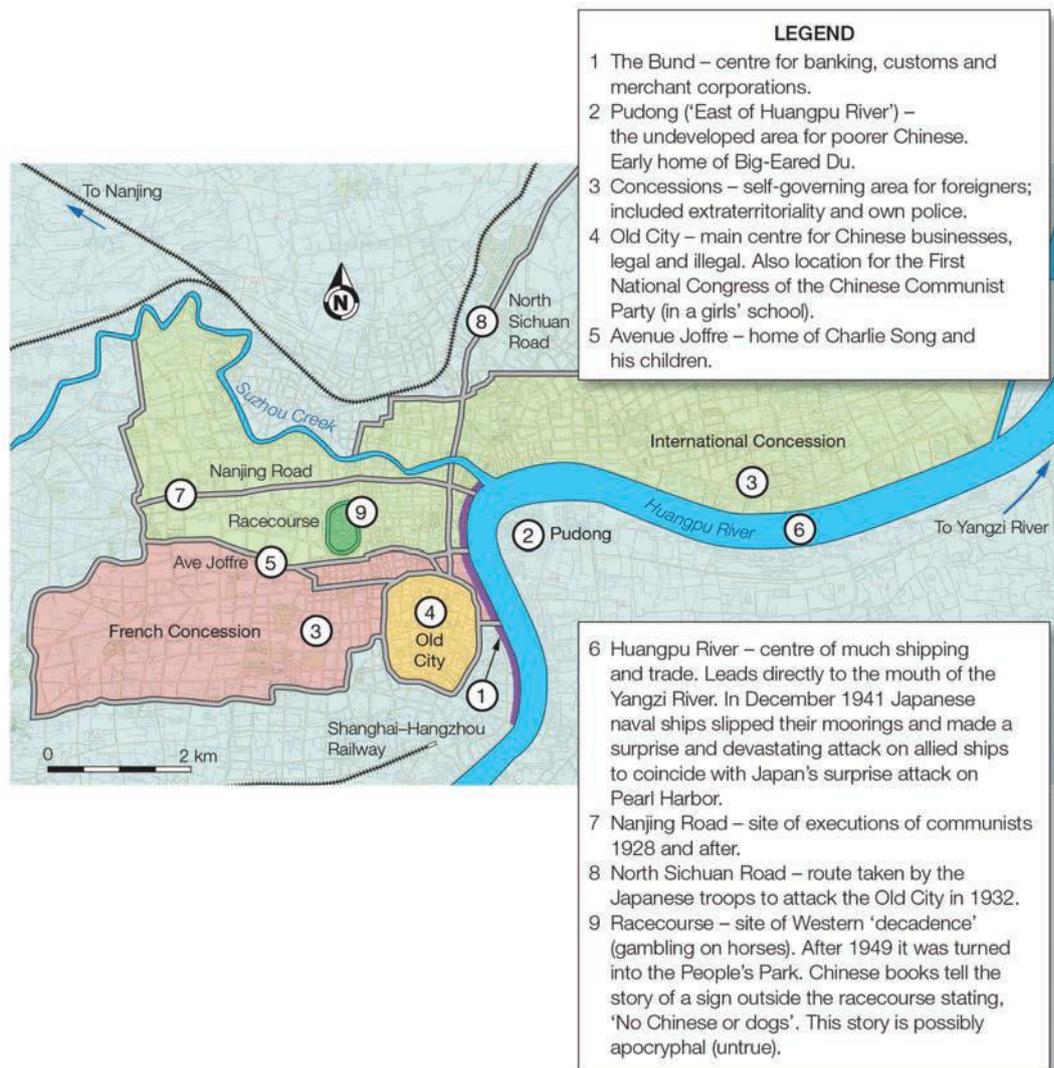
## 5.6 Tackling the economy

In 1928, the GMD government assumed total tariff control, which in the past had been run by foreign governments and warlords. It also started reclaiming inland concessions that had been given to foreign interests after the Opium Wars. In the same year, a Ministry of Railways was set up to compete with those controlled by foreign interests. From 1928 to 1937, the length of national lines went from 8000 to 13 000 kilometres. With the advent of the motor car, highways were in greater demand. They went from 1000 kilometres of road in 1921 to 115 703 kilometres in 1936. Three joint-venture airlines were instituted (in partnership with foreign companies). To further enhance China's infrastructure, there were significant increases in the rollout of telegraph lines and postal services.

**tael** a Chinese 'ounce' of silver, although the exact weight varied throughout the country

With bankers as in-laws, it was not surprising that reforms in banking and finance were on Jiang's list of reforms. On 4 April 1934, the government eliminated the **tael** and replaced it with a national silver dollar, as well as introducing paper currency. The proliferation of Chinese banks was reorganised into four major banks: the Central Bank, the Bank of China (to handle foreign exchange), the Bank of Communications (for domestic industries) and the Farmer's Bank (for farm credit and mortgages). Interestingly, a similar system still operates in China today.

▼ Source 5.11 Map of Shanghai in 1935



**AMAZING BUT TRUE ...**

Paper money had been issued in China since the Tang Dynasty, but it required a strong and stable government to ensure its continuing value, otherwise people would be reluctant to give up coins, which carried their value in metal. Traditional Chinese coins had a square hole in the centre so they could be tied in groups of 10 for easy handling. These 'strings' of cash were usually carried in the long sleeve of the Chinese gown. The Ming Dynasty issued paper currency for 1000 'cash' or copper coins.

There was a determination to import heavy machinery in order to build up industry (as well as defences). Between 1927 and 1937, some 500 million Chinese dollars were spent on such imports. Despite political unrest and Japanese aggression, lighter industries grew even more quickly.

Growth and expenditure were not backed up by solid income. In the period 1928–1935, 42 per cent of income came from customs revenues, 17.13 per cent from the salt tax and 19.16 per cent from commodity taxes. Income only covered 80 per cent of expenditure. The rest was covered by loans and increasing debt, which gave the economy shaky foundations. One source of income not available to the national government was land taxes – peasant and landlord – as these were administered by local governments. While the national government in its 1930 resolution tried to limit peasant land rents to 37.5 per cent of the main crops, this policy was not implemented. This failure to relieve the peasants (80 per cent of the population) of their insurmountable debt and misery was ultimately to prove disastrous for the GMD government.

**KEY  
STATISTIC**

## 5.7 Life under the Guomindang

In a vivid description of the perilous political climate, Jung Chang recounts the story of her mother's friend:

*At the teacher training department my mother struck up a close friendship with a beautiful, vivacious seventeen-year-old girl called Bai. My mother admired her and looked up to her. When she told Bai about her disenchantment with the Kuomintang [Guomindang], Bai told her to 'look at the forest, not the individual trees'; any force was bound to have some shortcomings, she said. Bai was passionately pro-Kuomintang, so much so that she had joined one of the intelligence services. In a training course it was made clear to her that she was expected to report on her fellow students. She refused. A few nights later her colleagues in the course heard a shot from her bedroom. When they opened the door, they saw her lying on the bed, gasping, her face deathly white. There was blood on her pillow. She died without being able to say a word. The newspapers published the story as what was called a 'peach-colored case,' meaning a crime of passion ... My mother heard that she had been killed because she had tried to pull out.*

**Source 5.12** Jung Chang, *Wild Swans*, Anchor Paperback, London, 1992, p. 116.

In a story that shows life had not improved for the ordinary labourer, Li Chunying tells of his father's early employment:

*At the age of nine, he was sent to a carpet manufacturer's workshop in Beijing to be an apprentice. An apprentice, at this time, was the equivalent of a servant – a servant not only of the owner of the workshop, but also of his own teacher and the other master weavers. He had to wait upon them at every meal, fetching food for his teacher and the master weavers before he could eat himself. Every time he took up his bowl a master weaver would call him to refill his bowl. All master weavers ate their food very quickly, a habit formed when they themselves were apprentices. When his teacher and all the master weavers finished eating, my father had to stop eating too, partly because he had not enough time to eat and partly because when he had time to eat there was not much food left for him. Consequently, he was always only half fed.*



While his aunt suffered from a feudal custom, his mother reflected the spirit of the times when she refused to comply – and succeeded:

*Her older sister had her feet bound and cried bitterly during the day but mostly during the night. But she dared not touch the bandages; she just suffered. Warnings such as 'if you have large feet you will not get married, for no man likes to marry a girl with large feet,' frightened her. However, my mother was different. When my grandmother bound her feet, she tore off the bandages and cut them into tiny pieces. 'Nobody will marry you if you don't bind your feet!' my grandmother scolded her. 'If nobody wants to marry me, I will not marry anybody,' my mother answered back. She teased her older sister when she tottered about the house or yard. Her older sister would be in tears but she never dared to touch the bandages; she envied my mother when she ran freely about the yard, but never dared to liberate her own feet.*

Source 5.13 Li Chunying, *Jade Eye*, New Holland, Sydney, 2003, pp. 16, 19.

Before she became the actress Lan Ping, Jiang Qing was known as Li Yunhe. In this extract, her biographer describes the decadent lifestyle that was typical of Shanghai:

*Shanghai women shocked Yunhe at first. To a Northerner – even one like Yunhe who fell short of Peking [Beijing] restraint and taste – the females in the upstart city of Shanghai were brash, loud-mouthed, flirtatious, gaudily dressed, and overly made up. Yunhe was amazed to see Shanghai women snarl and scratch at each other in a street quarrel and to hear the prostitutes of Nanjing Road shout for customers like boys selling newspapers. She did not think of herself as a sheltered wallflower. But perhaps she would be too sedate for Shanghai, after having been too pushy in Shandong.*

Source 5.14 Ross Terrill, *Madame Mao – The White-Boned Demon*, Hale & Iremonger, Sydney, 1995, p. 50.

THE STORY SO FAR

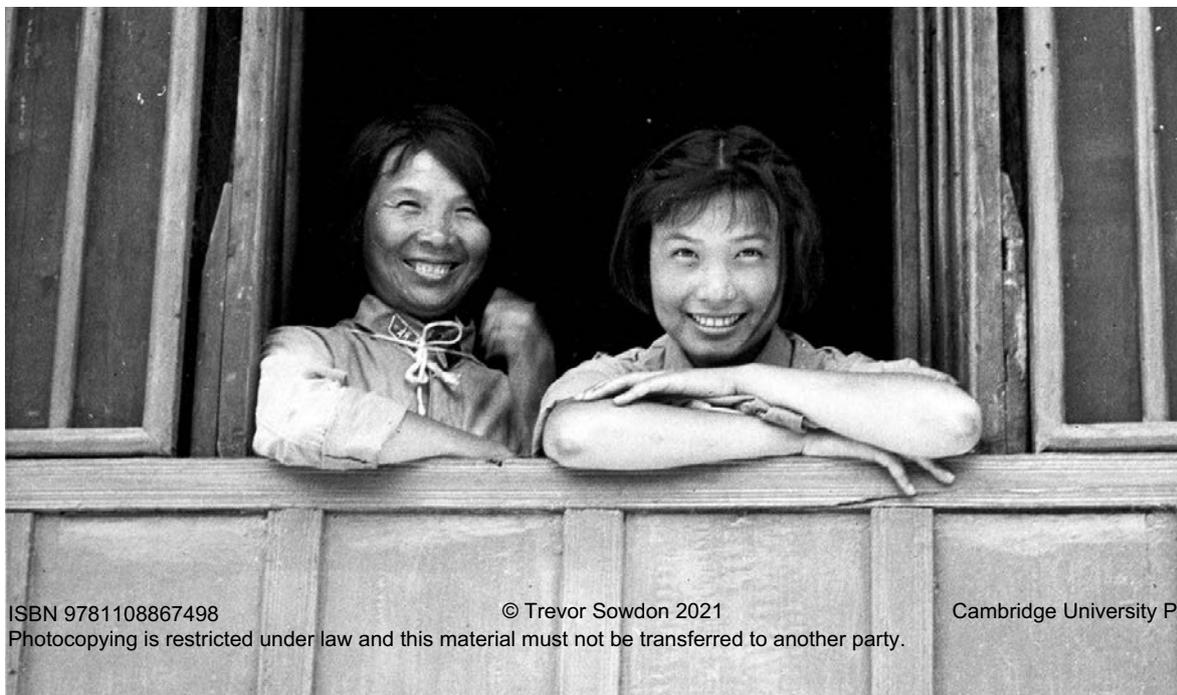


Following the Northern Expedition, the Guomindang were able to form a central but not unified government. Even the external threat of a belligerent Japan did not stop the dissension of warlords or even conflict within the party itself. Jiang Jieshi received international recognition, but when it came to attacks from Japan, the democratic nations vacillated. The merchant and professional classes generally prospered, but the plight of the peasants and city workers remained dire.



Use the QR code or visit the digital version of the book and watch the video summarising the chapter.

▼ Source 5.15 Lan Ping (right) with her mother circa 1936



## Develop your historical thinking skills

### Define key terms

Write your own definition of each of the following key terms:

- factional
- regime
- Beiping
- Generalissimo
- fascist
- Guandong Army
- Green Gang
- puppet emperor
- tael.

### Analysing cause and consequence

- 1 Determine what was the biggest obstacle facing Jiang Jieshi in 1928.
- 2 Evaluate the Guomindang successes and failures up to 1936.

### Constructing historical arguments

In 1936, why was Jiang considered by many the only one who could unite China?

### Analysing historical sources as evidence

In 1943, at the height of the war against Japan, Song Meiling went to the United States to appeal for more arms and money for China. She charmed the US Congress. The US president's wife, Eleanor Roosevelt, noted that her reception:

*marked the recognition of a woman who through her own personality and her own service, has achieved a place in the worlds, not merely as a wife ... but as a representative of her people ... When I saw her coming down the aisle, she seemed overshadowed by the men around her. I could not help a great feeling of pride in her achievements as a woman, but when she spoke it was no longer as a woman that one thought of her. She was a person, a great person, receiving the recognition due her as an individual valiantly fighting in the forefront of the world's battle.*

**Source 5.16** Hannah Pakula, *The Last Empress: Madame Chiang Kai-shek and the birth of modern China*, Simon & Schuster, New York, 2009, p. 419.

- 1 Identify the role that Eleanor Roosevelt saw Song Meiling playing so well.
- 2 Determine which qualities made Song Meiling such a good choice to approach the United States for aid.
- 3 Evaluate how much Song Meiling and her husband, Jiang Jieshi, were 'in the forefront' of the battle against Japan.



# 6

## THE LONG MARCH, 1934–1936

### 万里长征

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*We are the fish and the people are the water through which we move.*

– LONG MARCH SAYING



## Overview

The famous **Long March** – the CCP fleeing the GMD armies – has been seen by the Chinese Communist Party and many historians as an example of a military loss being converted into victory. The first author to tell the world about this epic event was Edgar Snow in his book *Red Star Over China*. This is the version that has dominated perceptions of the Long March. However, lately some aspects of the ‘myth’ of the Long March have been challenged.

**Long March** the CCP journey from Jiangxi to Shaanxi while being attacked by the GMD

## Key issues

- What were the Encirclement Campaigns?
- How did the Fifth Encirclement Campaign succeed?
- Who went on the breakout?
- Who was He Zizhen?
- What happened at the Xiang River crossing?
- What events occurred at Zunyi?
- What happened at the Luding Bridge crossing?
- What is the verdict on the Long March?
- Who was Zhu De?

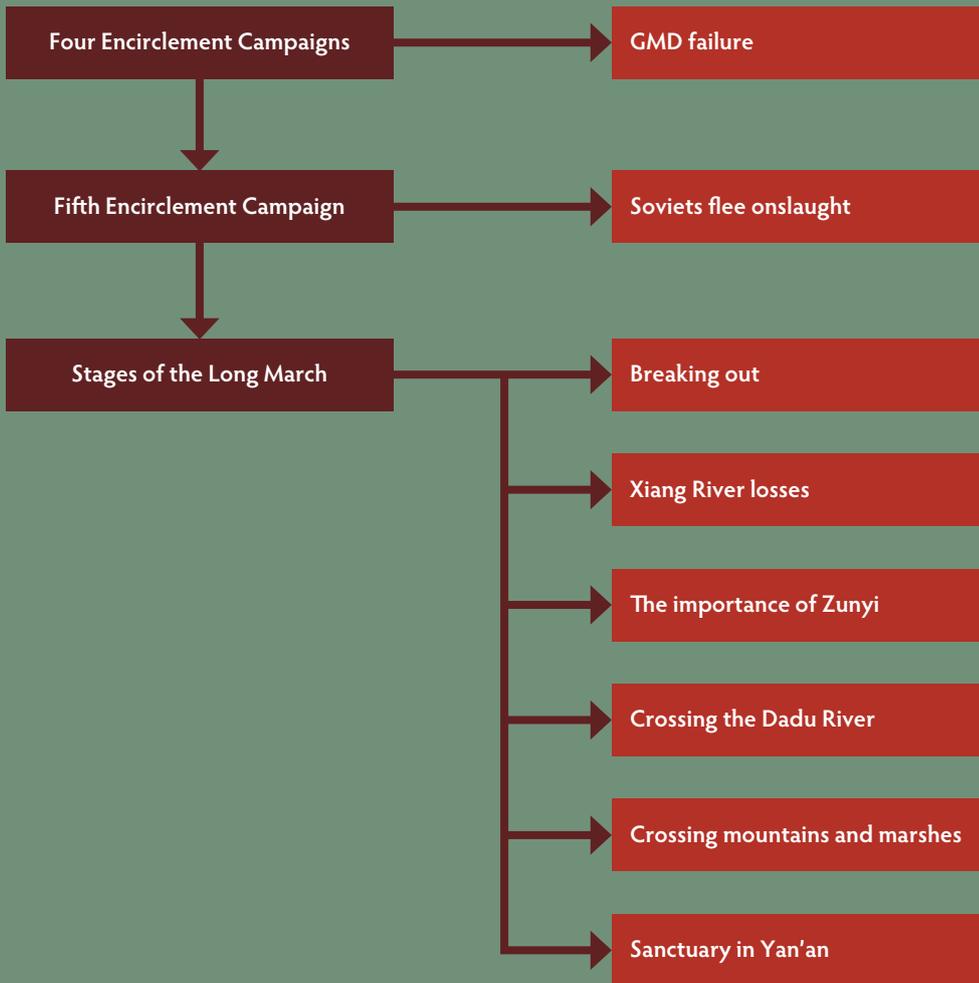
## Digital resources for this chapter

In the *Interactive Textbook*:

-  Video and audio sources and questions
-  Digital activities

◀ **Source 6.0** Red Army soldiers crossing a mountain during the Long March

# Flow of chapter



# Timeline

|  |  |  |  |  |  |   |   |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|---|---|
| <p><b>1929</b><br/>14 JANUARY</p> <p>Mao Zedong and Zhu De leave Jinggangshan Soviet</p>         | <p><b>1930</b><br/>1-2 AUGUST</p> <p>Mao Zedong and Zhu De fail to capture and hold Nanchang</p> | <p><b>1930</b><br/>8 DECEMBER</p> <p>Futian Incident where Mao Zedong has the Futian dissenters executed</p>  | <p><b>1931</b><br/>1 JULY</p> <p>Third Encirclement Campaign; later called off due to Japanese actions</p> | <p><b>1933</b><br/>JANUARY</p> <p>CCP Central Committee goes from Shanghai to Ruijin</p> | <p><b>1934</b><br/>16 OCTOBER</p> <p>Long March begins</p>  | <p><b>1935</b><br/>16 JUNE</p> <p>First Route Army meets Zhang Guotao's forces</p>    | <p><b>1936</b></p> <p>Zhang Guotao and He Long's forces arrive at Gansu</p> <p>Yan'an becomes capital of the Shaanxi Soviet</p> |
| <p><b>1929</b><br/>10 FEBRUARY</p> <p>Mao Zedong establishes Ruijin Soviet (also in Jiangxi)</p> | <p><b>1930</b><br/>5 NOVEMBER</p> <p>First Encirclement Campaign</p>                             | <p><b>1931</b><br/>APRIL</p> <p>Second Encirclement Campaign</p>   | <p><b>1932</b><br/>18 SEPTEMBER</p> <p>Fourth Encirclement Campaign begins</p>                             | <p><b>1933</b><br/>6 OCTOBER</p> <p>Fifth Encirclement Campaign begins</p>               | <p><b>1935</b><br/>JANUARY</p> <p>Zunyi meeting</p>  |  | <p><b>1935</b><br/>26 OCTOBER</p> <p>Mao Zedong's forces reach Shaan-Gan-Ning Soviet</p>  |

## 6.1 What were the Encirclement Campaigns?

Jiang Jieshi turned his back on the growing menace of the Japanese armies in the north and was determined to extinguish the CCP once and for all. In particular, he was determined to destroy the Jiangxi Soviet. As the soviets were located in the mountainous border areas, there were too many escape routes for a front-on attack. So, the plan was to encircle the soviets with superior troop numbers and lay siege to them.

### The first four campaigns: 1930–1933

The first three campaigns were launched against the soviets, especially the key one based in Jiangxi. The first two were military failures as they could not cope with the Communist guerrilla tactics. The third campaign in July 1931 was led by Jiang himself, with 130 000 soldiers, but the invasion of Manchuria by Japan forced Jiang to halt the attack. The fourth campaign in 1933 saw Jiang launch a force of 153 000 troops against the soviets. Unfortunately for the GMD, its forces were split by Japanese encroachment on the Great Wall. Some units defected to the Communists, and the tactics of the Red Army sorely tested the remaining forces.



**KEY  
STATISTIC**

### The Fifth Encirclement Campaign: October 1933 to October 1934

With the help of German military advisers von Falkenhausen and von Seeckt, an army of 700 000, aircraft and a blockade or siege approach, the Fifth **Encirclement Campaign** strangled and starved the soviets. The key target was the **Ruijin Soviet**.

#### Encirclement Campaigns

Jiang's efforts to surround and eliminate communist soviets

#### Ruijin Soviet

Soviets were sometimes known by the name of the province and sometimes by the name of the main city. Therefore, it was easier to call the Shaan–Gan–Ning Soviet the Yan'an Soviet. The second Jiangxi Soviet is also the Ruijin Soviet, which helps to distinguish it from the earlier Jiangxi Soviet with the alternative name: Jinggangshan Soviet.

#### ANALYSIS ACTIVITY 6.1

##### Encirclement campaign

Edgar Snow wrote:

*Nanking [Nanjing] believed that its efforts at annihilation were about to succeed. The enemy was caged and could not escape. Thousands had supposedly been killed in the daily bombing and machine gunning from the air, as well as by 'purgations' in districts reoccupied by the Kuomintang [GMD]. The Red Army itself, according to Chou En-lai [Zhou Enlai], suffered over 60 000 casualties in this one siege. Whole areas were depopulated, sometimes by forced mass migrations, sometimes by the simpler expedient of mass executions. Kuomintang press releases estimated that about 1 000 000 people were killed or starved to death in the process of recovering Soviet Kiangsi [Jiangxi].*



**KEY  
STATISTIC**

**Source 6.1** Edgar Snow, *Red Star Over China*, 1978, p. 216.

Note that Snow uses the Wade-Giles romanisation popular at the time. 'Nanking' is 'Nanjing' and is mentioned because it was Jiang's capital, and therefore refers to his government.

- 1 Determine Jiang's goal in this campaign.
- 2 Evaluate the ruthlessness of his methods.
- 3 Explain what Snow means by 'purgations'.



KEY HISTORIAN



Edgar Snow

The first real public airing of a Maoist view was Edgar Snow's book, *Red Star Over China*.

While this was a detailed and insightful book – a revelation in its time – Mao had virtually dictated much of the CCP history to the author. The rest was supplied by other CCP leaders. Snow had no way of verifying the facts – he would not have been able to travel freely in Guomindang-held areas. So he took much of it uncritically. It gave him a scoop and instant fame. His later books are more balanced, but they belong to a later time and political system.



▲ Source 6.2 Edgar and Helen Snow



▲ Source 6.3 Cover of *Red Star Over China*

## 6.2 The Fifth Encirclement Campaign succeeds

The Maoist view of the need to abandon the Ruijijian Soviet is that there was a change of defence tactics, and that Otto Braun, with the support of the new political head of the Red Army, Zhou Enlai, abandoned Mao's guerrilla tactics in exchange for trench fighting, and this alone allowed the Fifth Encirclement Campaign to succeed.

An article by Liu Bocheng, published in China in 1978, asserts:

*During the fifth counter-campaign against 'encirclement and suppression' the 'left' opportunists began with adventurism in attack and, on the ground of a chance victory in the encounter at Hsunkou, dispatched troops into enemy areas and followed the erroneous policy of 'engaging the enemy outside the gates.'*

Source 6.4 Liu Bocheng et al., *Recalling The Long March*, 1978, p. 4.



▲ Source 6.5 Liu Bocheng

Mao's biographer, Ross Terrill, observed:

*The dream of 'halting the enemy at the gate' could easily turn into a nightmare if the enemy were to get through the gate. That is what happened. It showed the folly of positional warfare. Braun valued territory above troops. He lost both.*

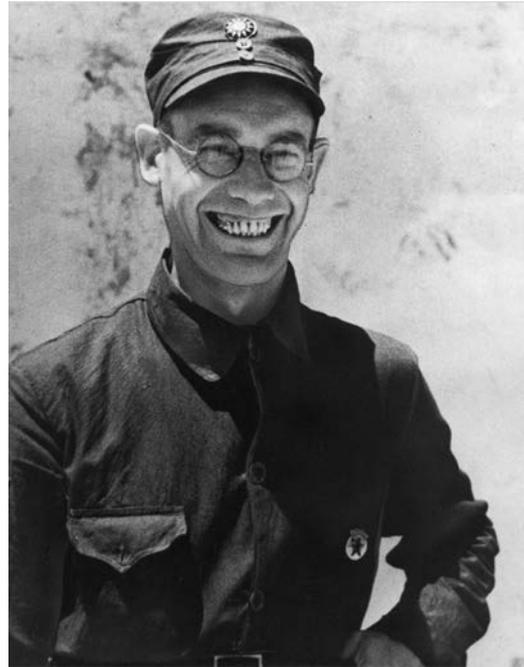
**Source 6.6** Ross Terrill, *Mao: A Biography*, 1980, p. 119.

A different perspective is given by Soldier Huang, a veteran of the Long March:

*He [Braun] was not to blame for the Red Army's failures. He did not insist on trench warfare as people are always told, but guerrilla tactics and mobile attacks couldn't work anymore. We were trapped, like flies in a spider's web.*

**Source 6.7** Sun Shuyun, *The Long March*, 2006, p. 43.

► **Source 6.8** Otto Braun



## FOCUS QUESTIONS

- 1 How do these views differ?
- 2 Can they be reconciled?
- 3 Can Braun be seen as a scapegoat? Why?

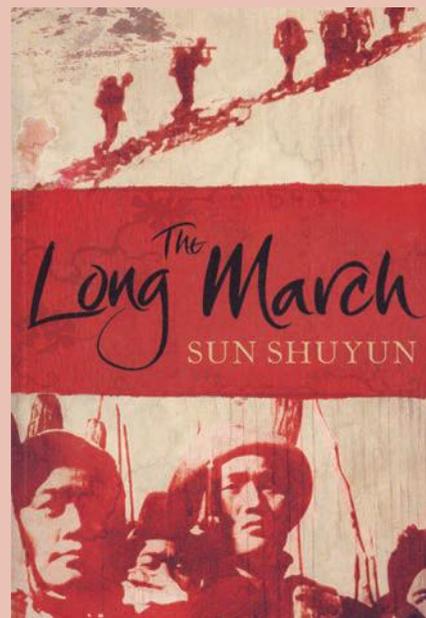
## KEY HISTORIAN

### Sun Shuyun

In *The Long March*, Sun Shuyun actually revises Mao's politics before 1949, unpacking some of the Maoist myths of the Long March first published by Edgar Snow. By retracing the Long March route and talking to locals, she challenges many aspects of the Long March – although not the bravery of the marchers.



▲ **Source 6.9** Sun Shuyun

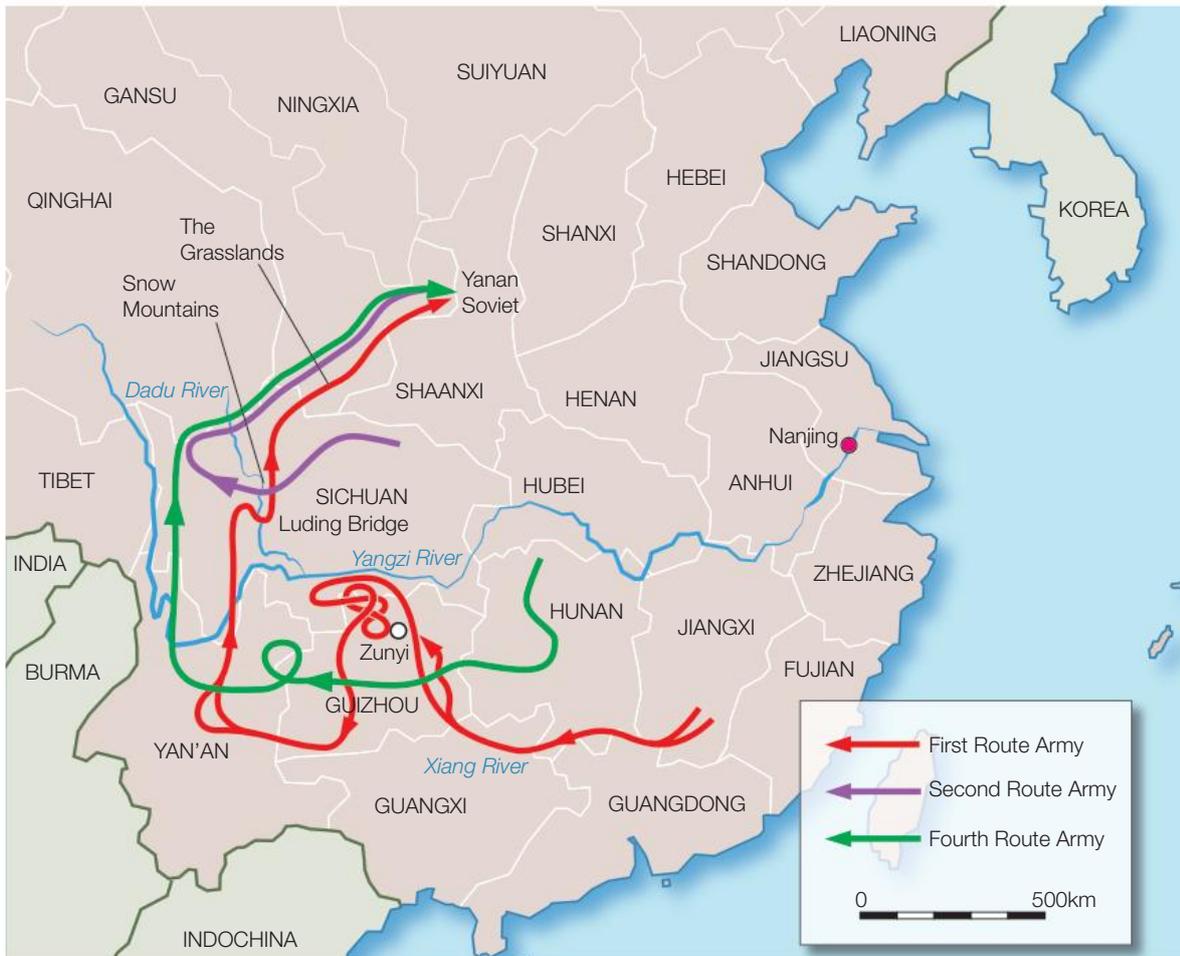


▲ **Source 6.10** Cover of *The Long March*

## 6.3 Who went on the breakout?



The decision was made to break out of the Jiangxi Soviet. The decision was not made by Mao, but there is a view that he was consulted on tactics by Zhou Enlai and Zhu De. In October 1934, the First Route Army (Chinese army divisions were divided into 'routes' or 'fronts' and then numbered) broke through the Guomindang lines and headed west towards Hunan province. The destination at the time was unclear.



▲ Source 6.11 Map of the Long March. The Third Route Army under He Long was forced out of Hunan earlier and it merged with the Second Front Army.

### FOCUS QUESTION

Who did *not* go on the Long March?



It was clear that not everyone could go. Except for a remnant of soldiers left to 'defend' the soviet, the Red Army went. The leaders went. Boys who were mobile also went. Of the 80 000–100 000 marchers, only around 30 to 35 women went. Most were wives of officials, and 11 were there to make the favouritism towards the wives of CCP leaders less blatant. Women, children and the wounded stayed behind to suffer the retribution of the GMD troops. Mao's brother Mao Zetan was left behind and was killed.

Meanwhile, each evacuating soldier carried a rifle, a quilt, a mug, chopsticks, 10 days' rations of rice, spare sandals, and a needle and thread placed in his cap. In two columns that joined at the rear, they broke through the triple encirclement and headed for the Xiang River.

## 6.4

## SIGNIFICANT INDIVIDUAL

**He Zizhen (1910–1984)**

Mao's wife He Zizhen was the daughter of politically liberal parents from Yongxin, near the Jiangxi border. She dropped her given name Guiyuan and took on Zizhen. In 1926, she joined the Communist Youth League. With the 1927 split between the GMD and CCP, her younger brother was executed for carrying CCP messages. He Zizhen returned to Yongxin from propaganda work to help defend the town from the GMD. Before the town fell to the GMD, He fled to the Jinggang Mountains and was there to welcome Mao when he set up his soviet. By 1928, Mao had taken her as a wife, even though he was still married to Yang Kaihui, who had borne him three sons. By the time of the Long March, He had already left a daughter behind in Fujian in 1930. She later gave birth to a son, who was left with Mao's brother when the Long March began. In 1935, during the exhausting journey, she gave birth to a girl who was left with a peasant woman with payment of silver dollars and some opium. Two months later, in Guizhou province, she threw herself across the body of a wounded soldier when they were bombed by a GMD aircraft. Seventeen pieces of shrapnel entered her body. She spent only one night of the Long March with Mao. In 1937, after they settled in Yan'an, Mao sent her to Russia for medical care, then took on his third wife, Jiang Qing. After 1949, He Zizhen lived a quiet life and managed to outlive Mao. She devoted much time to looking for her abandoned children but sadly was unable to locate any of them.

## FOCUS QUESTION

Suggest why Mao found it necessary to abandon his second wife, He Zizhen.

▼ Source 6.12 Mao with He Zizhen



## 6.5 The Xiang River crossing

The Red Army managed to escape from Jiangxi relatively unscathed. However, in their westward journey, their first major military obstacle occurred at a major natural obstacle, the Xiang River. Here they met with strong Nationalist opposition and the Red Army casualties were devastatingly high.

*After 500 kilometres and ten battles the Red Army reached the Guizhou border with only 45 000 men left. Crossing the Xiang River had been costly. Mao had blamed Otto Braun's straight line retreat as being too predictable but Harrison Salisbury points out that Jiang's army had units sitting on both flanks.*

**Source 6.13** Harrison Salisbury, *China: 100 Years of Revolution*, Andre Deutsch, London, 1983, p. 153.

**KEY QUOTE**

*It was also obvious that the Long Marchers were carrying too much equipment, such as printing presses, which had to be ditched. But none of this explains the great depletion of numbers in two days of fighting at the Xiang River. The best estimations give a figure of 15 000 killed at this time leaving 30 000 unexplained. Sun Shuyun, following an interview with a survivor wrote, 'Nobody wants to admit it but the majority almost certainly deserted'.*

**KEY STATISTIC**

**Source 6.14** Sun Shuyun, *The Long March*, HarperCollins, London, 2006, p. 87.

This was heresy to the CCP view of dedicated Red Army soldiers, but it does make sense, as these men did not know they were going so far away from the families they had left behind at such extreme risk.

### FOCUS QUESTION

Why would the CCP be quick to deny any desertions at the Xiang River crossing?

### AMAZING BUT TRUE ...

Otto Braun was not the only European on the Long March. A Swiss-born missionary Alfred Bosshardt was captured by the Second Front marchers under General He Long. Bosshardt travelled with them for about 4000 kilometres until they reached a place near Kunming, where he was released. He proved valuable in interpreting captured maps with non-Chinese inscriptions.

### AMAZING BUT TRUE ...

The county of Xing'an is the home of the Monument to the Martyrs of the Xiang River, which honours those in the Red Army who fought and died in the Xiang River crossing. It is fronted by 11-metre granite sculptures of the faces of a soldier, a woman and an old man, supported by a frieze of the Red Army, supported by peasants and workers. Adjacent there are three gigantic concrete guns. The exhibition hall beneath the guns is just one small room with unremarkable displays and very little information. The irony is that the monument is 15 kilometres from the actual battle site. The reason for this anomaly is that the actual location is not conveniently situated, whereas the 1996 monument is on the tourist route to the popular city of Guilin.

► **Source 6.15**  
A memorial to the Long March in Shiguzhen



## 6.6 The extraordinary events at Zunyi

In Guizhou province, the Red Army approached Zunyi. Red Army soldiers disguised as GMD entered the city, and it was easily captured. If you check the map of the journey after Zunyi (see Source 6.11), you will notice that the route doubles upon itself, goes back to Zunyi and then heads south before resuming a westerly direction. This has been touted as an illustration of a change of tactics, reflecting a change of leadership.

Liu Bocheng expressed the Maoist line in 1978 when he wrote:

*The Tsunyi [Zunyi] Meeting triumphantly put an end to the domination of the 'Left' line in the central leading body of the Party and inaugurated a new central leadership with Comrade Mao Tse-tung [Zedong] at its head. This change saved the Party and the Red Army at a most critical time.*

**Source 6.16** Liu Bocheng et al., *Recalling the Long March*, Foreign Languages Press, Peking/Beijing, 1978, p. 9.

This view states that Mao, with the support of Zhou Enlai, Zhu De and others, resumed leadership of the Party. Then, using unpredictable routes, he was able to make it more difficult for Jiang's armies to catch them. Interestingly, Edgar Snow's account in *Red Star Over China*, which was basically dictated to him, makes no mention of this transformation.

In their controversial biography, *Mao: The Unknown Story*, Jung Chang and her husband, Jon Halliday, state:

*It is commonly claimed that Mao became the leader of the Party and the army at the Zunyi meeting – and by majority mandate. In fact, Mao was not made chief of either the Party or the army at Zunyi ... However, Mao did achieve one critical breakthrough at Zunyi: he became a member of the Secretariat, the decision-making core.*

**Source 6.17** Jung Chang & Jon Halliday, *Mao: The Unknown Story*, Jonathan Cape, London, 2005, p. 145.

In his biography of Mao, the Russian historian Alexander Pantsov cites Mao telling his daughter Li Min about the Zunyi meeting:

*The meeting figured that a Buddha like me might still prove useful, therefore, they dragged me onto the Standing Committee of the Politburo of the Central Committee.*

**Source 6.18** Alexander Pantsov, *Mao: The Real Story*, Simon & Schuster, New York, 2012, p. 280.

Either way, Zunyi did see Otto Braun removed from command, and it did mark the resurrection of Mao as a political force.



### FOCUS QUESTION

What could be the purpose of exaggerating Mao's advancement at Zunyi?

▼ **Source 6.19** Site of the Zunyi Meeting



## 6.7 The Luding Bridge crossing

The next stages consisted of victories for the Red Army at Loushan Pass in Guizhou, ferrying thousands across the Jinsha (Golden Sands) River into Sichuan province, and the treaty with the fearsome Lolo people of the Yi nationality (where the military envoy, Liu Bocheng, had to drink fresh chicken blood with the chief).

Perhaps the most vivid image of the Long March is that of the crossing of the Dadu River over the Luding Bridge. The Luding Bridge was constructed from 13 huge chains strung 100 metres across the Dadu gorge. A stone slab at the bridge declared:

*Towering mountains flank Luding Bridge  
Piercing the endless floating clouds.*

The Chinese film versions show volunteer Red Army soldiers, 22 of them led by Commander Liao, crawling across chains and through flames while under heavy machine-gunfire, and some falling a great distance into the river valley below. The legend is not just based on the heroism of these men but on the vital nature of the task. A failure to cross would have meant the Red Army being trapped and annihilated south of the Dadu River, a fate suffered by the last of the Taiping rebel armies in 1863.

Edgar Snow's account encouraged this version of events:

*Hand grenades and Mausers were strapped to their backs, and soon they were swinging out above the boiling river, moving hand over hand, clinging to the iron chains ... The first warrior was hit, and dropped into the current below; a second fell, and then a third.*

**Source 6.20** Edgar Snow, *Red Star Over China*, Pelican, London, 1978, p. 229.

### FOCUS QUESTIONS

- 1 No doubt the men who crossed that bridge were the 'Heroes of Dadu', but was the account glamourised?
- 2 If so, for what purpose?

However, two accounts written by Long Marchers are less dramatic. Commander Yang Chengwu wrote:

*With the clarion call of bugles, our assault party swiftly plunged into the flames. Commander Liao's cap caught fire. He threw it away and fought on. The others also dashed through the flames, closely behind Liao. In the street fighting that followed ...*

**Source 6.21** Yang Cheng-Wu, 'Lightning Attack on Luting Bridge', in Liu Bocheng et al., *Recalling The Long March*, Foreign Languages Press, Peking/Beijing, 1978, p. 99.

Note what is missing from this account, and that of Wei Guolu, one of Zhou Enlai's bodyguards:

*On hearing that a horse had fallen in [to the river], Vice-Chairman Chou [Zhou] asked urgently, 'Have any people been lost?' He was only put at ease when the reply was in the negative.*

**Source 6.22** Wei Kuo-Lu, *On the Long March as Guard to Chou En-Lai*, Foreign Languages Press, Peking/Beijing, 1978, p. 37.

◀ **Source 6.23** Propaganda painting of the valiant crossing of Luding Bridge



## 6.8 On the mountains and in the marshes

After the Dadu River, the obstacles encountered were more likely to be geographical than military. Ahead of the Red Army were the Snow Mountain Ranges. The marchers were within 150 kilometres of their comrades in the Fourth Route Army led by Zhang Guotao, but it would take them seven weeks to traverse the mountains. Many of these soldiers had grown up in semi-tropical Jiangxi, and their sandals and clothing would prove woefully inadequate for the task ahead of them. They had seven ranges to cross, with the highest peak at 4800 metres. Mao wrote, ‘The Red Army fears not the trials of the Long March / Holding light ten thousand crags and torrents.’ This was a light-hearted approach from a leader who was carried on a stretcher at one stage due to malaria and had a horse at other times.



▲ Source 6.24 A painting of the Red Army crossing mountains during the Long March

### ANALYSIS ACTIVITY 6.2



#### The Long March



▲ Source 6.25 A painting of Zhou, Mao and Zhu De on the Snow Mountains

- 1 Assess whether this picture of Mao gives an accurate idea of the Long March.
- 2 Explain why this image does not match reality.



Eventually, heavily depleted in numbers, the First Route Army met up with the Fourth Route Army, which was greater in numbers and fresher due to its shorter journey from its base in Sichuan. Here, there was a falling out between Mao and Zhang Guotao. Zhang headed west while Mao continued north to Shaanxi.

However, the route chosen by Mao meant crossing the high-altitude grasslands on the eastern border of Tibet. Before even reaching the grasslands, the Long Marchers were often ambushed by the nomadic herdsmen who were not interested in making peace with any Chinese – CCP or GMD. The grasslands were, in fact, marshes with no inhabitants, no perceptible paths and almost no food supply. Furthermore, the evenings were freezing cold. Soldiers often had to sleep sitting back-to-back to avoid sinking to their deaths. In the mornings, some soldiers would not stir as they had frozen to death. For many Long Marchers, this was the worst stage of the journey.

They emerged from the grasslands and continued towards the Shaanxi Soviet (often called the Shaan–Gan–Ning Soviet as it encompassed the provinces of Shaanxi, Gansu and Ningxia). The final obstacle was a battle at Lazikou, a narrow pass in the mountains. The enemy division waiting there was outflanked by soldiers led by Commander Yang Chengwu.

**KEY EVENT** 

In late October 1935, Mao's weary remnant of the First Route Army straggled into Shaanxi to be welcomed by local soviet leaders. It was a whole year before the Second Route Army under He Long and the Fourth Route Army led by Zhang Guotao joined the others in Shaanxi. In 1936, the Long March concluded, and a new base was established in the town of Yan'an (Yenan). Soon Zhang Guotao realised he could not suffer Mao being the leader and defected to the Nationalists (GMD).

**FOCUS QUESTIONS**

- 1 What were the natural obstacles faced in the final phase of the Long March?
- 2 Were they avoidable?

## What is the verdict on the Long March?

Chairman Mao's verdict on the Long March was:

**KEY QUOTE** 

*The Long March is also a seeding-machine. In the 11 provinces it has sown many seeds which will sprout, leaf, blossom and bear fruit, and will yield a harvest in the future. In a word, the Long March has ended in victory for us and defeat for the enemy.*

**KEY STATISTIC** 

How can it be seen as a victory when they were removed from southern China, almost wiped out and ended up in the desolate and remote yellow loess-covered north-west? The best estimate of the number of those who set out from Jiangxi is 80 000–100 000. Only 10 000 straggled into Shaanxi under Mao. Perhaps one-third of these were recruited along the way. So, only about one soldier in 10 finished the journey. Historian Dick Wilson notes in *The Long March* (1971) that, of the original roll call of 300 000 for all soviets before the Long March, only 30 000 were left. Surely it was a colossal defeat?

Jiang Jieshi thought he had squashed the CCP, yet he lived to rue the fact that the Long Marchers reached Shaanxi. The positives for Mao's CCP were:

- they survived
- that he now was undisputed leader of the CCP
- the Long March created a myth of invincibility for the survivors, no doubt helped by the publication of Edgar Snow's *Red Star Over China*
- Yan'an was to prove strategically important as a base from which to later challenge the GMD government.

**FOCUS QUESTIONS**

- 1 To what extent was the Long March a colossal defeat?
- 2 To what extent was the Long March a victory?

## AMAZING BUT TRUE ...

In 2007, two British men, Andy McEwen and Ed Jocelyn, retraced the Long March with GPS equipment. Rather than Mao's 12 500 kilometres, they measured the Long March at 6500 kilometres. They were also introduced to a woman in Yunnan who may have been the child that Mao's wife He Zizhen abandoned.

## 6.9

## SIGNIFICANT INDIVIDUAL



▲ Source 6.26 Zhu De

### Zhu De (Chu Te) 朱德 (1886–1976)

Zhu De was born into a poor Hakka family in Sichuan province. He was adopted by a wealthy uncle and was able to sit the imperial exams and achieve a civil appointment. Then he undertook military training in Yunnan. Zhu supported the 1911 revolution. He later served a local warlord and, upon this warlord's death, became a warlord himself. The murder of his second wife and child by a rival warlord may have been the cause of his opium addiction.

He cured himself of this addiction and travelled to Germany to study engineering. There he met Zhou Enlai and became, in 1922, a member of the CCP. In 1925 he went to the Soviet Union to study military affairs. As a GMD commander he was ordered, in 1927, to counter the Nanchang uprising that he in fact led. After a period in hiding, Zhu led his 10 000 troops to Jinggangshan to join Mao's Jiangxi Soviet. The peasants there referred to the leadership as Zhu–Mao, sometimes thinking it was one person.

In 1929, the soviet shifted to Ruijin. In 1931, Zhu was made commander of the Red Army and led that army on the Long March. He supported Mao's reinstatement at Zunyi. However, when they met up with Zhang Guotao's troops in northern Sichuan, Zhu was obliged to travel west with Zhang in the futile quest to find another location for a soviet.

After the Xi'an Incident, Zhu De became the leader of the new Eighth Route Army working under the GMD against the Japanese invaders. Following the surrender of Japan, Zhu led the army (now the People's Liberation Army [PLA]) against the GMD. In 1955, he was listed as one of the 10 great marshals of the Communist armies.

After 1949, Zhu De held important but largely ceremonial posts such as Commander-in-Chief of the PLA (1949–1954) and Vice-Chairman of the CCP. He kept a low profile until he tried to protect Peng Dehuai at Lushan with only the mildest of criticisms. During the Cultural Revolution, he was a minor target of the Red Guards but was protected by Zhou Enlai. On 6 July 1976, Zhu De died of natural causes, preceding Mao by two months.

## THE STORY SO FAR



Before it became known as the Long March (*Chang zheng*), Mao referred to it as the 25 000 *Li* (12 500 kilometres) March. That figure is disputed, as are the motives and wisdom of the leadership; however, what is not in dispute is the courage and endurance of those soldiers who survived. While the myth of the Long March has been lessened by accounts of desertion, kidnapping and executions, it remains a pivotal moment in the survival and eventual victory of the Chinese Communist Party.



Use the QR code or visit the digital version of the book and watch the video summarising the chapter.

## Develop your historical thinking skills

### Define key terms

Write your own definition of each of the following key terms:

- Encirclement Campaigns
- The Long March
- First Route Army.

### Establishing historical significance

How does the myth of the Long March correspond to reality?

### Analysing cause and consequence

What is there in the Long March that Mao was able to use to build up the Chinese Communist Party's image?

### Constructing historical arguments

- 1 Discuss the significance of the Long March.
- 2 Assess whether the Long March was a victory or a defeat.

### Analysing historical sources as evidence



▲ Source 6.27 Long March leaders

- 1 Identify the three Long Marchers depicted.
- 2 Why was it rare for them to be together during the march?
- 3 What did each contribute to the Long March?

## Analysing historian's interpretations

A key and controversial allegation made by Jung Chang and Jon Halliday in *Mao: The Unknown Story* is that Jiang Jieshi was not trying to wipe out the Long Marchers but had allowed them to escape encirclement and shepherded them to Sichuan province. His motives, according to the authors, were to negotiate the return of his son Jiang Jingguo who was in Moscow; to have Soviet assistance in holding out Japan; and to have an excuse to bring his troops into Sichuan and gain full control over the Sichuan warlord. They wrote:

*Although he did not get his son back now, Chiang [Jiang] had achieved his goal of bringing the three southwestern provinces under the central government. The Guizhou warlord had been forced to resign, and left the province after being lavishly bought off. The Yunnan governor stayed on and maintained a good relationship with Chiang (for the time being). With his own army now in Sichuan, following at Mao's heels, Chiang returned there in May to assume control of this strategically important – and most populous – province. Here he spent months of intensive activity to build up Sichuan as his base for war against Japan.*

**Source 6.28** Jung Chang and Jon Halliday, *Mao: The Unknown Story*, Jonathan Cape, London, 2005, p. 162.

Which of the following points concern you most about this theory, and why?

- A Other historians do not agree with it.
- B There is no Chinese or Russian documentation to back it.
- C It runs counter to Jiang's intense hatred of the CCP.
- D The USSR still retained his son.
- E After Zunyi, the only practical route for the CCP was north and closer to the USSR.
- F China was not currently at war with Japan.



# 7

## WAR WITH JAPAN, 1936–1945

### 抗日战争

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*The Japanese are only a disease of the skin, the Communists are a malady of the heart.*

– JIANG JIESHI EMPLOYING A PROVERB

## Overview

Jiang Jieshi's military reaction to the Japanese threat seemed to involve turning a blind eye and showing a determination to wipe out the Shaanxi Soviet instead. As a result, two of his own generals arrested Jiang (the Xi'an Incident) and the subsequent negotiations produced an uneasy alliance between the GMD and CCP, known as the **Second United Front**. In 1937, Japan abandoned its piecemeal encroachments into Chinese territory and declared all-out war against the Republic of China. Meanwhile, Mao's soviet won the propaganda war by inspiring patriots, especially women, to become part of the '**Yan'an Way**'.

## Key issues

- What was the Xi'an Incident?
- Who was Zhang Xueliang?
- How did the Second Sino–Japanese War begin?
- What was the 'Rape of Nanjing'?
- What were Jiang's tactics against the Japanese?
- How did the CCP fare in Yan'an?
- How did foreigners support Yan'an?
- What were Mao's three policies?
- What was Mao Zedong Thought (Maoism)?

**Second United Front** cooperation between the GMD and CCP following the Xi'an Incident

**Yan'an Way** the idea that life in the soviet was: harmonious; welcoming for women; where the soldiers and peasants both tilled the land; and where the leadership educated, listened to, and wisely guided, the people

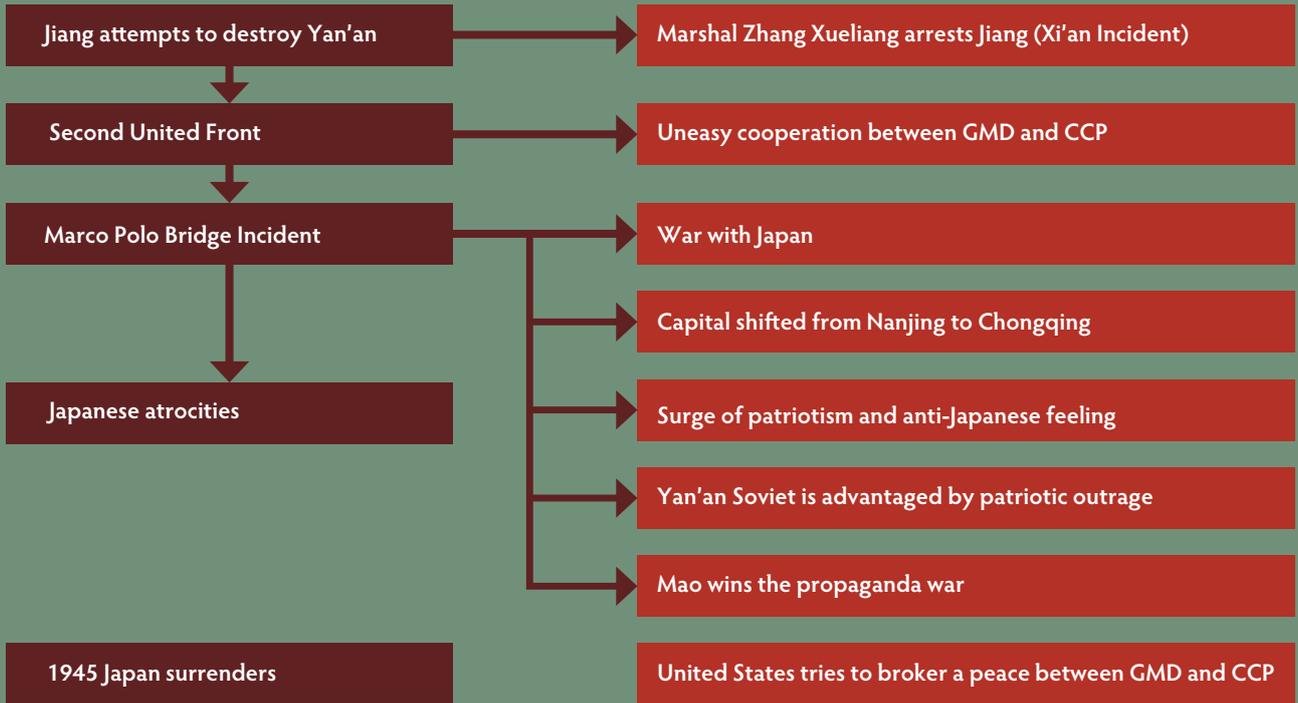
## Digital resources for this chapter

In the *Interactive Textbook*:

-  Video and audio sources and questions
-  Digital activities

◀ **Source 7.0** A colourised photo of Japanese soldiers in Shanghai, 1937

# Flow of chapter



# Timeline

|  |   |   |  |  |  |   |
|--|---|---|--|--|--|---|
| <p><b>1936</b><br/><b>12 DECEMBER</b><br/><i>Xi'an Incident: Jiang arrested by own generals</i></p>  | <p><b>1937</b><br/><b>7 JULY</b><br/><i>Marco Polo Bridge Incident starts second Sino-Japanese War</i></p>    | <p><b>1937</b><br/><b>13 DECEMBER</b><br/><i>Nanjing falls; 'Rape of Nanjing'</i></p>  | <p><b>1940</b><br/><b>20 AUGUST</b><br/><i>Red Army launches '100 Regiments' offensive against Japanese</i></p>  | <p><b>1941</b><br/><b>7 DECEMBER</b><br/><i>Pearl Harbor brings United States into the conflict</i></p>                      | <p><b>1945</b><br/><b>14 AUGUST</b><br/><i>Japan surrenders</i></p>  | <p><b>1945</b><br/><b>27 NOVEMBER</b><br/><i>General George C. Marshall succeeds Hurley as negotiator</i></p> |
| <p><b>1936</b><br/><b>25 DECEMBER</b><br/><i>Zhang Xueliang releases Jiang</i></p>   | <p><b>1937</b><br/><b>20 NOVEMBER</b><br/><i>GMD capital moved from Nanjing to Chongqing (in Sichuan)</i></p> | <p><b>1939</b><br/><b>11 DECEMBER</b><br/><i>Guomindang censorship powers increased</i></p>   |  <p><b>1941</b><br/><b>MAY</b><br/><i>Mao's Rectification Campaign begins in Yan'an</i></p> | <p><b>1944</b><br/><b>19 OCTOBER</b><br/><i>US envoy Joseph Stilwell recalled to United States at Jiang's insistence</i></p> |  <p><b>1945</b><br/><b>28 AUGUST</b><br/><i>Mao flies to Chongqing for meeting with Jiang</i></p> | <p><b>1946</b><br/><b>1 MAY</b><br/><i>Red Army forces renamed People's Liberation Army (PLA)</i></p>         |

## 7.1 The effect of the Xi'an Incident on the CCP and GMD

Determined to finish the Communists who survived the Long March, Jiang Jieshi decided not to trust the locally based warlord-marshals Yang Hucheng and Zhang Xueliang and went to Xi'an to personally oversee the campaign. Yang and Zhang were not happy that 'Chinese were fighting Chinese'. Because of the Japanese occupation of Manchuria, Zhang was ousted from his original home base. He had also been in communication with the Communists. Consequently, on 12 December 1936, when Jiang was bathing at the local hot springs, Zhang's troops came and arrested him. This became known as the 'Xi'an Incident'.



▲ Source 7.1 Huaqing Hot Springs, the site of the Xi'an Incident

Zhou Enlai came to negotiate on behalf of the Communists. There were calls for Jiang's execution. Jiang's wife, Song Meiling, flew in from Nanjing. With encouragement from Moscow, it was decided that only Jiang could lead a united China against Japan. Jiang returned to Nanjing a national and international hero, with a promise to end the blockade of the Yan'an Soviet and to enter a second alliance with the CCP (the first was from 1922 to 1927). In turn, the Reds agreed to subordinate the Red Army to the Guomindang military command. The Red Army was accordingly renamed the Eighth Route Army and New Fourth Route Army, and their headquarters were switched to Xi'an.

**Yan'an** the capital of the Shaan-Gan-Ning Soviet Border Area

**Red Army** communist army under Peng Dehuai prior to the Jiangxi Soviets where it was led by Zhu De

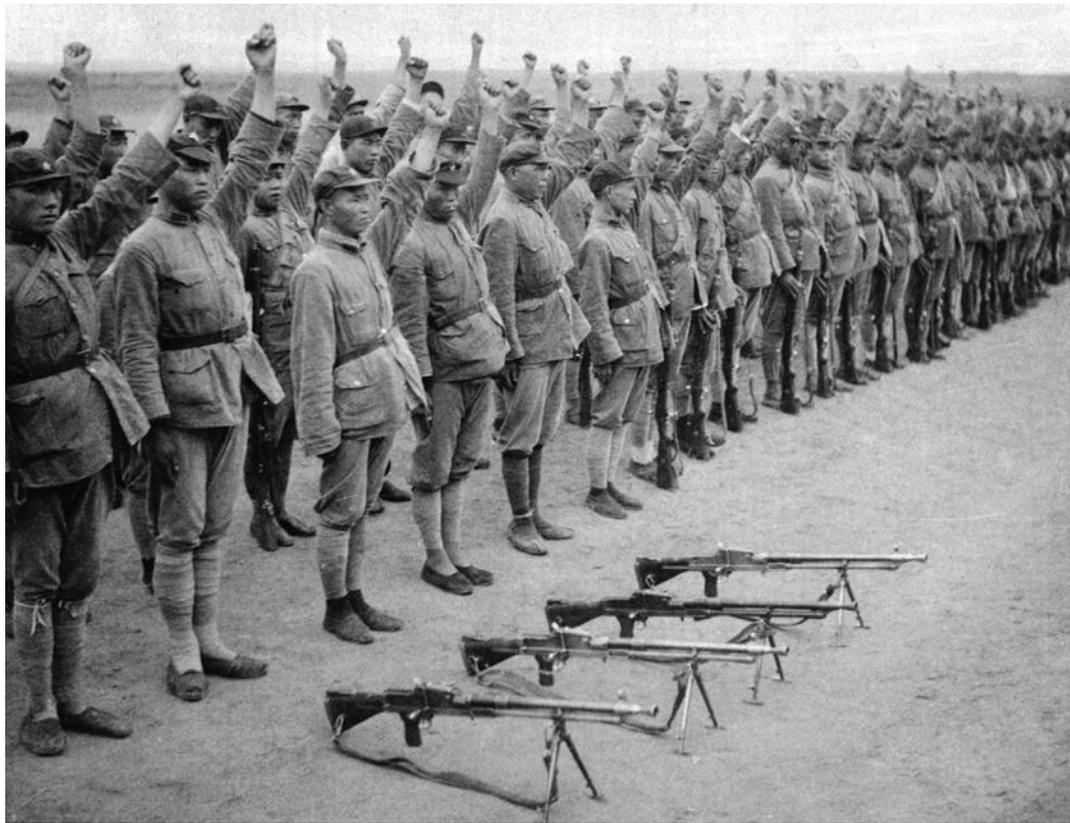
### FOCUS QUESTION

How did the Xi'an Incident change the Chinese political scene?



AMAZING BUT TRUE ...

When the troops came to arrest Jiang at the Xi'an hot springs, he fled outside and hid between some boulders until he was discovered and arrested. The irony of all this is that his given name, Jieshi, means 'between rocks'.



▲ Source 7.2 Soldiers in the Eighth Route Army pictured circa 1937

7.2

SIGNIFICANT INDIVIDUAL



**Zhang Xueliang (1901–2001)**

Zhang Xueliang's father was a Manchurian warlord, Zhang Zuolin, who ruled Manchuria until his assassination in 1928 (with suspicion pointing to a Japanese plot). After ridding himself of an opium addiction, Zhang Xueliang (known as 'The Young Marshal') ruled Manchuria until forced out by the Japanese in 1931. He then became a marshal in the Guomindang forces and was situated near Xi'an, when Jiang Jieshi ordered him to attack the Shaan-Gan-Ning Soviet in 1936. Instead, Zhang arrested Jiang. After the Xi'an Incident, he accompanied Jiang back to Chongqing and remained under house arrest, which continued after accompanying Jiang to Taiwan, until 1961.

◀ Source 7.3 Zhang Xueliang

## 7.3 How did the second Sino–Japanese War begin?

Japan had gained a strong foothold in northern China. The army supposedly maintaining the peace in occupied Manchuria was the Guandong (Kwantung or North East) Army. Its young officers, keen to have Japan further expand its empire, were impatient with the more moderate politicians and concerned by the Second United Front. Back in Japan, the militarists were gaining greater influence than the civil administration, encouraged by the rise of fascism and Nazism in Europe.

On 7 July 1937, a Japanese detachment of the Guandong Army knocked on the closed gates of the town Wanping, demanding that they search for a missing soldier. They were refused entry. The Japanese opened fire and the local soldiers fired back. As this took place near a marble bridge mentioned by Marco Polo, this became known overseas as the Marco Polo Bridge Incident. The Chinese know it as the Lugouqiao (Lukouch'iao or Reed Channel Bridge) Incident. This pretext for an escalation of hostilities became an example of 'the tail wagging the dog', and Japan was committed to full-scale conquest.

Despite some fierce resistance by some GMD armies, Japanese technological supremacy and preparedness meant that the east coast of China was quickly occupied by the Japanese. Beiping (as Jiang Jieshi had renamed Beijing, meaning 'Northern Peace') fell quickly, as did Tianjin. Then Hangzhou and Shanghai were taken. Taiyuan held out for longer. The behaviour of many of the Japanese troops towards the Chinese soldiers and civilians constitutes a period of great shame in Japanese history, and it is still a sore point today. The Chinese can tell many stories of murder, rape, mutilation and being buried alive by the Japanese Imperial Army.

▼ Source 7.4 Lugouqiao, or the 'Marco Polo Bridge'





## 7.4 The 'Rape of Nanjing'

**KEY EVENT**

**'Rape of Nanjing'**  
the capture of Nanjing by Japanese soldiers and subsequent brutality

The most infamous account of brutality against the Chinese, the **'Rape of Nanjing'**, followed the Japanese capture of the Guomindang capital, Nanjing (Nanking), in mid-December 1937. The ancient walled city of Nanjing was captured, and many Japanese soldiers went on a killing spree. It is estimated that 20 000 women were raped then killed. At least 200 000 people were murdered. Some soldiers had a bet as to who could decapitate the most Chinese in one day. Patients in hospitals were murdered. The only refuge was in the foreign compounds.



▲ Source 7.5 Map of Japanese occupation of China

## 7.5 What were Jiang's tactics against the Japanese?

The main Guomindang forces regrouped at Wuhan. With the help of aircraft and pilots supplied by Stalin, the leader of the Soviet Union, Wuhan was stoutly defended by the Guomindang forces. In June 1938, Jiang gave orders to blow the dams that held back the mighty Yellow River (Huang He). This slowed the Japanese advance somewhat but killed many Chinese peasants in the process. All this provided time for the government to move the capital to Chongqing in Sichuan, in the upper reaches of the Yangzi River.

### AMAZING BUT TRUE ...

Prior to America's entry into World War II, there was a group of American mercenary pilots who flew for the Guomindang government, and who made sure the Japanese aircraft did not have unchallenged control of the southern skies (Russian planes withdrew after the 1939 Hitler–Stalin Pact). These pilots were known as the Flying Tigers. They flew outdated P40 planes, but flew them well, and received \$500 for every Japanese plane they shot down. You may wish to track down and watch a 1942 Republic Pictures film called *Flying Tigers*, starring John Wayne.

The Japanese established a puppet government in Manzhouguo (Manchukuo, or Manchu nation), with Puyi installed as puppet emperor. They also established a puppet regime in Nanjing to legitimise their control of China. However, in December 1941, Japan bombed Pearl Harbor in Hawaii, and Generalissimo Jiang was pleased to now have the support of the United States. He believed it was only a matter of time before the defeat of Japan and his return to power. Meanwhile, he and his wife, Song Meiling, were regarded as heroes. When Song Meiling visited the US Congress to appeal for arms and money, her charm, good looks and perfect English won over the politicians.

▼ **Source 7.6** US First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt and Song Meiling in front of the White House, February 1943



## 7.6 How did the CCP fare in Yan'an?

After the Xi'an Incident, the Communists had a period of respite and were able to build up their soviet. Mao and the other leaders seemed to have developed a better working relationship with the local peasants, even sending the army into the fields to boost the food supply. The Long Marchers had to switch from a rice diet to one of wheat and sorghum. They also learnt to live in the cave-like homes, dug into the sides of the yellow cliffs.

There was a sense of egalitarianism, made easier by the mutual poverty of the local population and the absence of rich landlords. Mao lived in a cave-like home with a vegetable garden out the front, as did everyone else. Schools were set up to cope with the 95 per cent illiteracy rate of the peasants and to disseminate political doctrine. Music and dance were adapted to teach the Communists' perspective. They established an Anti-Japan University in Yan'an, which was good propaganda. The soviet even overprinted Guomindang stamps for its own postal service.

The Communists did originally try to seriously hurt the Japanese forces with their 'One Hundred Regiments Offensive', but the Japanese reprisals were severe, especially on any villages associated with an attack. The Eighth Route Army then settled more on harassment rather than open warfare.

Soon young people – especially women – travelled to the soviet. Some came to aid the fight against the Japanese troops, feeling that the Guomindang was insincere in its defensive measures. Some women came to assert their independence by avoiding or escaping arranged marriages. The cruelty of some mothers-in-law in China was legendary, and the selection of the previously unseen future husband was often arbitrary. Once caught in a bad marriage, there was no escape except for death or Yan'an. This influx of young, attractive women proved too tempting for some of the older comrades, who abandoned their wives and married the young, and sometimes sophisticated, newcomers.

It is widely believed that Mao had an affair with Lily Wu, an attractive Shanghai actress. A scandal erupted and she was banished from Yan'an. Mao's wife, at the time, He Zizhen, was sent to Moscow for 'medical' reasons. This allowed Mao to become involved with another young Shanghai actress called Lan Ping. She changed her name to Jiang Qing and eventually she and Mao married. However, the Party did insist that she remain out of political decisions – which she did until 1966.

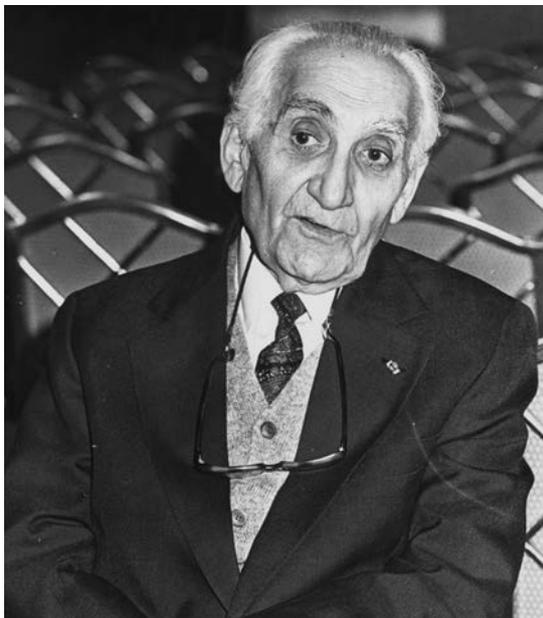
▼ Source 7.7 Mao and Jiang Qing around 1945



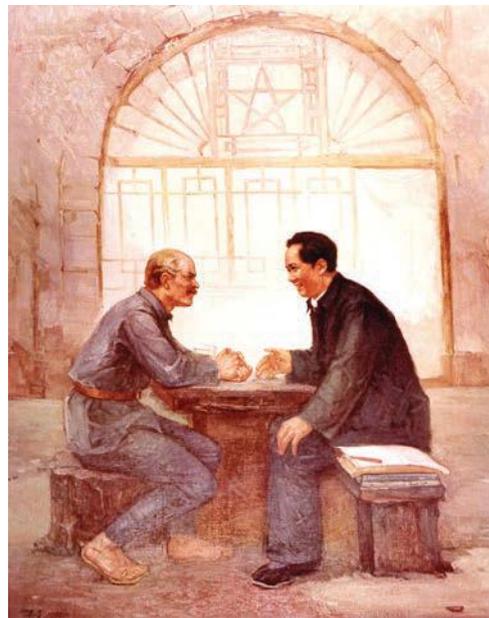
## 7.7 Foreigners in Yan'an

Otto Braun divorced his Jiangxi wife and married a singer named Li Liyang. When he was told to return to Moscow in 1939, he took neither woman with him.

Braun was not the only foreigner in the Soviet at that time. An American doctor, George Hatem, was practising in Shanghai but in 1936 travelled to the Red Soviet with Edgar Snow. Here he employed his medical skills to good effect. He even took on a Chinese name, Ma Haide. In a similar vein, a Canadian surgeon, Norman Bethune, who had fought against the fascists in the Spanish Civil War, went to Wuhan to serve the GMD wounded. In frustration, he headed to Yan'an in 1938, where he established mobile operating theatres until his death in 1939, from an infection picked up in surgery.



▲ Source 7.8 Dr Ma Haide (George Hatem) in 1988



▲ Source 7.9 A painting of Norman Bethune and Mao Zedong in Yan'an

In 1937, Agnes Smedley came to write a biography of Zhu De, whom she greatly admired. She shared a cave with Helen Snow, wife of Edgar Snow, who was also an admirer of the CCP leaders.

Probably the most influential visitor was Edgar Snow, who wrote his first account of life there, *Red Star Over China*. Much of the world had assumed the Reds had disappeared after the Long March. Most Chinese did not know there was a Shaan–Gan–Ning Soviet. Consequently, Snow's glowing account of the Long March and the Soviet drew positive attention to Mao's little kingdom both within China and beyond. Because of Guomindang forces, Snow was not able to research the content and was dependent on Mao and Zhu De for information. Despite this bias, it is a detailed account and became part of the history it was recording.

► Source 7.10 Agnes Smedley





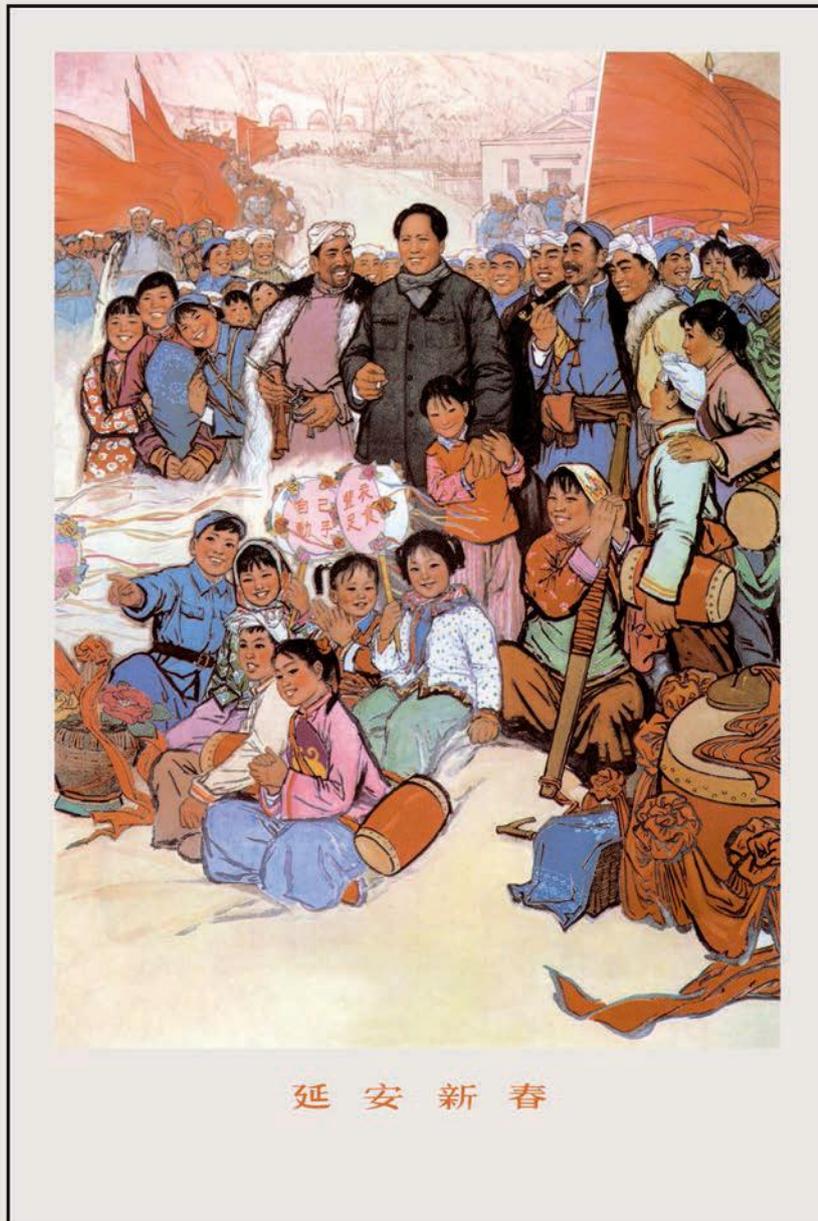
### FOCUS QUESTIONS

- 1 To what extent did Jiang risk his popularity with his policy towards the Japanese invasion?
- 2 To what extent did the Yan'an soviet promote the CCP to China and the world?

### ANALYSIS ACTIVITY 7.1



#### New Spring in Yan'an



▲ Source 7.11 New Spring in Yan'an

- 1 Describe what is idyllic about this setting.
- 2 Identify which social group dominates this poster, and explain why.
- 3 In your opinion, assess whether the picture fully matches the reality of life in Yan'an.

## 7.8 American support – Chongqing or Yan'an?

With Stalin's mind and troops occupied with Hitler's invasion of the Soviet Union, hope for China seemed to lie with the United States after 1941. In 1942, President Roosevelt sent General Joseph Stilwell to Chongqing to advise and organise the Chinese forces there. Stilwell was shocked by the corruption, lack of training and lack of equipment in the GMD forces. He tried to assume military command but was blocked by Jiang. Stilwell complained to Roosevelt, as did Jiang, and the president decided to replace Stilwell.

In contrast, those in a 1944 contingent sent to Yan'an, led by Colonel David Barrett and known as the Dixie Mission—possibly because the Reds were comparable to the Southern rebels of the Confederate States of America during the American Civil War (1861–1965) – were impressed by what they saw. Mao, of course, laid on the best of Communist propaganda presentations. Roosevelt's special emissary, Patrick Hurley, arrived not long after and he also praised the policies of the soviet.

However, none of the US officials could convince Jiang Jieshi to cooperate completely with the Communist military or to change his approach to the war.



▲ Source 7.12 The Dixie Mission in Yan'an, featuring Mao (second from left) and Colonel David Barrett (second from right)



## 7.9 Mao's three policies

### 1. On New Democracy

Mao needed to explain the political process for future expansion and eventual government. He also needed to garner broader support for his style of government. In his *On New Democracy* (1940), he seemed to offer a broader involvement in politics – at least at the lower levels, where V.I. Lenin's 'dictatorship of the proletariat' was converted to 'dictatorship of the people'. Thus, he allowed participation by the 'four revolutionary' groups: proletariat, peasants, patriotic capitalists and petty bourgeoisie (as represented by the smaller stars on the current Chinese flag). The contradictory term 'democratic dictatorship' reflects the position that there was a democratic-like process in the lower levels but not further up the ladder. This is the situation that still exists today, whereby the Party has complete control and the people do not directly elect anyone to key positions of power.

**Mass Line** Mao's theory that the CCP listens to the masses before making policy

### 2. The Mass Line

#### ANALYSIS ACTIVITY 7.2



##### The Mass Line

In a similar vein, the '**Mass Line**' is democratic in theory but authoritarian in practice. In theory, it involved the Party listening to the masses and then incorporating their wishes into Party policy. Mao wrote:

**KEY QUOTE** 

*It [the Party] should teach every comrade to love the people and listen attentively to the voice of the masses; to identify himself with the masses wherever he goes and, instead of standing above them, to immerse himself among them; and, according to their present level, to awaken them or raise their political consciousness.*

**Source 7.13** Wm Theodore de Bary (ed.), *Sources of Chinese Tradition, Vol. II*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1964, pp. 265–6.

- 1 Explain what is admirable and democratic in this statement.
- 2 Identify the 'escape clause' that allows the Party not to listen to the masses.

### 3. The Rectification Campaign

**zhengfeng**  
(rectification)  
Mao's means of removing dissent in Yan'an and afterwards

Not everything went smoothly in the Yan'an Soviet. In a foreshadowing of what was to happen later, Mao launched a campaign of 'rectification' in 1941, which lasted until 1944. In Chinese this is called **zhengfeng** (literally 'correct the style', although the character for 'correct' can also mean 'punish').

#### AMAZING BUT TRUE ...

Mao was often presented as the great orator and communicator. Unlike Zhou Enlai, who spoke perfect Mandarin Chinese, Mao spoke in a Hunan dialect that was understandable and melodic to a Mandarin speaker. However, the peasants in Yan'an would have found him difficult to understand.

## ANALYSIS ACTIVITY 7.3



## Extract from Mao's 'Rectify the Party's style of work', 1942

Finally, in opposing subjectivism, sectarianism and stereotyped Party writing we must have in mind two purposes: first, 'learn from past mistakes to avoid future ones', and second, 'cure the sickness to save the patient'. The mistakes of the past must be exposed without sparing anyone's sensibilities; it is necessary to analyse and criticise what was bad in the past with a scientific attitude so that work in the future will be done more carefully and done better. This is what is meant by 'learn from past mistakes to avoid future ones'. But our aim in exposing errors and criticising shortcomings, like that of a doctor curing a sickness, is solely to save the patient and not to doctor him to death. A person with appendicitis is saved when the surgeon removes his appendix. So long as a person who has made mistakes does not hide his sickness for fear of treatment or persist in his mistakes until he is beyond cure, so long as he honestly and sincerely wishes to be cured and to mend his ways, we should welcome him and cure his sickness so that he can become a good comrade. We can never succeed if we just let ourselves go, and lash out at him. In treating an ideological or a political malady, one must never be rough and rash but must adopt the approach of 'curing the sickness to save the patient', which is the only correct and effective method.



Source 7.14 'Rectify the Party's Style of Work', 1942, Maoist Documentation Project, 2004.

- 1 Identify the three basic errors according to Mao.
- 2 Explain Mao's solution to the problem.
- 3 Discuss how such a seemingly harmless speech could be the source of pain for so many Party members.

Historians vary in their assessment of the aims of this campaign. They range from:

- converting Marxist theory to practical reality (pragmatism)
- applying Marxism to Chinese conditions (Sinification)
- attempting to unite the growing numbers with a consistent ideology

to:

- humiliation and/or removal of any who would challenge his authority or policies
- the installation of Mao Zedong Thought as the sole philosophy of the CCP.

Stuart Schram, a biographer of Mao, expressed it in this way:

*Thus began the shift from the adaptation of Marxism to the language, mentality, and conditions of the Chinese people (Mao's original definition of Sinification) to the replacement of all other forms of Marxism (including that of Marx himself) by the infallible thought of the leader [Mao].*

Source 7.15 Stuart Schram, *The Political Thought of Mao Tse-Tung*, Pelican, Hammondsworth, 1969, p. 72.

Whatever the aims of rectification, the effects were pretty obvious. While it began mildly as **self-criticism** and group study sessions (of selected works), it soon degenerated into **struggle sessions** (humiliation – sometimes painful – in front of a crowd), the writing of confessions, isolation and informing on colleagues. Some were driven to suicide, and some were tortured and executed by the infamous head of the secret police, Kang Sheng. It was a minor echo of what was happening in Stalin's Russia.

In 1944, Mao called the Rectification program to a halt with tears in his eyes, admitting it had gone too far (an admission he was never to make again). However, he had achieved a personal victory. He was undisputed leader of the soviet, and those who might challenge him had received a clear warning not to do so.



▲ Source 7.16 Kang Sheng, the head of Mao's notorious secret police

**self-criticism**

Mao's policy of having people 'confess' their political sins, thereby suppressing dissension

**struggle sessions**

the parading of victims before crowds seeking confessions and humiliation

## FOCUS QUESTIONS

- 1 Which of the possible aims of rectification are included in the quotation from Schram?
- 2 To what extent did Mao's policies strengthen his control of the Party?

## 7.10 Mao Zedong Thought (Maoism)

Russian socialists were critical of Mao's version of socialism, but it was more than his reliance on peasants as the vanguard of the revolution. After all, Lenin had changed Marx's spontaneous mass revolution into a planned event led by one party. They were critical of Mao's understanding of the nature of classes and the Marxist stages of revolution. They were especially critical of Mao's emphasis on national goals rather than international ones.

Aspects of Maoism:

- 1 Mao seldom quoted or sought inspiration from socialist writings.** He was more inspired by Chinese texts such as *San Guo* (Three Kingdoms), *The Annals of Twenty-Four Dynasties*, and Sun Zi's (AKA SunTzu's) *The Art of War*. He used these texts on the political manoeuvres of Chinese rulers and their battle tactics to guide him.
- 2 Practice overrides theory.** Empirical evidence (what actually works) guided many of Mao's actions. In a 1963 interview to a 'foreign visitor' Mao said:

*We [China] tried peasant uprisings; they failed. We tried a bourgeois revolution with Sun Yatsen [Sun Yixian]. But that didn't work either. So what to do? We tried various forms of communism, too, various strategies. None worked. There really is no theory at all of what to do, no special theory at all. You have to think about the specifics of your own country. There is nowhere else to go.*

**Source 7.17** Sirin Phathanothai, *The Dragon's Pearl*, Simon & Schuster, London, 1995, p. 194.

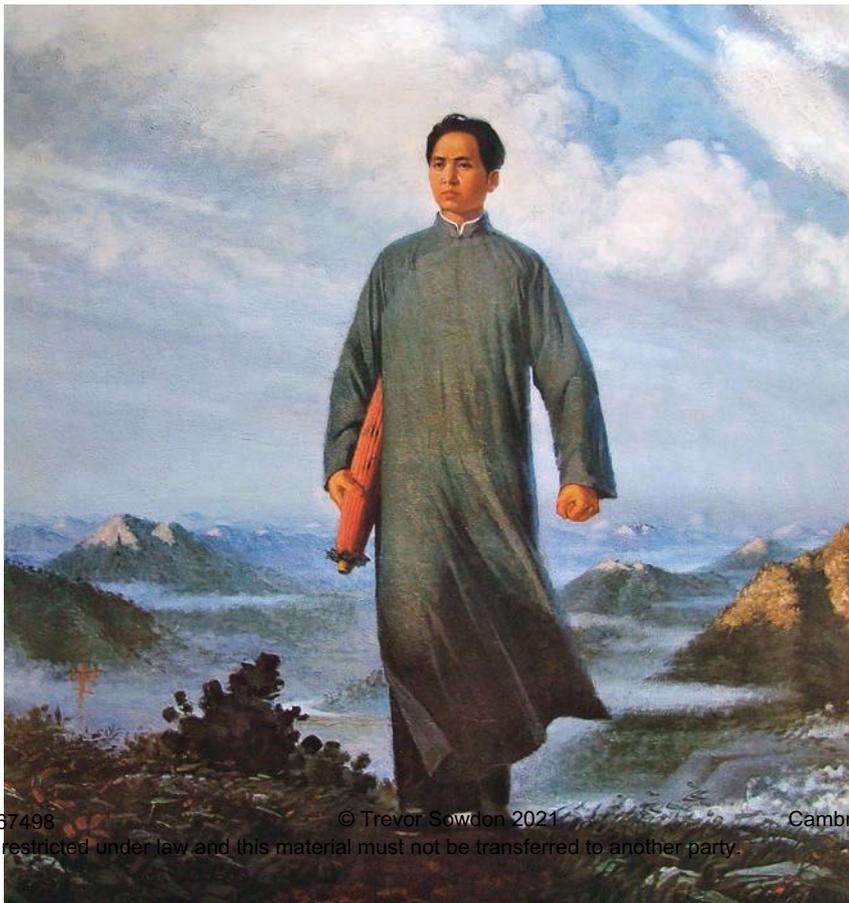
- 3 Contradiction was a theme of Mao's.** This was possibly a defence against his own theories being accused of contradiction.

- 4 Violence was a key weapon in Mao's arsenal.** In stating 'A revolution is not a dinner party ...' and that 'political power grows from the barrel of a gun', Mao was not just being hypothetical. From his delight in witnessing the violence of the Hunan peasants in the 1927 uprising to his savage treatment of the dissident Futian Red Army officers (both in Chapter 4) and even his Rectification Campaign, Mao justified violence within his own party.

KEY  
QUOTE



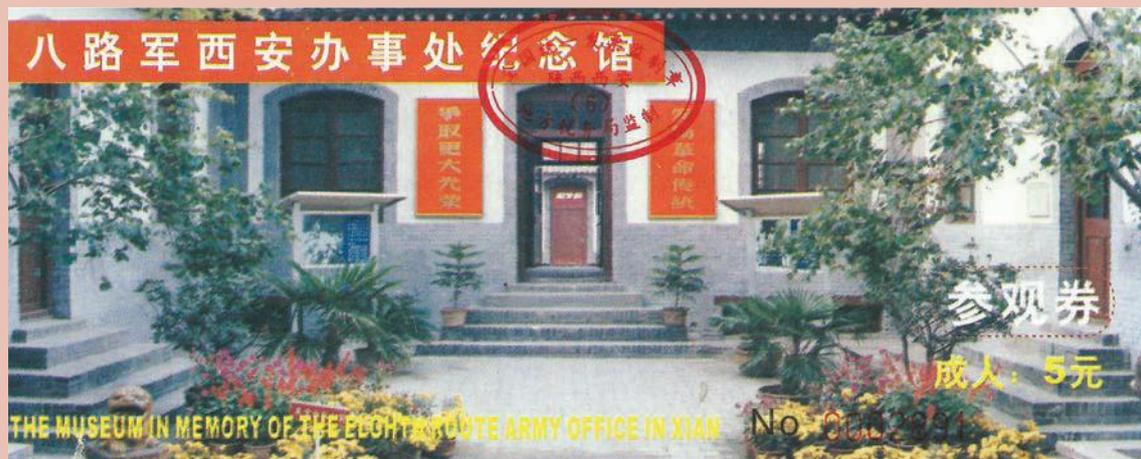
◀ **Source 7.18** A young Mao Zedong



- 5 **Mao saw the peasants as the vanguard and models of revolution.** Mao knew his power rested on the desire of the peasants for land. They were unlikely to challenge his authority and had the numbers to win China. They were the sea through which the Long March ‘swam’.
- 6 **The Red Army was to identify with the people.** Mao and Zhu De insisted the army did not alienate the peasantry. The Army was a key player in politics so long as Mao was in charge.
- 7 **Manpower was vital not machinery.** While the GMD’s weapons technology greatly disadvantaged the Red Army, Mao believed sheer manpower and the will to succeed were the keys to victory. To him, propaganda was vital.
- 8 **Anti-intellectualism.** As with all intellectuals who seize power, Mao was suspicious of those with the intellect to challenge him – hence the Rectification Campaign.
- 9 **Mao developed the idea of permanent revolution.** This was the idea that revolution would not succeed in one swoop but that ongoing struggles were required to change the mindset of a population affected by generations of ‘bourgeois’ ideas.
- 10 **His ideas were sacrosanct.** Mao did not countenance criticism – especially of his theories. By 1941, Mao was not only undisputed leader of the CCP and the Red Army, but Maoism was not open to questioning. (Later, Mao used the Anti-Rightist Campaign and the Cultural Revolution to punish those who dared to speak up.)

**permanent revolution**

Mao’s take on the Marxist-Trotskyite term applied to the Great Leap and GPCR where the proletariat continually seek their own outcomes – an ongoing task where fervour not conceit is required

**HISTORY THROUGH OBJECTS**

▲ **Source 7.19** This is the entry ticket bought by the author into Xi’an 8th Route Army Headquarters, which is now a museum. Prior to 1976 this museum would have been very popular. When, in 2000, the author asked nearby for directions, a number of locals were unsure of its location.

**THE STORY SO FAR**

The Xi’an Incident crucially delayed Jiang Jieshi’s attempt to finally wipe out the CCP. This gave the Shaanxi Soviet time to regroup, and room to train and discipline the growing Red Army (now the Eighth Route Army). The onset of the second Sino–Japanese War in 1937 presented the Nationalist (Guomindang) government with a monumental crisis, which it did not handle well. While Jiang seemed a hero to the overseas press, it was the work of Edgar Snow and the Dixie Mission that glorified Mao’s Soviet. Mao’s policies in Yan’an not only prepared the CCP to take on the Guomindang after Japan’s surrender, but also established him as the undisputed leader of the Party.



Use the QR code or visit the digital version of the book and watch the video summarising the chapter.





## Develop your historical thinking skills

### Define key terms

Write your own definition of each of the following key terms:

- Marco Polo Bridge Incident
- Chongqing
- Xi'an Incident
- Eighth Route and New Fourth Route Armies
- 'Rape of Nanjing'
- Dixie Mission
- Yan'an Way or Yan'an Spirit
- self-criticism
- rectification (*zhengfeng*)
- Mass Line
- struggle sessions.

### Activities

Go to the Marxists.org website (via <http://cambridge.edu.au/redirect/9279>) and read the whole of Mao's 'Rectify the Party's Style of Work'. Try to read between the lines. What is Mao *really* saying?

### Establishing historical significance

- 1 Explain why Nanjing was an important victory for Japan against the Guomindang.
- 2 Explain how important the Japanese invasion was to the Shaanxi Soviet.
- 3 Assess whether Jiang was correct in seeing the CCP as more of a threat than the Japanese.

### Analysing cause and consequence

- 1 Outline what advantages Jiang Jieshi had over Mao in 1937.
- 2 Outline what advantages Mao had by 1944.
- 3 Both the GMD and CCP claimed China defeated Japan. Were they correct?
- 4 Discuss what criticisms of his anti-Japanese tactics were levelled at Jiang Jieshi, now and later.

### Constructing historical arguments

- 1 Explain which factors allowed the Yan'an Soviet to survive and even prosper.
- 2 To what extent did the image of the Yan'an Way (or Spirit of Yan'an) correspond to reality?

## Analysing historical sources as evidence



▲ Source 7.20 Japanese troops firing on Chinese in Shanghai, 1937

- 1 Explain the significance of the date – 1937.
- 2 Explain the significance of the helmet in the foreground, which has a white sun symbol on its side.
- 3 At this time and place, what are both sides (Japanese and Chinese) fighting for? Discuss.



# 8

## **CIVIL WAR TO RED VICTORY, 1946–1949** 争及中共的全面胜利

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*Xian fa zhi ren (先发制人 Offence is the best defence)*

– CHINESE PROVERB

## Overview

In the early 1940s, Japan reached a stalemate in China. It had seized the industrial and fertile areas on the eastern seaboard and further expansion was costly, especially when Japan started facing losses in the Pacific. In 1945, the atomic bombs dropped on the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki brought the war in the Pacific to an end. Japan surrendered. The United States tried to broker a peace between the GMD and CCP, but it soon broke down and **civil war** began. The GMD had early successes, but the CCP was stronger than it had been a decade before, and in 1949 Mao claimed victory in Beijing. Jiang and the GMD fled to Taiwan, thus creating two Chinas.

**civil war** an internal war for control of the country

## Key issues

- Who took on the Japanese forces?
- What attempts were made to avoid civil war?
- Why did the CCP win the civil war?
- Who was Lin Biao (Part 1)?

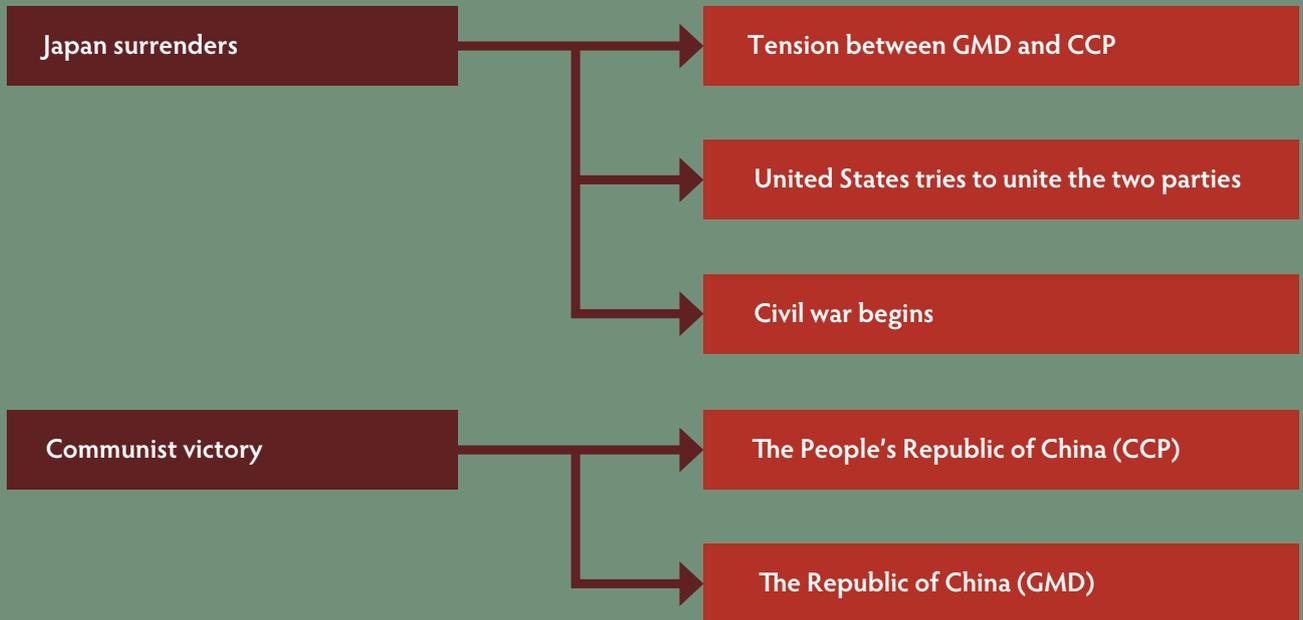
## Digital resources for this chapter

In the *Interactive Textbook*:

-  Video and audio sources and questions
-  Digital activities

◀ **Source 8.0** PLA soldiers during the assault on Shanghai during the civil war, 21 May 1949

# Flow of chapter



# Timeline

1945  
14 AUGUST  
*Japan surrenders*



1947  
19 MARCH  
*GMD captures Yan'an*



1949  
1 OCTOBER  
*People's Republic of China declared*



1946  
12 JULY  
*Civil war begins between GMD and CCP*



1949  
13 JANUARY  
*CCP armies occupy Beijing*

1949  
10 DECEMBER  
*Jiang Jieshi leaves for Taiwan*

## 8.1 Who took on the Japanese forces?



While some Chinese histories claim China defeated Japan, the reality is that Japan's losses in the Pacific and the US use of the atomic bomb in 1945 were the key reasons for her surrender. This immediately meant that Japan no longer had any claims on Taiwan, Manchuria, Korea or the other occupied territories. With Western countries driven out by the war, there was a free and unsegmented China up for grabs.



▲ Source 8.1 Song Meiling reads of Japan's surrender in New York

### HISTORICAL INTERPRETATIONS 8.1



#### Who really took on the Japanese – the Nationalists or the Communists?

Jiang's retreat from the Japanese forces to Chongqing did not endear him to young **patriotic** Chinese sickened by reports of atrocities. While he may have been correct in judging the Communists to be the greater enemy, his pursuit of them lost him the propaganda war. Finally, the corruption of those around him meant that, of the millions of dollars sent by the United States as war aid, very little saw its way to the front. Consequently, there was a perception – one that Mao was quick to promote – that the Communists alone took on the Japanese. Stuart Schram summed this up:

**patriot** one who is willing to defend their country

*The Nationalist headquarters moved to Chungking [Chongqing], and behind the Japanese lines the Communist-led guerrillas remained virtually alone as an effective political force.*

Source 8.2 Stuart Schram, *Mao Tse-Tung*, Pelican, Middlesex, 1967, p. 210.

However, it may not have been as clear-cut as that. There were notable and heroic encounters by the GMD forces with the Japanese. In capturing the Yangzi River area, the Japanese lost 62 000 soldiers. GMD losses were even greater. Jack Gray explains why the GMD efforts seemed to pale against the role of the Communist troops:



*The course of the war put Chiang [Jiang] at a disadvantage before public opinion. The Japanese sought to take over the coastal cities and the main communication routes, especially the railways. To do this they had to defeat mainly Nationalist, not Communist forces ... On the other hand, the Japanese had neither the means nor the desire to establish power throughout the rural areas where the Communists were established; these areas were subject to only occasional attacks ... Thus although the Nationalist armies bore almost the whole brunt of the attacks, it was the Communist armies which impressed the Chinese public.*

Source 8.3 Jack Gray, *Rebellions and Revolutions: China From the 1800s to the 1980s*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1990, p. 275.

- 1 Explain how these two views differ.
- 2 In your opinion, can they both be correct assessments?
- 3 Schram's comment is from a 1967 publication, whereas Jack Gray's was published in 1990. Is that likely to affect their respective stances? Justify your response.
- 4 Discuss what further evidence would you need to resolve the problem.



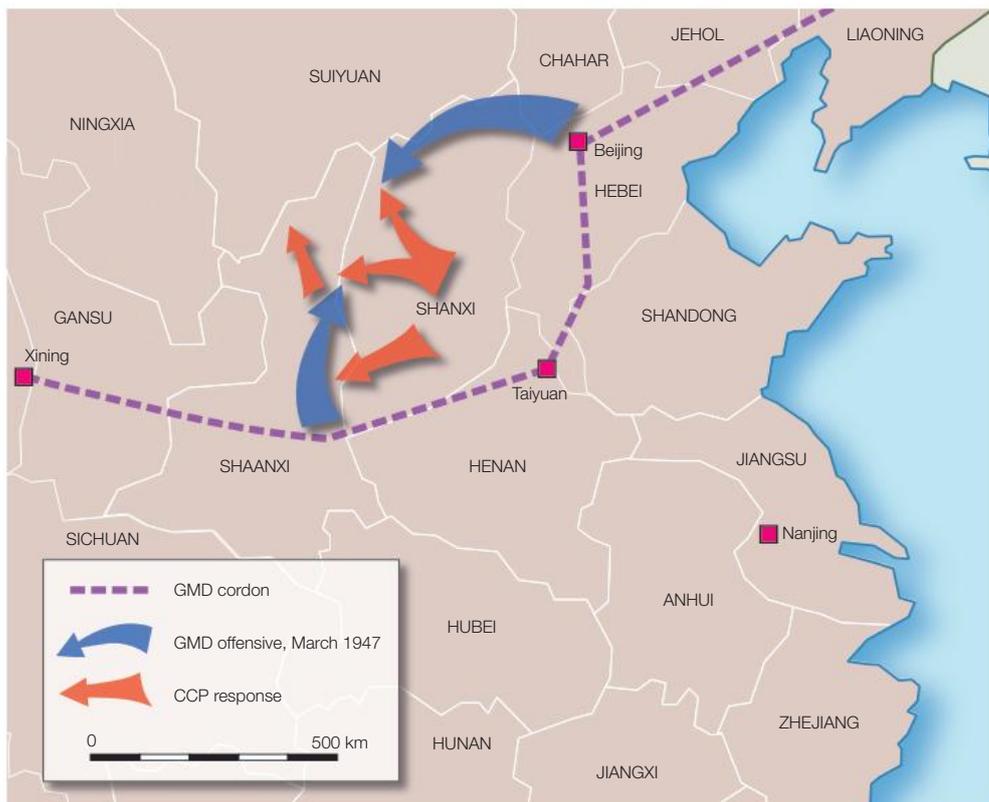
## 8.2 What attempts were made to avoid civil war?



With the end of the 'Anti-Japanese War', there was jostling on both sides to claim the advantage. General Douglas MacArthur flew Jiang and representatives to the major coastal centres to accept the Japanese surrender. The Communists, for their part, infiltrated the areas in north-east China that the Japanese had occupied and confiscated weapons and vehicles as well as recruiting Manzuguo and GMD soldiers. Strangely, Stalin had offered Jiang the support of Russia, including holding Manchuria until the GMD were able to resume control, totally snubbing Mao.

◀ Source 8.4 Student supporters of communism put on a theatre production about the civil war

130



▲ Source 8.5 Map of GMD advances on the Red Army



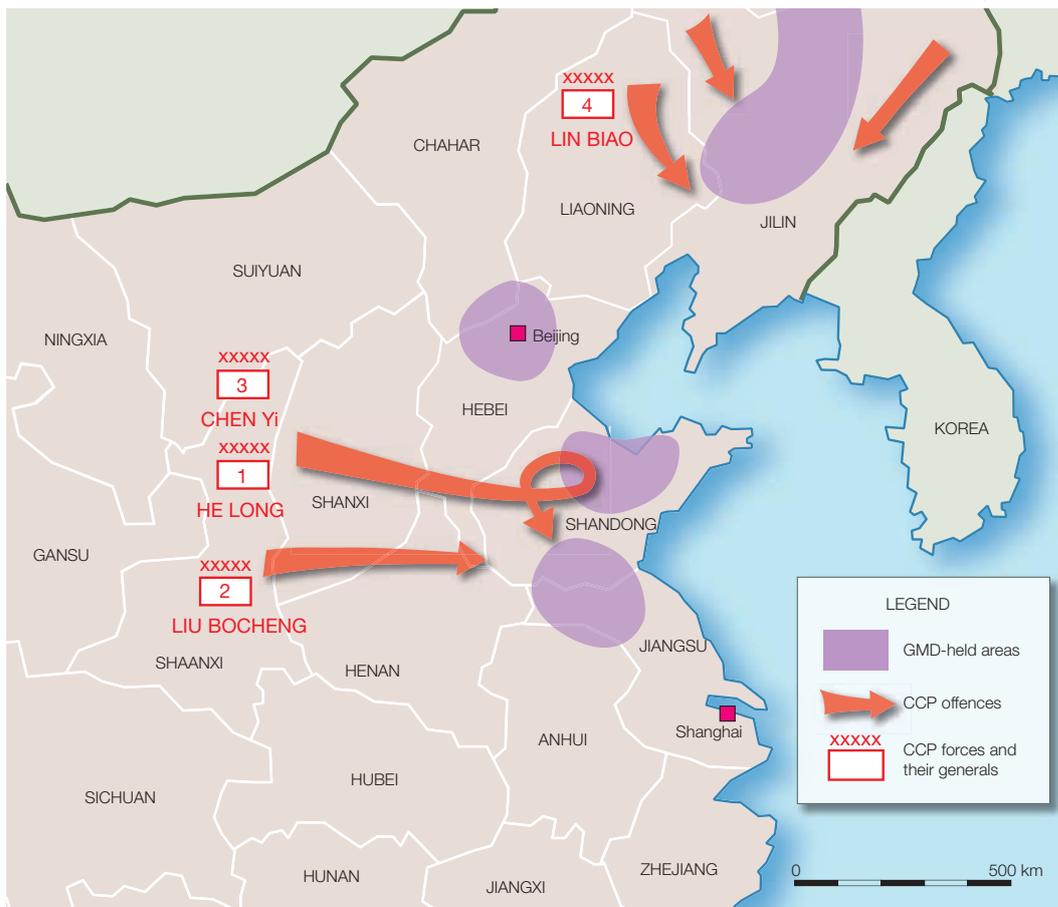
In 1945, General George C. Marshall arrived from the United States to negotiate a peaceful sharing of power in post-war China. In January 1946, he arranged a ceasefire between the GMD and CCP. As part of the negotiations, Mao went to Chongqing, met with Jiang and posed with him for photographs. Zhou Enlai remained behind as the chief Communist representative.

◀ Source 8.6 Jiang greeting General George C. Marshall

## 8.3 Why did the CCP win the civil war?

In June 1946, full-scale civil war broke out and George C. Marshall blamed both sides for the conflict. The GMD forces were superior in number and equipment (thanks to the United States), but the CCP used equipment captured from the Japanese and later the GMD itself. Jiang’s army was calculated at four million regulars, while Mao had 1.2 million, but many of the GMD forces had been conscripted and had a high desertion rate.

▼ Source 8.7 CCP advances on the GMD



From 1946 to 1947, the GMD armies made all the advances, capturing major centres in the north and even capturing Yan’an. The Communist forces were largely prepared to give up cities but maintained their influence in the countryside, where their peasant support and guerrilla tactics were most effective.

► Source 8.8 The very old and very young were left in Yan’an when the Communist forces were compelled to leave.





## The Red tide

By 1947, the tide was turning and the CCP were capturing much of Manchuria as well as making successful raids south of the Yellow River (Huang He).

There were three key battles which produced the communist victory:

**KEY STATISTIC**

1 The Liaoxi–Shenyang campaign (September to November 1948) was led by Lin Biao and was his eighth and final Manchurian battle. Key cities fell to the CCP. Changchun fell to the armies of Lin Biao.

In October, the city of Mukden also fell. Four hundred thousand outmanoeuvred GMD soldiers died or surrendered. Generals switched sides and joined the Communists. Valuable arms and equipment fell into the hands of the Red Army.

2 The Beiping–Tianjin campaign (November 1948 to January 1949) was also led by Lin Biao whose forces moved south of Manchuria and captured the key cities of Tianjin and Beiping. The commander of Beiping turned his 200 000 troops over to the Red Army and close to half a million troops were lost from the GMD in this campaign.

3 Concurrent to the Beiping–Tianjin campaign was the decisive Huai–Hai campaign led by Red Army generals Chen Yi, Liu Bocheng and Chen Geng. While the two sides were evenly matched in numbers, the Red Army had Deng Xiaoping organising and coordinating civil support and supplies. The 65-day battle broke the back of the GMD forces.



▲ Source 8.9 The People's Liberation Army (PLA) 'liberates' Beiping in 1949

**PLA** People's Liberation Army – the new name for the Red Army

In April, the Red Army, now called the People's Liberation Army (**PLA**), took Nanjing. Wuhan, Xi'an and Shanghai quickly followed. The GMD campaign was collapsing. There was no effective force left south of the Yangzi River.



▲ Source 8.10 Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama congratulating the new leader of China, circa 1955

On 10 December 1949, Jiang Jieshi and his family boarded a DC-4 plane and flew to the island of Taiwan, off the coast of Fujian province, where he was to prepare his campaign to retake the mainland. He died in 1975 in Taiwan, but it would be another 20 years before his casket was buried, as the intention was that he be buried on the mainland.

Jiang took hundreds of thousands of soldiers to Taiwan, as well as treasures and gold bullion. His navy, backed by the US Seventh Fleet, patrolled the Taiwan Strait, preventing a CCP invasion. His escape to Taiwan had been planned in advance. The local islanders were not happy with the GMD invasion, but resistance was met with death. The Taiwanese had led a relatively peaceful existence under the Japanese since 1898, when China ceded the island to the victor nation. Even today, political debate in Taiwan revolves around whether to win back the mainland or continue to develop Taiwan independently.

After some delay, on 1 October 1949, Mao and leading members of the Party, together with special guests, stood on the rostrum

above Tian'anmen (Heavenly Peace Gate) on the south wall of the Forbidden City in Beijing (which was once again the capital of China) and announced the establishment of the People's Republic of China (Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo).

## HISTORICAL INTERPRETATIONS 8.2

**Did Jiang lose the civil war or did the CCP steal China from him?**

The first element of this debate concerns what the GMD did for the people of China. While Jiang was using Sun Yixian's 'period of tutelage' as an excuse, Jiang ruled as a dictator, with no real attempt to involve the people in government. While there was an initial period of economic growth in China under Jiang, two costly wars led to a dwindling supply of food, starvation and uncontrolled inflation. On top of this, while Jiang lived a rather austere (simple) life, his government and generals were very corrupt. Much of the money the United States gave for the war effort ended up in private hands, including those of his wife's brother-in-law, H.H. Kung. Unlike the CCP, there was no real attempt to implement Sun Yixian's policy of 'People's Livelihood' with its 'equalisation of property ownership'.

Jiang Jieshi, explaining the Communist victory, wrote in 1957:

*When the war [World War II] ended, the Communists resorted to armed insurrection. They did everything to nullify all reconstruction projects, to hinder the Government's program of demilitarization, to disrupt the nation's economic life and to upset its social order. They spread national defeatism at a time when the people were weary after the long war. Finally, the general public became so confused and bewildered that all they had asked was peace at any cost, however transient it might turn out to be. This was the basic reason for the tragic reverses which China suffered in her war against Communism.*



Source 8.11 Pichon P.Y. Loh (ed.), *The Kuomintang Debacle of 1949: Conquest or Collapse?* DC Heath & Co, Lexington, 1965, p. 75.

Professor A. Doak Barnett provides an alternative perspective:

*The relative ease of the final Communist takeover was a result in part, of course, of the strength of the Chinese Communist revolutionary movement forged during the previous two decades of armed struggle, but the speed of the takeover was also the result of the completeness of the demoralisation, disintegration, and collapse of the Nationalist regime on the mainland.*



Source 8.12 Pichon P.Y. Loh (ed.), *The Kuomintang Debacle of 1949: Conquest or Collapse?* DC Heath & Co, Lexington, 1965, p. 6.

- 1 Explain whether there is any agreement between these two excerpts.
- 2 Where do they disagree?
- 3 In your opinion, what possible reasons has Jiang not given for losing China? Why not?

## AMAZING BUT TRUE ...



General Yang Hucheng – who, with Zhang Xueliang, arrested Jiang Jieshi in 1936 – was under house arrest in Chongqing as the Communist armies approached in 1949. Secret police agents, acting on orders from Jiang Jieshi, went to Yang's home and killed his family and staff, and burnt the bodies. Another son later exhumed Yang's body and took it to Xi'an for burial, 13 years after the Xi'an Incident that had so angered Jiang.

◀ Source 8.13 Zhang Xueliang and Yang Hucheng at the time of the Xi'an Incident



## 8.4

### SIGNIFICANT INDIVIDUAL



#### Lin Biao (Lin Piao) 林彪 (1907–1971)

##### Part 1

Lin Biao was born in the city of Wuhan in Hubei province. His father was the owner of a small factory. Lin joined the Socialist Youth League in 1925, the same year he enrolled in the Huangpu Military Academy. He took part as a colonel in the Northern Expedition in 1927 but, following the CCP/GMD split in Shanghai, he went to join Mao's Jiangxi Soviet.

In 1928, he became a commander and in 1934 a corps commander in the Red Army. Lin led the Long March forces that broke through Jiang Jieshi's Fifth Encirclement. His support for Mao at Zunyi allowed him to become a divisional commander in the Eighth Route Army from 1937 to 1938. The next three years he spent in Russia recovering from a minor wound after being mistakenly shot when he wore a GMD uniform for a prank. Back in China, he married his second wife, Ye Qun. Ye Qun was criticised during the

▲ Source 8.14 Lin Biao in Beijing, 1950

Rectification Campaign for comments she made when under GMD rule. She had been outed by a former friend, the wife of He Long. (He Long later paid for this with his life during the Cultural Revolution.)

Lin Biao distinguished himself in the fighting against Japanese forces and was decisive in the civil war, winning Manchuria for the Communists. Later, even his critics regarded him as an excellent military commander.

For Part 2 of this profile on Lin Biao's life between 1949–1971, see Chapter 14.

## 8.5 How did environmental factors contribute to the revolution?

Whilst there were many political, social and military victories that led to the CCP's victory in 1949, in such a vast country as China there is a huge variation in geography and topography. The various elements of the environment also influenced the conditions leading up to the Chinese Revolution of 1949.

▼ Source 8.15 Chinese soldiers advance through the flooded Yellow River, 1938



### Rivers

The major Chinese rivers flow east from the Qinghai-Tibetan plateau into the Pacific Ocean. Chinese rivers have a high volume of water and are much wider than those in Australia. The Yellow River (Huang He) flows through the silty, yellow loess (an accumulation of sand, silt and clay), which is not fertile. The Yan'an Soviet grew in this remote, less fertile and poverty-stricken area. In 1938, Jiang ordered the dykes of the Yellow River to be blown, in order to slow the Japanese advance: this resulted in many Chinese peasant deaths. The land south of the Changjiang (Yangzi) River is much more fertile. At its mouth is Shanghai, traditionally home to secret societies and triads.

During periods of conflict, crossing rivers proved hazardous to military movement. The Red Army had huge losses when crossing the Xiang River in 1934. Similarly, crossing the Jinsha (Golden Sands) and the Dadu Rivers required Red Army resourcefulness.

## Mountains

Provincial borders are often mountainous and over the years have become the homes of bandit groups and later, CCP soviets. These made use of the physical and political barriers to deter government interference. It took five encirclement campaigns for Jiang Jieshi to finally evict the 'Red Bandits' of Jiangxi. The Snow Mountains proved deadly obstacles when the Red Army Long Marchers crossed them in 1935.

## Marshes

In a similar vein, marshes were often the resort of bandits. The famous Chinese novel *Outlaws of the Marsh* is based on the exploits of a bandit leader, Song Jiang. The justification for Mao leading his portion of the Red Army across the marshes was to deter GMD troops, but it may have been merely a tactic to beat Zhang Guotao to Yan'an.

## Remoteness

The vastness of China has often allowed rebellious groups to take hold, away from the grasp of the nation's capital. Rebellion often took root in southern China. The Taiping Rebellion began in Guangxi province and came close to taking Beijing. Sun Yixian used his USSR funding to develop a political base and his Huangpu Military Academy in Guangzhou. From here, the GMD-led Northern Expedition successfully overthrew the warlords.

The remoteness of Sichuan in the west allowed its warlord to escape direct control from the GMD, until 1937 when Jiang used its remoteness to establish a new capital at Chongqing and avoid land-based assault from the Japanese armies.

The Shaan–Gan–Ning base (Yan'an) was not fertile, but its distance from Nanjing kept it safe from both the GMD (until 1947) and the Japanese. Until Edgar Snow's book *Red Star Over China* was published, most of China, including Jiang, had assumed the Long Marchers had perished.



▲ **Source 8.16** Japanese bombers flying towards Chongqing in 1941. The mountainous terrain and remote location meant that bombers were the easiest way for the Japanese to engage in warfare.

## Neighbours

For centuries Korea had been a vassal state of China. After the First Sino-Japanese War (1894–1895) it came under Japanese control. It was from here that the Japanese Guangdong army launched its 1937 invasion of China. While the northern neighbour, Stalin's USSR, financed Sun Yixian's GMD, it was unable to be of much assistance in the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937–1945). However, with Hitler's defeat in the west, Stalin did hand over Japanese equipment captured in Korea and Manzhouguo, thus assisting the CCP in the Civil War (1946–1949).

### FOCUS QUESTIONS

- 1 Suggest how each geographical or environmental factor might have contributed to a revolutionary situation.
- 2 Which of these factors do you think had the strongest influence on events?



### THE STORY SO FAR



Twenty-two years after the formation of the Red Army and 21 years after the flight from Jiangxi, the course of Chinese history changed, wedded to rule by the CCP. For the next 27 years, China would be subject to the policies and whims of one man – Chairman Mao Zedong.



Use the QR code or visit the digital version of the book and watch the video summarising the chapter.

## Develop your historical thinking skills

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### Define key terms

Write your own definition of each of the following key terms:

- civil war
- patriot
- PLA.

### Activities

- 1 On a map of China, mark the paths of the CCP generals as they advanced south.
- 2 Use the internet as a resource to find biographies of Lin Biao, Zhu De, Peng Dehuai, He Long and other CCP generals. Turn your research into annotated timelines of their lives.
- 3 Find as many different designs as you can for the Red Army flags prior to 1949.
- 4 Look up Chinese postage stamps for this time period. Note the inflationary prices and whose picture is on them. See whether you can find GMD stamps overprinted by the CCP.

### Analysing cause and consequence

- 1 Explain how the military tactics of the Communists were more effective than those of the Nationalists (Guomindang).
- 2 Explain the reasons why the CCP won the propaganda war against the GMD.

### Constructing historical arguments

Was the civil war lost by the Guomindang or was it won by the Communists? Discuss.

## Analysing historical sources as evidence



▲ Source 8.17 Mao announces the establishment of the People's Republic of China, 1949

- 1 Identify, as many as you can, those standing with Mao above the Gate of Heavenly Peace.
- 2 To what extent did they help with the revolution?
- 3 Identify how the image depicts Mao's leadership of the Party by October 1949.
- 4 Using your understanding, discuss how the picture correctly or incorrectly reflects their importance in the revolution and civil war.
- 5 What is significant about the CCP declaring the People's Republic of China over the front gate of the Forbidden City?

## Analysing historian's interpretations

*The government lost another half a million troops during the Huai-Hai campaign, with some 300,000 taken prisoner and the remainder dead or injured ... The defeat removed the last main government defence line north of the Yangtze [Yangzi River].*

*Chiang Kai-shek [Jiang Jieshi] and his commanders had no-one but themselves to blame for their defeat at Huai-Hai. The battle marked not just the end of effective government resistance in mainland China, but the culmination of years of military errors and mismanagement, defects that had become characteristic of Nationalist military operations ... Finally, Chiang Kai-shek personally interfered with battle plans and issued operational orders while fighting was in progress, as was his custom. With so much power concentrated in the hands of one man, responsibility for the failures could not but be concentrated there as well.*

*Despite the valour that many government units displayed on the battlefield, they found themselves once again out-manoeuvred by superior PLA strategy and tactics.*

*... Government commanders had never learnt the lessons of speed and decisiveness that had been mastered by their adversaries. But government commanders also lacked an adequate understanding of mechanized warfare and the use of air power.*

**Source 8.18** Ch.13 'The KMT-CCP conflict 1945–1949' by Suzanne Pepper, *The Cambridge History of China, Vol 13, Republican China 1912–1949 Part 2*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2002, p. 781.

- 1 Explain why the battle of Huai–Hai was so significant.
- 2 Identify who the author means by 'their adversaries'.
- 3 Why was the GMD's (KMT's) failure to utilise mechanisation and air power so significant?
- 4 How much responsibility does the writer put on Jiang's shoulders? Discuss whether you think that is reasonable.
- 5 Considering Jiang's military training and experience, explain what factors might affect his judgement.

# Area of Study 2

## Consequences of revolution: The new society – challenges and responses, changes and continuity, significant individuals and experiences of groups in China, 1949–1976

*Power is not a means, it is an end. One does not establish a dictatorship in order to safeguard a revolution; one makes the revolution in order to establish the dictatorship.*

– GEORGE ORWELL

### Overview

Revolutionaries make promises in order to win power. They are then expected to honour those promises. Mao Zedong certainly intended to do just that. However, he became impatient and tried to achieve growth too quickly, and also set unrealistic expectations. Unfortunately, he was not inclined to listen to advice from his colleagues. When policies such as the Great Leap Forward went wrong, there was friction in the Party.

The moderates in the Chinese Communist Party wanted to slow the pace of change so the peasants would not continue to suffer. This meant putting the brakes on Mao's rule, but Mao was never one to tolerate dissension or criticism. When the opportunity came, Mao turned the Red Guards against his own party. Very few officials escaped the suffering of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. Inevitably, many people were caught up in the chaos that Mao had unleashed through his newly created Red Guards.

Mao was not only back in control by 1966, but he was more powerful than ever. This was, in part, due to support provided by Lin Biao, Mao's Minister for Defence, who had promoted the cult of Maoist Thought through the publication of *Quotations of Chairman Mao* in 1964. After turning against many of his former colleagues, Mao then turned against his Red Guards by sending them to the countryside. He seemed to have it all, but his failing health and an alleged assassination attempt by Lin Biao in 1971 forced Mao to bring back the surviving moderates who had the ability to restore order. The Gang of Four, led by Mao's wife, tried to maintain the revolutionary momentum, but the citizens were weary of the chaos. As we will see, the way was open to a new economic path for China.

Eventually, in 1978, Deng Xiaoping gained control and slowly opened the economy to capitalist forces. Although Deng died in 1997, his policies continue in China today. After a long and difficult struggle, the people of China now belong to an economic superpower that is quite a contrast to the humiliated and divided nation of the late nineteenth century.

#### ▼ Source 9.0

Souvenir figurines of Chairman Mao, Red Guards and common revolutionaries are still sold in Shanghai markets today.



## Timeline of key events 1949–1976

### 1949–1956

- ▶ CCP victory over GMD. Jiang and GMD flee mainland for Taiwan
- ▶ Mao is Chairman of the CCP and PRC. Song Meiling is vice-chairman. Zhou Enlai is premier
- ▶ Marriage and Agrarian Laws are enacted in 1950
- ▶ The First Five-Year Plan is launched in 1953
- ▶ Joseph Stalin dies in 1953

### 1957–1958

- ▶ One Hundred Flowers campaign is launched inviting criticism
- ▶ This is by the Anti-Rightist Campaign led by Deng Xiaoping

### 1957–1959

- ▶ Second Five-Year Plan is the Great Leap Forward
- ▶ Communes are encouraged
- ▶ Bumper harvests are falsely reported
- ▶ The Great Famine follows

### 1959–1965

- ▶ After Lushan Conference, Mao steps down as Chairman of PRC and Peng Dehuai is removed as head of the PLA
- ▶ Liu Shaoqi is new Chairman of PRC and Lin Biao leads PLA
- ▶ Lin Biao publishes *Quotations of Chairman Mao* for PLA (*The Little Red Book*)

### 1966–1968

- ▶ Mao swims in the Yangzi River
- ▶ Mao's article 'Bombard The Headquarters' is published
- ▶ The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution is launched
- ▶ Red Guards rally to Mao
- ▶ Liu Shaoqi is under attack in 1967
- ▶ Liu Shaoqi is expelled from Party in 1968

### 1969–1972

- ▶ Red Guards 'sent down' in 1969
- ▶ Lin Biao dies after he attempts to kill Mao
- ▶ Gang of Four posters attack Lin Biao and 'Confucius'
- ▶ President Nixon of the United States visits China in 1972

### 1973–1976

- ▶ Jiang Jieshi dies in Taiwan in 1976
- ▶ Zhou Enlai, Zhu De and Mao Zedong all die in 1976.
- ▶ Gang of Four arrested by Hua Guofeng

▶ **Source 9.1** Propaganda poster of the Red Guards in 1966



毛泽东 (1893-1976)  
Mao Zedong (1893-1976)

9

## 'LIBERATION': THE EARLY YEARS, 1949-1956

新中国早期概况

*Dong fang hong* (东方红 *The East is Red*)

- POPULAR CCP SONG

晓鸽婚庆

承接大型主题婚礼、金牌司仪、摄像团队、  
舞台灯光、T台音响、鲜花彩车、婚纱化妆、  
婚场布置、开业庆典、生日祝寿、歌舞晚会、  
婚宴包桌、婚庆用品

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喜电：13782143770

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## Overview

After struggling to survive and then to overthrow the GMD government, Mao's CCP now had the opportunity to put into practice the promises it had made, particularly to the peasants. The Party had the advantage of a united China, a humiliated Japan and an almost total withdrawal of foreign intervention and influence. Despite this, the Party had an unexpected military conflict, as well as old customs and traditions, with which to contend.

## Key issues

- Would the new government deliver on its promises?
- How was *fanshen* and land reform enacted?
- How did women live under the new government?
- What was Maoist Thought Reform?
- How did the Korean War affect the new society, 1950–1953?
- What were *San Fan* (1951) and *Wu Fan* (1952)?
- What were the aims of the First Five-Year Plan, 1953–1957?

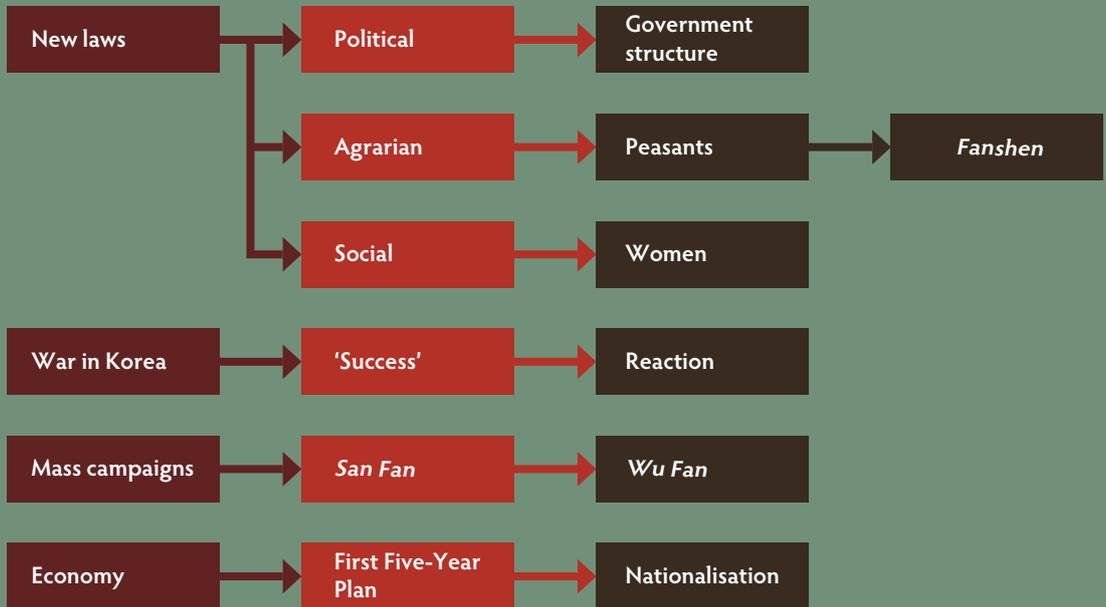
## Digital resources for this chapter

In the *Interactive Textbook*:

-  Video and audio sources and questions
-  Digital activities

◀ **Source 9.2** A statue of Mao outside the Luoyang YTO Group Corporation. YTO began during the First Five-Year Plan and manufactured the first nation-owned tractor in China.

# Flow of chapter



# Timeline

1949  
People's Republic of China proclaimed



1949  
DECEMBER  
Mao Zedong meets Stalin in Moscow

1950  
JUNE  
Agrarian Reform Law  
North Korean troops invade South Korea

1951  
San Fan (Three Antis campaign)

1953  
MARCH  
Death of Stalin

1953  
First Five-Year Plan



1950  
Treaty of Friendship signed between People's Republic of China and Soviet Union  
The Marriage Law enacted

1950  
OCTOBER  
Chinese 'volunteers' enter Korea

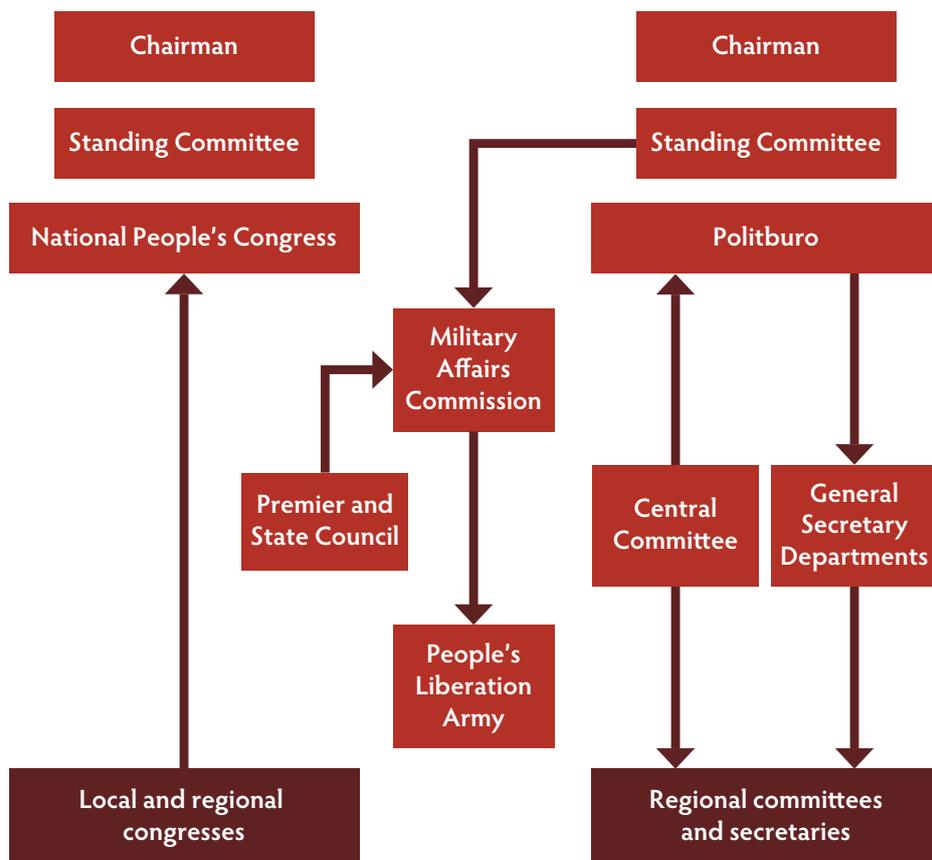
1952  
Wu Fan (Five Antis campaign)

1953  
JULY  
Armistice signed in Korea

## 9.1 Would the new government deliver on its promises?

After securing most of China and then claiming 'China has stood up', Mao needed to establish his new government. The Party set up the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference – by invitation only. Mao was elected **Chairman** of both the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the Chinese Communist Party. This made him the most powerful man in China. The number two position of Vice-Chairman was held by Liu Shaoqi, while Premier Zhou Enlai was number three.

**Chairman** a Chinese political position more powerful than the name suggests. Comparable to a president.  
**PRC** People's Republic of China



▲ Source 9.3 The new government structure

The political structure was made up of three vertical and parallel tiers. These consisted of the government, the Party and the PLA. The CCP was the dominant force in all three; lesser parties – such as left-wing Guomindang – featured, but not significantly. Elections were rather indirect in that people voted for representatives who would then vote for the next level up, and so on. Whoever controlled the Party controlled the other two political areas, and therefore the country.



## 9.2 Fanshen and land reform

**KEY EVENT** 

One group on which the CCP had relied to win the civil war was the peasantry. The CCP enacted on 28 December 1947 the Draft Agrarian Law which announced:

**fanshen** a reversal of the previous order – peasants now persecuted landlords

**'speak bitterness'** the policy of peasants criticising former landlords after Liberation

**counter-revolutionary** a derogatory term for any Communist who did not agree with you

**mutual aid teams** an early form of cooperative for peasants

**cooperatives** a voluntary sharing of resources and labour by a few families

**collectives** large-scale cooperatives

- I The agrarian system of feudal and semi-feudal exploitation is abolished. The agrarian system of 'land-to-the-tiller' is to be realised.
- II Landownership rights of all landlords are abolished.
- III Landownership rights of all ancestral shrines, temples, monasteries, schools, institutions and organisations are abolished.
- IV All debts occurred in the countryside prior to the reform of the agrarian system are cancelled.

This was a propaganda success as well as a promise to the peasants of what was to come. As the PLA 'liberated' towns and villages, peasants initially took it upon themselves to seize the landlords' lands and mete out punishment. This reversal of the traditional order was called **fanshen** (literally to 'turn the body over'). There was no consistency until the new government established village associations to redistribute the land and to deal with the landlords. Up to half the arable land changed hands. Landlords often faced **'speak bitterness'** meetings, where peasants aired their grievances. The landlord might be humiliated and then given lowly chores to do or, if feelings ran high, he might be executed. The government at first encouraged a non-violent approach, but after the outbreak of the Korean War, a fear of **counter-revolutionaries** led to the policy of encouraging greater violence.

While the peasants were content to own their own land, the government wanted to advance socialism. It first suggested **mutual aid teams**, which formalised how families (often 10 at a time) had learnt to work together on a short-term basis. Then it encouraged **cooperatives** (of 20 or more families), where they pooled resources but still owned their own land. Many in the CCP were happy with this pace, but Mao signalled with his 'High Tide' speech that he wanted to advance to the next stage of **collectives** (100–200 households). There was greater resistance to this, as the peasants did not want to give up personal control and did not directly benefit from their own labour. They had waited a long time for unhindered ownership of the land they tilled.

William Hinton first wrote about *fanshen* when he lived in the village of 'Longbow' (actually Zhangzhuang) in 1948:

**KEY QUOTE** 

*Every revolution creates new words. The Chinese Revolution created a whole new vocabulary. A most important word in this vocabulary was fanshen. Literally, it means 'to turn the body' or 'to turn over'. To China's hundreds of millions of landless and land-poor peasants it meant to stand up, to throw off the landlord yoke, to gain land, stock, implements and houses. But it meant much more than this. It meant to throw off superstition and study science, to abolish 'word blindness' and learn to read, to cease considering women as chattels and establish equality between the sexes, to do away with appointed village magistrates and replace them with elected councils. It meant to enter a new world.*

**Source 9.4** William Hinton, *Fanshen: A Documentary of Revolution in a Chinese Village*, Pelican, Harmondsworth, 1972, p. xi.

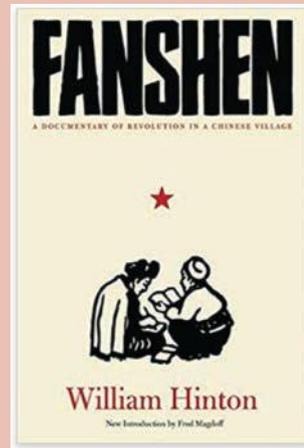
## KEY HISTORIAN



## William Hinton



▲ Source 9.5 William Hinton and his sister Joan



▲ Source 9.6 *Fanshen: A Documentary of Revolution in a Chinese Village*

William Hinton was writing of his experience in rural China in 1948. Before volunteering to be an observer to a volunteer work team, he had been teaching English at a northern Chinese university. His book *Fanshen* was focused on the year he was in the village of Zhangzhuang. For personal and political reasons, his book was not published until 1966. Curiously, it makes no mention, even in the forewords, of the disastrous famine of 1959 to 1961.

## 9.3 Women under the new government

The other section of society to which Mao had appealed was the group that he stated 'held up half the sky' – that is, women. To reward them, on 1 May 1950 the Marriage Law was enacted. In one bold stroke, legally at least, women were set free. Its key provisions were:

- Women could freely choose their partners.
- Polygamy and concubinage were banned.
- There were equal rights and ownership for both sexes.
- Child betrothal was banned. A woman had to be 18 before she could marry.
- Payments for brides were prohibited.
- A woman had free choice of employment.
- Widows were free to remarry.
- Divorce was much easier.
- Prostitution was prohibited.
- Foot-binding was banned.
- Infanticide (common with female babies) was prohibited.

While educated women in the cities were quicker to embrace these new opportunities, it was more difficult for the peasant girls in the villages, where family clans were still important. The peasants were more likely to have fought for land than for gender equality.



**FOCUS QUESTIONS**

- 1 How did the Marriage Law deviate from the old society?
- 2 Which of these laws were likely to be easily put into practice by women?
- 3 Which of these laws were likely to have struggled against the traditional ways?

## 9.4 Maoist Thought Reform

As the CCP had gained victory by winning the civil war rather than a slowly growing popularity, the ordinary Chinese citizen did not know what this new regime would entail. The PLA and those in Yan'an had been schooled in CCP principles and, through the Rectification Campaign, knew what to expect.



*Fanshen* was not just for the peasants, as the 'rolling over' applied to city life as well. Ideas were now Marxist (or Maoist) based. New terminology had to be adopted such as 'comrade', 'serve the people', and the importance of 'class background'. Former factory owners, who had chosen to stay, would now be managers. In schools, the curriculum centred on socialism, and the principals found Party secretaries senior to them in all school matters. In fact, all enterprises found Party secretaries in positions of power. These Party secretaries were directly appointed by the CCP and their job was to ensure Party policies and publications were ingrained into the collective psyche. In all facets of working life, employees had to endure regular and boring meetings presided over by these Party secretaries.

Newspapers, radio stations, TV stations were all under the control of the Party. No matter what work unit they belonged to, the populace woke to the blare of the Chinese national anthem, followed by the news and then political broadcasts, all emanating from strategically and unavoidably placed loudspeakers.

Quickly, the people of China learnt:

- Mao was the unassailable leader of China.
- The CCP was the only party with real power.
- Voting was largely ineffective and the National People's Congress was a 'rubber stamp' for CCP policies.
- Educational standing was downgraded and association with the GMD, religion, Confucianism, middle-class values or connections with the United States were detrimental.

**rightist**

a label for those considered more conservative (not wanting change) than Marxists

- The PLA and the police were 'friends', but the Office of Public Security was to be feared.
- There was always someone willing to tell on you if you spoke rashly about the new system.
- Being labelled as 'counter-revolutionary', '**rightist**', 'anti-Party' or 'reactionary' was cause for fearful concern.

If mass propaganda did not work, pressure from the family or work unit was sufficient to convince. Failing that, interviews by State Security, time in jail or the threat of a bullet in the back of the head would work. While Lenin ordered the execution of the Russian Tsar and his family, the last emperor of China and Manzuguu, Puyi, was re-educated to become a model citizen, a testament to the power of propaganda and brainwashing (a term made famous by the Korean War).

Later, in the Cultural Revolution (discussed in Chapters 13 to 15) Thought Reform was more intense, more threatening, more Mao-centred and spearheaded by 'spontaneous' Big Character Posters.

## 9.5 How did the Korean War affect the new society, 1950–1953?

After the Japanese surrender, the Soviet Union secured northern Korea above the 38th Parallel while the United States maintained the southern section. When negotiations to reunite the two sections failed, Stalin installed his leader, Kim Il-Sung, in the north. On 25 June 1950, North Korea unexpectedly invaded South Korea and occupied most of the peninsula. The United States, with UN agreement and the assistance of 15 other countries, including Australia, led the counterattack that split the North Korean forces and eventually approached the Yalu River, the border with China.



▲ Source 9.7 Mao Anying

While the United States blamed China for the attack, Mao Zedong was just as surprised. Suspicion pointed to Stalin. However, the imminent defeat of the Communist North and a fear of the United States entering China led Mao to place Peng Dehuai in charge of 1.2 million PLA 'volunteers' to push the US-led troops back. At first, sheer weight of numbers worked for the Chinese, but soon US technology and better-equipped soldiers held them up. The war proved very costly for China, which suffered an estimated 900 000 casualties, including Mao's son from his first marriage, Mao Anying.



### AMAZING BUT TRUE ...

When Mao was told of the death of his son Mao Anying, who had died when US plane bombed Peng Dehuai's headquarters, he shed no tears and was reported as saying, 'This is nothing.'

The sides stalemated at the 38th Parallel. Cease-fire negotiations began in July 1951, but it took Stalin's death and a US threat to continue the war before an armistice was signed in 1953.

Despite the high number of casualties, the Korean War was hailed as a victory for the PRC. After a century of humiliating defeats by foreign powers, China had held off the United States and its allies. The war united the country behind the new regime through the wave of patriotism it produced. However, the war also produced two negative effects. The chance for China and the United States to cooperate vanished, leading to the United States becoming the protector of Taiwan and refusing to recognise the PRC. Also, fearing a US-sponsored invasion from Taiwan, the Chinese government became more repressive in its search for 'counter-revolutionaries'.



▲ Source 9.8 Kim Il-Sung

### FOCUS QUESTION

To what extent was the Korean War a success for the new government?

### AMAZING BUT TRUE ...

The sticking point for the Korean armistice was that a number of captured Chinese soldiers – 14 000 in all – did not want to be repatriated but asked to be sent to Taiwan instead.



## 9.6 What were *San Fan* (1951) and *Wu Fan* (1952)?

**KEY EVENT** 

***San Fan*** the Three Antis (graft, waste, bureaucracy)

***Wu Fan*** the Five Antis (bribery, tax evasion, theft from the state, cheating on government contracts, industrial espionage)

The resentment against the United States and fears of an invasion provoked an internal reaction as well. Mao's campaign of the Three Antis (*San Fan Yundong*), against graft, waste and bureaucracy in the government, was extended to anyone with former connections with Western institutions, who had an unsuitable background or who was deemed to be resisting change. Those accused on the flimsiest of reasons were subject to mass struggle sessions and self-criticism. For tens of thousands of people, this resulted in quick trials and executions. This was an extension of Mao's Rectification Campaign of the 1940s and the Chinese equivalent of McCarthyism (an anti-Communist witch hunt) in the United States.

In 1952, this program was extended to the Five Antis (*Wu Fan Yundong*): bribery, tax evasion, theft of state property, cheating on government contracts and stealing of economic information (industrial espionage). This campaign was far-reaching and, in its efforts to find scapegoats, ruined many innocent lives.

## 9.7 What were the aims of the First Five-Year Plan, 1953–1957?

To build up China, Mao needed support from the Soviet Union, which China referred to as an 'elder brother'. Mao's trip to Moscow in December 1949 was not welcomed enthusiastically by Stalin. The visit received little coverage in the Russian press, and after five days Mao's party was invited to see the Bolshoi Ballet perform a piece that strongly indicated the Soviet Union's superior status. The occasion was not a welcome to the Chinese delegates but rather a celebration of Stalin's 70th birthday. Mao was being snubbed for not following Stalin's directives about working with the GMD. Eventually, the Soviet Union and China signed a Treaty of Friendship, Alliance and Mutual Assistance, whereby the Soviet Union agreed to provide loans to China (US\$300 million) and the use of 10 000 Soviet engineers and other experts.

▼ **Source 9.9** *In the Name of Peace* (The Signing of the Treaty of Friendship, Alliance and Mutual Assistance between the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China) – 1950, painted by Viktor Vukhtinsky. Included in this image are Nikita Khrushchev, Vyacheslav Molotov, Josef Stalin, Mao Zedong, and Zhou Enlai.



Following Stalin's example, Mao decided on a Five-Year Plan to encourage economic and industrial growth. This required setting targets to be achieved by the end of the five-year period. The emphasis was on heavy industry (particularly steel production) to help drive industrialisation and advance the Chinese economy. This would allow China to become more powerful as well as help pay off Russian loans.

While **'liberation'** caused many businesspeople and experts to leave for Hong Kong, Taiwan or further overseas, others stayed and many even returned from overseas to help build the new China. So the CCP had not scared off all the talent it needed.

Generally, the First Five-Year Plan was a success and most targets were met. Steel production increased from 1.3 million tonnes in 1952 to 5.2 million in 1957, beating the target of 4.7 million. However, Mao was impatient to see greater growth.



**'liberation'** the capture of an area by the CCP

### ANALYSIS ACTIVITY 9.1



#### Five-Year Plan



▲ Source 9.10 'Strive for the comprehensive early completion and over-fulfilment of the Five-Year Plan'

- 1 Identify who dominates the poster and explain why.
- 2 From the map, determine which parts of China receive emphasis.
- 3 Identify the social groups applauding Mao's plan.



**FOCUS QUESTION**

To what extent was the economy making better progress than politics?

**ANALYSIS ACTIVITY 9.2**



**Mao's meeting with Stalin**

*That same evening he [Mao] was received by Stalin in Moscow at 6 pm. The reception was brief but remarkable. After initially speaking of the 'prospects for peace' in the world, Stalin talked about what was troubling him most, namely New Democracy and its relationship to socialism. He clearly emphasized that 'the Chinese Communists must take the national bourgeoisie into consideration'. He also tried to soften Mao's harsh position towards the Western world, pointing out that 'there is no need for you [the Chinese] to create conflicts with the British ... The main point is not to rush and to avoid conflicts.' Mao had to reassure Stalin that they would not touch the national bourgeoisie and foreign enterprises 'so far'.*

**Source 9.11** Cited in Alexander V. Pantsov, *Mao: The Real Story*, Simon & Schuster, 2007 (trans. 2012), p. 369.

Pantsov's main thesis is that Mao was dependent on, and grateful to, Stalin.

- 1 Identify what is condescending in Stalin's advice to Mao.
- 2 What, in Mao's 'reassuring' response, suggests reluctance.
- 3 Justify why Stalin would be nervous about the new leader of the newest socialist state.
- 4 Justify why Mao would be nervous about meeting Stalin.

## 9.8 Positives and negatives facing the new regime

### Positives

Unlike the Russian Bolsheviks who faced a civil war when they gained power, the CCP had used civil war to gain power. Consequently, after some military mopping up of isolated GMD-held areas, Mao and the CCP had a united China to administer. Spheres of influence had vanished. Foreign powers, especially Japan, had withdrawn. The government faced a honeymoon period where they had the support of the peasantry and unions. Patriotism was running high following the Japanese surrender. Non-communist supporters were at least hopeful of a government untainted by corruption. Finally, the CCP had the support of the emerging superpower – the USSR.

### Negatives

Across the world, opposition parties often find criticism of the government easy and do not have to build a solid or practical program of reform. The CCP's experience in ruling was only in the soviets, and that did not always go smoothly. Redistribution of the land was successful but not without difficulties, especially since many peasants had already wrested the land from the landlords. While the First Five-Year Plan was a success, the government was building up debt due to the USSR loans. The Korean War was a costly commitment and brought about a culture of fear, hence the need for *San Fan* and *Wu Fan*. Then there was the question of how to deal with GMD-held Taiwan. There was also the problem of how to deal with the 55 minority groups in China such as the Muslim Uyghurs in the north-west and Lamaist Tibetan Buddhists in the west. Even though they counted for less than seven per cent of the nation, the allegiance of to non-indigenous religions was seen as a threat. Similarly, Christians whose leadership was based outside of China were eyed suspiciously.

However, the biggest problem to face the New China was the concentration of power in the hands of one vain, intolerant and almost-unchallengeable chairman. Later chapters will describe the avoidable chaos and suffering he inflicted upon his former comrades and the people of China.

## HISTORY THROUGH OBJECTS



▲ **Source 9.12** A 1950 stamp depicting the 1949 meeting of Mao and Stalin. Note the symbols of the two countries. The stamp is priced at 20 000 yuan, a very inflated price reflecting the economic effects of the civil war. The Chinese government, in this design, has calculatedly allowed 'Elder Brother' Stalin to be fractionally taller than Mao (who usually stands tallest in all other depictions).

## THE STORY SO FAR

While Mao and the CCP had clear control over China, they felt the challenge of the old ways. At first, they were successful in redistributing land. Women were given equality (at least on paper). The unexpected involvement in a war in Korea united most people behind the Party and was perceived as a victory for the PLA. However, the war also created further distrust of the Soviet Union and turned the United States from a potential friend into the enemy. This led to a witch hunt against perceived traitors, which destroyed the honeymoon period of government and fomented Party divisions that were to fester for some time.

Use the QR code or visit the digital version of the book and watch the video summarising the chapter.





## Develop your historical thinking skills

### Define key terms

Write your own definition of each of the following key terms:

#### Political terms

- Chairman
- counter-revolutionary
- 'liberation'

#### Land policies

- mutual aid teams
- cooperatives
- collectives

#### Campaigns

- *fanshen*
- 'speak bitterness'
- *San Fan*
- *Wu Fan*

### Role play

Write a script for and/or act out one of the following scenarios:

- 1 In 1950, two old peasant women discuss the Marriage Law. Mrs Chen is against the break in tradition, whereas Mrs Lao wishes the law had been in existence when she was first betrothed. Write and/or act out their conversation.
- 2 It is 1950, and Miss Gao is trying to explain to her father why she does not wish to go through with the marriage arranged for her 10 years ago.
- 3 Mr Wang has been brought before a mass meeting of employees at the No. 1 Watch Factory of Shanghai, and accused of cheating on a government contract. His main accuser is his rival for the manager's position, Assistant Manager Sun.

### Analysing cause and consequence

- 1 Examine which initial problems faced by the CCP had been inherited from previous governments.
- 2 Explain what motivated the government's actions between 1949 and 1956.

### Constructing historical arguments

Discuss which obstacles the new government faced by 1956 and how well it handled them.

## Analysing historical sources as evidence



▲ Source 9.13 Speed up production to improve farming

- 1 Identify which sectors of workers are depicted here.
- 2 Discuss what you notice about the gender balance in this poster.
- 3 Explain why China needed the revenue that increased agricultural production would generate.
- 4 Determine the force/s behind the increase in agricultural production.

NB. When you have studied the Great Leap Forward (Chapter 11) and the 'Learn from Dazhai' campaign (Chapter 12), return to this poster and note the similarities and contrasts.

## Analysing historian's interpretations

*Obviously one aspect of 'proletarian leadership' [by the CCP] was an ability to define and anticipate turning-points. The Chinese Communist Party, through a grasp of history as process, through diligent study of all social phenomena, through never-ending analysis and review of all actions undertaken, had developed this to a remarkable degree. It was therefore able to prepare its adherents in advance for major shifts in the spiral of events or to adjust policies quickly whenever events outran foresight.*

Source 9.14 William Hinton, *Fanshen: A Documentary of Revolution in a Chinese Village*, Pelican, Harmondsworth, 1972, p. 717.

- 1 Give two examples that demonstrate Hinton's faith in the Chinese Communist Party.
- 2 Propose why Hinton would later admit that 'proletarian leadership' was a debatable term in the context of the Chinese Revolution.
- 3 Discuss how well this noble picture of the Chinese Communist Party's abilities compares with the CCP's history prior to 1949.



10

**HUNDRED FLOWERS, 1957–1958**

百花齐放

---

*Baihua qifang, baijia zhengming (百花齐放百家争鸣 Let a hundred flowers bloom and a hundred schools of thought contend)*

– CHINESE PROVERB

## Overview

After the success of the First Five-Year Plan and the suppression of many intellectuals, Mao believed that controls could be relaxed. So he drew on the classic expression known as Hundred Flowers to open discussion and to avoid a situation in China similar to the 1956 Hungarian revolt against Russian control and Khrushchev's denunciation of Stalin. Following widespread criticism of the Party, and even Mao himself, there was a crackdown on those who spoke up, called the Anti-Rightist Campaign.

## Key issues

- What was Mao's Hundred Flowers Campaign?
- Who was behind the Anti-Rightist Campaign?
- Who was Mao Zedong (Part 2)?

## Digital resources for this chapter

In the *Interactive Textbook*:

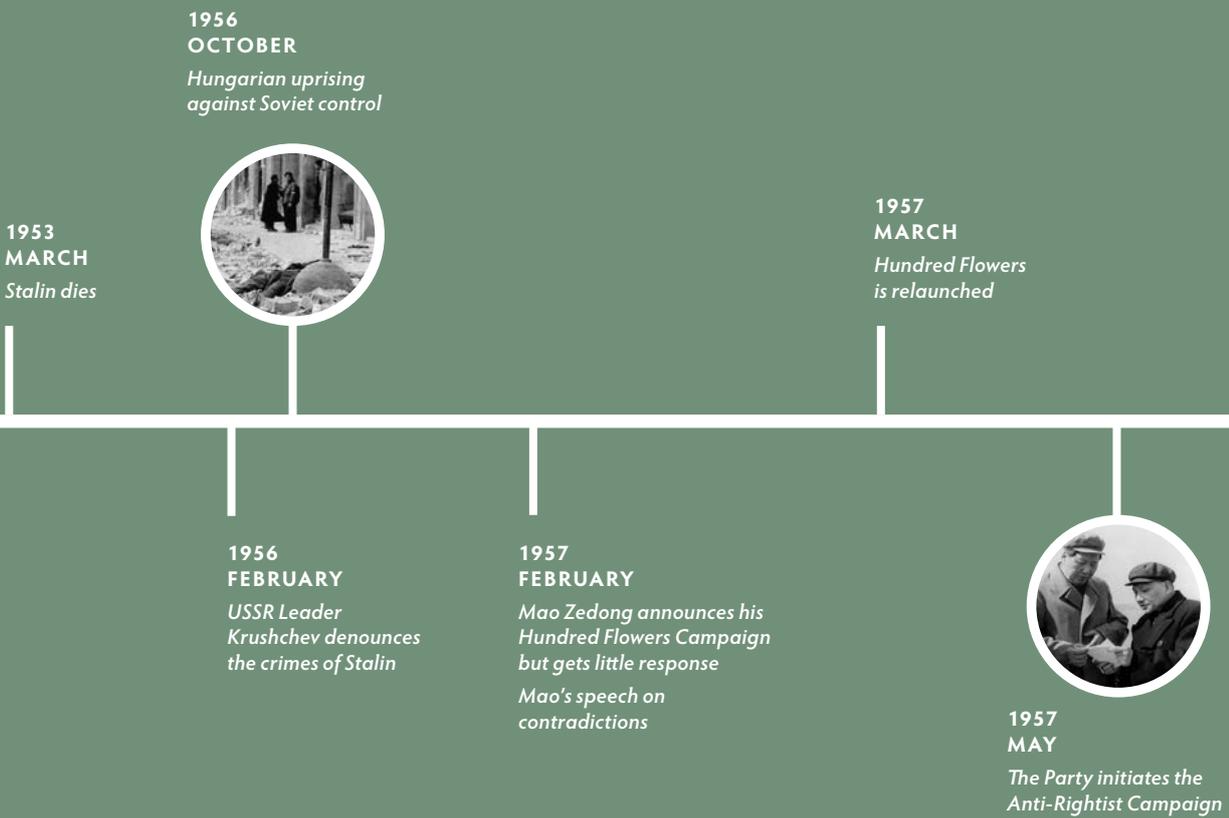
-  Video and audio sources and questions
-  Digital activities

## Flow of chapter



## Timeline

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## 10.1 Mao's Hundred Flowers Campaign

Two events in the Soviet Union spurred on the **Hundred Flowers** policy: a speech to the Russian Communist Party by the new leader, Khrushchev, condemning the crimes of the late Joseph Stalin; and the 1956 uprising in Hungary, in an effort to gain independence from the Russian-dominated Communist bloc. Mao sought to forestall any similar occurrences in China by opening discussion and criticism. He had already been planning another rectification program to bring Party members into line and the Hundred Flowers Campaign had the right qualities.

A Hundred Flowers is a reference to a classical expression, 'Let a hundred flowers bloom and a hundred schools of thought contend'. This expression championed the promotion of a diversity of ideas and viewpoints. The Party was a little nervous about the project, with Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping opposing it, but Mao was rather relaxed even when the CCP was roundly criticised by many intellectuals. He had already written that contradictions can be tolerated within the PRC. He even thought that by allowing intellectuals a voice they would feel part of the system and then allow themselves to be brought into line. Mao had been so used to being accompanied by fawning 'yes men' that he may have overestimated his popularity.

After initial hesitation, many intellectuals took the opportunity to voice their grievances and to suggest better ways of implementing change. Mao was willing to have the Party criticised (rectification) again, but this time he had gone outside the Party to achieve it. However, he may have miscalculated, as the criticism went beyond the Party to include the governmental structure, the dominance of the CCP in that structure and the leadership of Mao himself. The reaction was almost predictable.

► **Source 10.1** The aftermath of battle on a Budapest street during the Hungarian Uprising of 1956. Mao wanted to avoid any similar uprisings against communism in China.

▼ **Source 10.2** Mao and the Soviet Union's new leader Nikita Khrushchev, 1958



**Hundred Flowers** Mao's 1957 invitation for critics to speak out



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## What was Mao's purpose in launching Hundred Flowers?

Was Hundred Flowers a sincere but miscalculated gesture by Mao, or was it an attempt to 'lure snakes out of their lairs' – that is, to trap intellectuals and expose perceived enemies in the Party? A Chinese–English dictionary published in 1981 defines the Hundred Flowers as:

*a policy set forth by Chairman Mao for promoting the progress of the arts and sciences and the development of a flourishing socialist culture.*

Source 10.3 *A Chinese–English Dictionary (Han-Ying Cidian)*, English Department of Beijing Foreign Languages Institute, 1981.

Jack Gray offers an alternative view:



*The main point was not to secure the suppression of those who were hostile, but to secure a renewed and strengthened consensus. In this way, to return to his [Mao's] metaphor, China would be inoculated with a benign form of the Hungarian distemper, and so saved from the real disease.*

Source 10.4 Jack Gray, *Rebellions and Revolutions: China from the 1800s to the 1980s*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1990, p. 305.

Finally, Harrison Salisbury, author of a dual biography of Mao and Deng, wrote:

*In reality the case was much more complex, and it is small wonder that it has been interpreted in so many ways both abroad and within China. In the early stages Mao seems to have been impressed by the verdict against Stalin and to have drawn the conclusion that the time had come to loosen up the regime in China ... His ideas were not popular within the Party. Non-Party people reacted with extreme caution. They realized that there was a split in the Party and did not want to be crushed between the two sides.*

Source 10.5 Harrison Salisbury, *The New Emperors: Mao and Deng*, HarperCollins, London, 1992, p. 136.

### FOCUS QUESTIONS

- 1 What did Gray mean by 'the Hungarian distemper' metaphor?
- 2 How do these viewpoints differ?
- 3 What further information would you like to have to help you decide which author you would agree with?

### ANALYSIS ACTIVITY 10.1



#### Split between USSR and China

- 1 Describe how the photo suggests some tension between Mao and Khrushchev.
- 2 Explain why Mao was unhappy with a recent speech made by Khrushchev in Russia.
- 3 Discuss what other tensions created a split between the USSR and China.



▲ Source 10.6 Nikita Khrushchev, Mao and Liu Shaoqi in 1957

## 10.2 Who was behind the Anti-Rightist Campaign?

In June 1957, Mao's speech from February launching the Hundred Flowers policy was finally printed in the *People's Daily*, but with conditions that were not in the original. Essentially, it stated that criticisms were to unite the country and not divide it. This was the signal for the crackdown. Those who had been naïve enough to speak out were now the targets of peer criticism and severe punishment. Self-criticism was a minor penalty, while being sent to corrective camps was a common response. A 'socialist education campaign' was launched to bring thinking back to the Party line, and certain military and civil leaders were sent – as examples – to physical labour camps. The theme of 'better Red than expert' – which was to dominate in later years – was emphasised.

It has been estimated that 2.9 million Chinese were accused of being Rightists, with about one-sixth suffering a form of repressive punishment. Mao selected Deng Xiaoping to take major responsibility for the implementation of this crackdown.

The effect of this campaign is well depicted by Cheng:

... when Mao Tze-tung [Zedong] swung his policy around in 1957 and initiated the Anti-Rightist Campaign [he] labelled all those who had offered criticism 'Rightists'. Many of them lost their jobs, became non-persons and were sent to labour camps; others had their pay reduced and were demoted in rank. The treachery of Mao Tze-tung in repeatedly inviting frank and constructive criticism and then harshly punishing those who gave it completely cowed the Chinese intellectuals so that China's cultural life came to a virtual standstill.

Source 10.8 Nien Cheng, *Life and Death in Shanghai*, Flamingo, London, 1995, p. 23.



▲ Source 10.7 Mao Zedong with Deng Xiaoping, who led Mao's Anti-Rightist Campaign



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### FOCUS QUESTIONS

- 1 What is the author's attitude to Mao?
- 2 What is a non-person? (Think of George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.)

### Did Mao or the Party want the crackdown?

There is also disagreement among historians about who called for the Anti-Rightist campaign that was to put an end to Hundred Flowers and to stifle dissent for some time to come. Incidentally, the dictionary defines the *Fan Youpai Douzheng* ('Anti-Rightist Struggle') as 'the counterattack in 1957 against the bourgeois Rightists', which is an interesting viewpoint.

Source 10.9 *A Chinese-English Dictionary (Han-Ying Cidian)*, English Department of Beijing Foreign Languages Institute, 1981.

Mao's personal physician, Li Zhisui, noted that Mao took to bed with a cold and was concerned about the criticisms that had emerged from his Hundred Flowers policy, feeling betrayed especially by the democratic parties he hoped would pull the CCP into line.

Source 10.10 Zhisui Li, *The Private Life of Chairman Mao*, Arrow, London, 1996, p. 200.



KEY HISTORIAN

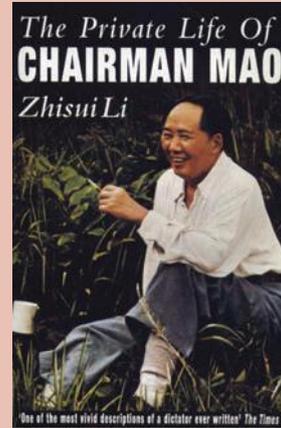


Zhisui Li

Dr Zhisui Li was a Chinese doctor who went to Hong Kong and then Australia to practise medicine. As the Communists were about to win the civil war against the GMD, his mother, in Beijing, invited him to return and help the new regime, which he did. Instead of working in a Beijing hospital as he hoped, Dr Li was roped into being the personal physician for Chairman Mao. From then, until Mao's death, he was able to witness the politics unfold first-hand. In 1988 he joined his sons in Chicago, and it was there that he wrote his memoir *The Private Life of Chairman Mao*.



▲ Source 10.11 Zhisui Li



▲ Source 10.12 Cover of *The Private Life of Chairman Mao*

Another view is that the Party members urged Mao to rein in the criticism, especially as they had not been enthusiastic about any loosening of the bonds.

Finally, if one is to believe that Mao launched Hundred Flowers with the intention of 'luring snakes out of their lairs', which he claimed when he launched the Anti-Rightist Campaign, then it could be argued that his intention all along was to crack down on these 'cow demons' and 'snake spirits' (Mao being contradictory in his reference to classical mythology).

FOCUS QUESTIONS

Research some Chinese mythology to discover the qualities of cow demons and snake spirits. You can try the internet or a children's version of *Journey to the West* by Wu Cheng-en.

ANALYSIS ACTIVITY 10.2



Dilemmas of the Anti-Rightist Campaign

In her brilliant telling of the story of three women in her family (including herself), Jung Chang describes the dilemma her mother faced, as a cadre, of finding the 5 per cent of Rightists under her jurisdiction (which was a split of Mao's arbitrary figure of 1–10 per cent of all intellectuals).

The process became so arbitrary that a 'system' developed:

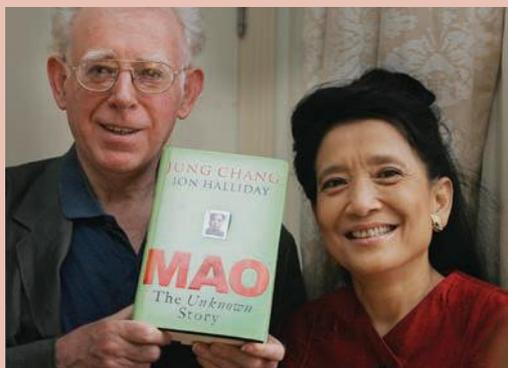
*Among the categories of rightists were 'lots-drawing rightists' (chou-qia you-pai), people who drew lots to decide who should be named as rightists, and 'toilet rightists' (ce-suo you-pai), people who found they had been nominated in their absence after they could not restrain themselves from going to the toilet during the many long, drawn-out meetings. There were also rightists who were said to 'have poison but not released it' (you-du bu-fang); these were people who were said to be rightists without having said anything against anyone. When a boss did not like someone, he could say ... 'His father was executed by the Communists, how can he not feel resentful?'*

*... A kind-hearted leader sometimes did the opposite: 'Whom should I nail? I can't do that to anyone. Say it's me.' He was popularly called a 'self-acknowledged rightist' (zi-ren you-pai).*

Source 10.13 Jung Chang, *Wild Swans*, HarperCollins, London, 1991, p. 289.

- 1 Assess what this extract tells you about the political climate of the time.
- 2 Propose how someone could avoid being labelled a rightist.
- 3 Extrapolate on what the 5 per cent quota suggests about the power of Mao in 1957.

## KEY HISTORIAN



## Jung Chang

In *Wild Swans*, Jung Chang tells of her experiences growing up in Mao's China, particularly the suffering of her family during the Cultural Revolution. In 2005, she published a second book, *Mao: The Unknown Story*, written with her husband, Jon Halliday. It is a vitriolic attack on the whole of Mao's political career. Most controversial is the theory that Jiang Jieshi did not try to wipe out the Long Marchers but rather shepherded them to Sichuan in order to subdue the local warlords and protect his son, who was being held hostage in the Soviet Union. It is a monumental and well-researched

▲ Source 10.14 Jung Chang and Jon Halliday

book, but it is open to two major criticisms. One is that some of the interviews are not sourced, in order to protect the interviewees, and thus cannot be checked. The more serious concern is that it consistently presents the worst image of Mao, and that the authors are too biased in their attempt to demolish the image and legacy of Mao.

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## 10.3

## SIGNIFICANT INDIVIDUAL

Mao Zedong (Mao Tse-tung) 毛泽东  
(1893–1976)

**Theorist, revolutionary leader and Chairman of the Chinese Communist Party**

## Part 2

On 1 October 1949, Mao declared the establishment of the People's Republic of China. The next year he was trapped by Stalin into supporting the North in the Korean War, which held the United States and others in a stalemate. Despite Mao losing a son, this was a prestigious beginning.

Mao felt the enemies of socialism were still evident and began thought-reform campaigns. In 1956–1957 he launched the Hundred Flowers Campaign to allow criticism of party officials but, following criticism of the CCP itself and his policies, cracked down with his Anti-Rightist Campaign, with severe punishments.

▲ Source 10.15 Mao Zedong

In 1958, Mao launched his Great Leap Forward, designed to accelerate communes and steel production. However, the 'backyard' furnaces were useless, and crops were neglected, leading to a famine with deaths officially estimated after Mao's death at 30 million.

Mao was encouraged to retire as leader of the PRC while Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping turned the clock back to allow economic recovery.

By 1966, Mao was ready to return and exact revenge. With the aid of Lin Biao, who issued the *Quotations of Chairman Mao* to each PLA soldier, Mao's famous swim in the Yangzi River and the support of his 'little generals' from the schools (Red Guards), Mao launched his Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (GPCR)

... continued



continued ...

attacking the 'Four Olds' (ideas, culture, customs and habits). His true goal was to purge his Party, regain absolute control and seek revenge against his perceived enemies.

Schooling stopped. Factory production was interrupted. Mao was worshipped as the 'Reddest of Red Suns' and 'The Great Helmsman'. Jiang Qing and her Gang of Four led the way to 10 years of *luan* (chaos), including large-scale vandalism. In 1971, Lin Biao was killed after an attempted coup against Mao. The Gang of Four now had Zhou Enlai in their sights, but the GPCR had lost momentum. Zhu De, Zhou Enlai and Mao all died in 1976. With Mao's death, the Gang of Four was arrested and the GPCR was over.

Mao was proven right in deviating from orthodox Marxism by having the peasants as the force behind a revolution. In power, however, his vision was not so pragmatic, and he made costly errors. Furthermore, Mao was quick to turn on his old comrades who had supported him in the revolutionary years. Ironically, the cult of Mao grew as he was personally becoming feeble. Mao was one of the most important leaders of the twentieth century, but far from the best.

THE STORY SO FAR



After the criticisms of Stalin and the Hungarian uprising, which blackened the image of socialism worldwide, Mao sought either to draw out the critics in China or win them over with the Hundred Flowers policy. Those who eventually spoke out were targets when the Anti-Rightist Campaign was launched. Even those who did not speak out could be targeted. Following the Rectification Campaign of the 1940s, the *San Fan* and *Wu Fan*, and now the Anti-Rightist Campaign, intellectuals and any potential critics were effectively silenced, which would have disastrous consequences over the next few years.



Use the QR code or visit the digital version of the book and watch the video summarising the chapter.

# Develop your historical thinking skills

## Define key terms

Write your own definition of each of the following key terms:

- Hundred Flowers Campaign
- Rightist
- *People's Daily*.

## Activities

As a teacher of Jiujiang No. 1 Middle (Secondary) School, launch an attack on Mr Li, the head of your department, converting his mild suggestions during the Hundred Flowers Campaign into inflammatory attacks on the Communist Party and even Mao.

## Analysing cause and consequence

- 1 Summarise what motivated Mao to launch the Hundred Flowers Campaign.
- 2 Assess whether Mao was following the 'Mass Line' or inventing policy on the run.

## Constructing historical arguments

To what extent was Mao intimidating his own followers from 1949 to 1958?

### Analysing historical sources as evidence

Extract from Mao's speech at the Chinese Communist Party's National Conference on propaganda work, 12 March 1957:

*Formerly, in the old China, it was a crime to talk about reforms, and offenders would be beheaded or imprisoned ... In building up the new China we Communists are likewise not daunted by any difficulties. But we cannot accomplish this all on our own. We need a good number of non-Party people with high ideals who will keep to the socialist and communist orientation and fight dauntlessly with us to transform and construct our society ...*

*It is wrong to appraise our work either from the standpoint of affirming everything or from the standpoint of negating everything. We should criticise those people who take such a one-sided approach to problems, though of course we should do so in the spirit of 'learning from past mistakes to avoid future ones and curing the sickness to save the patient', and we should give them help ...*

*What if one dare not write? Some people say they dare not write even when they have something to say, lest they should offend people and be criticized. I think such worries can be cast aside. Ours is a people's democratic state, and it provides an environment conducive to writing in the service of the people. The policy of letting a hundred flowers blossom and a hundred schools of thought contend offers additional guarantees for the flowering of science and the arts. If what you say is right, you need not fear criticism, and through debate you can further explain your correct views. If what you say is wrong, then criticism can help you correct your mistakes, and there is nothing bad in that. In our society, militant revolutionary criticism and counter-criticism is the healthy method used to expose and resolve contradictions, develop science and the arts and ensure success in all our work ...*

**Source 10.16** Extract from Mao's speech at the Chinese Communist Party's National Conference on propaganda work, 12 March 1957, Marxists.org

- 1 Identify what Mao is challenging the intellectuals of China to do.
- 2 Demonstrate how his language makes it sound safe to criticise the government.
- 3 Propose reasons why people were initially wary about speaking out.
- 4 Contrast this speech with Mao's 1942 *Rectify the Party's Style of Work* (Source 7.14), and outline what similarities you can find.

### Analysing historian's interpretations

*As days went on the 'mistakes' of the party [CCP] were subjected to increasingly ruthless criticism. Finally, the very right of the party to rule was questioned. Not only were individual members of the party called to account, but the party as an institution was rebuked. People were suddenly arguing that the Communist party had no intrinsic right to rule, that power should be shared ...*

*In the end, Mao's own leadership was criticized ...*

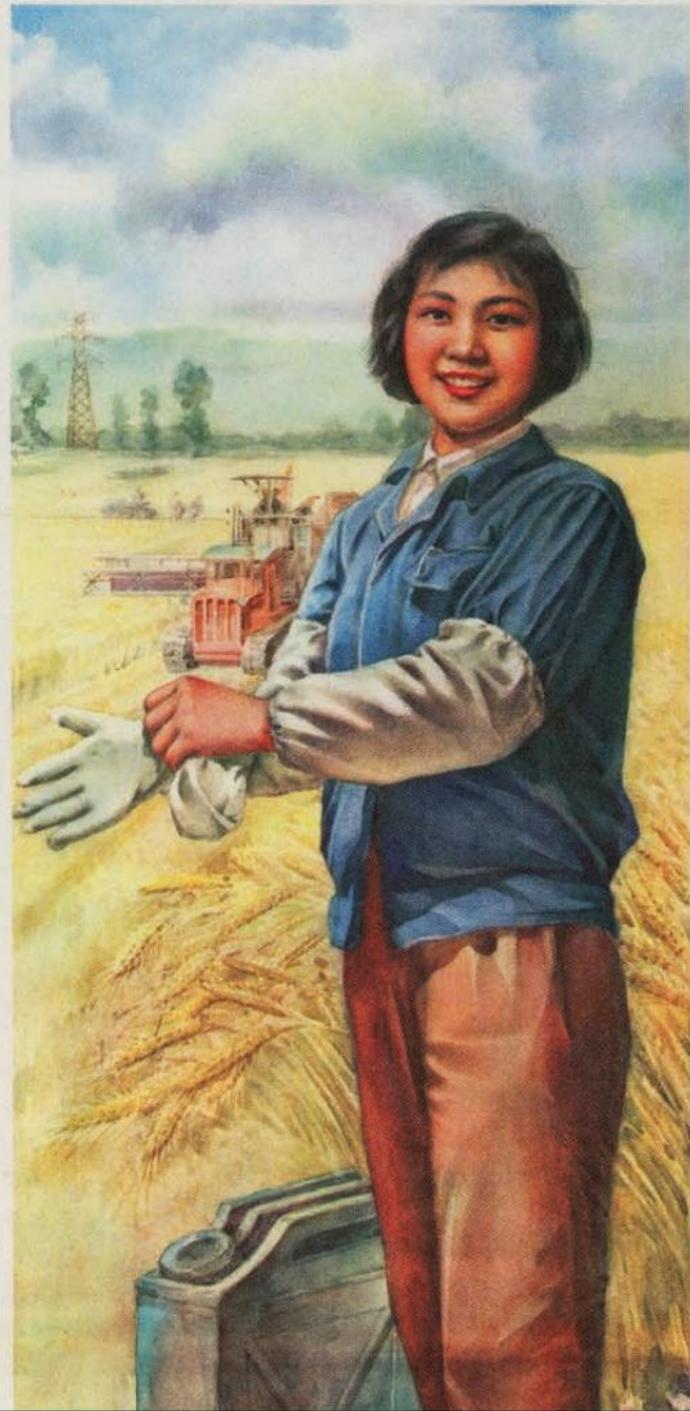
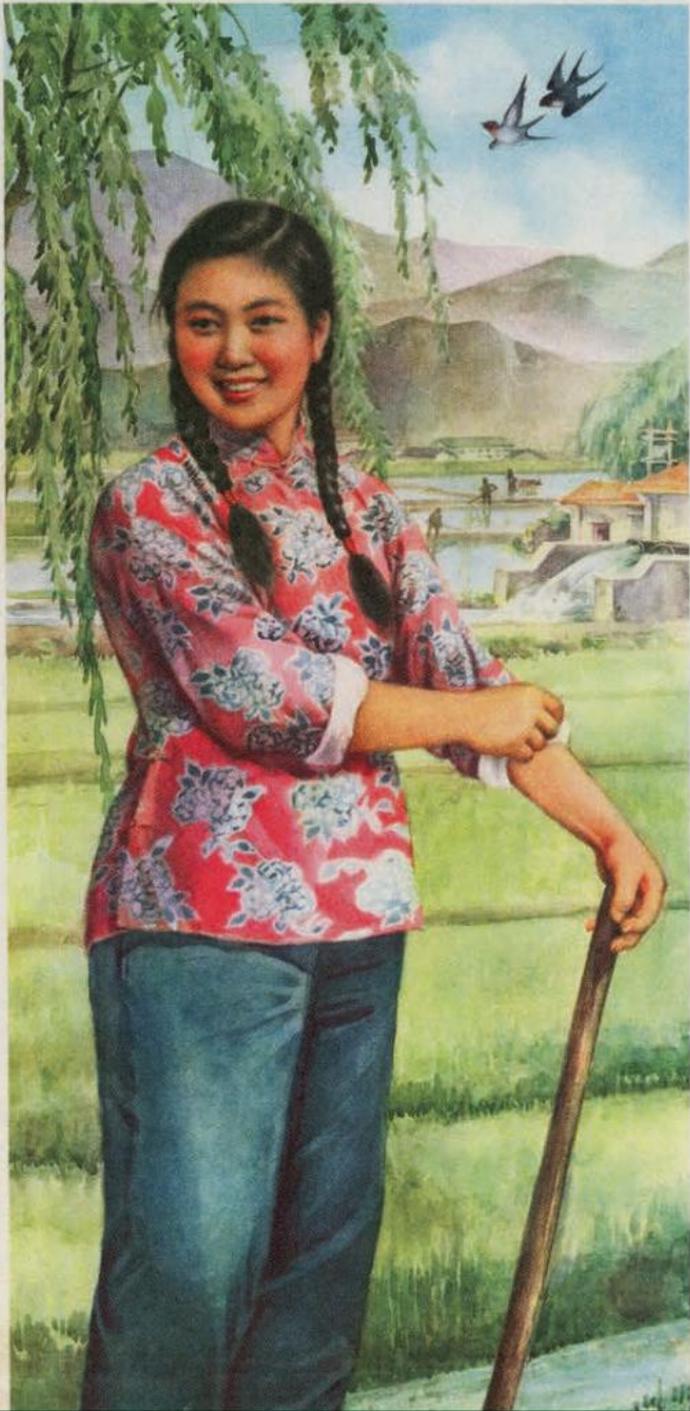
*Mao of course was shocked. He had never intended that any of the criticisms be directed against him. He had never meant the party as an institution to come under attack. Accustomed as he was to the flattery of everyone he met, certain that his real enemies had been eliminated or put in jail, he had not realized the depth of the intellectuals' dissatisfaction.*

**Source 10.17** Zhisui Li, *The Private Life of Chairman Mao*, Arrow, London, 1996, p. 200.

- 1 Identify which campaign is Dr Li referring to.
- 2 Account for how, according to the author, Mao miscalculated the consequences of inviting criticism.
- 3 According to the author and your own views, deduce what was Mao aiming to achieve by this movement.
- 4 Compare how Dr Li's on-the-spot view differs from other views in this chapter.

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1 1

**THE GREAT LEAP FORWARD AND THE GREAT FAMINE, 1957-1959**

大跃进和大饥荒

*The Helmsman Sets the Ocean Course*

- CCP PROPAGANDA SONG

## Overview

Mao was impatient with the rate of progress of the Chinese economy despite the First Five-Year Plan exceeding most of its targets. Deciding not to continue following the Russian model, Mao instead chose to follow a path that he thought utilised the PRC's greatest asset – its population. So the Second Five-Year Plan was to become the **Great Leap Forward**. Unfortunately, Mao's crackdowns on intellectuals and his own party meant that people were afraid to speak up and tell the truth about his Great Leap, and a huge famine swept parts of China. While Mao refused to take the blame, he was eventually moved aside – but not for long.

**Great Leap Forward** Mao's ambitious but flawed second Five-Year Plan to speed up production

## Key issues

- What were the aims of the Great Leap Forward?
- What was the nature of the Great Leap Forward?
- What was the Great Famine?
- What disputes are there over the death toll?
- Who was Liu Shaoqi?

## Digital resources for this chapter

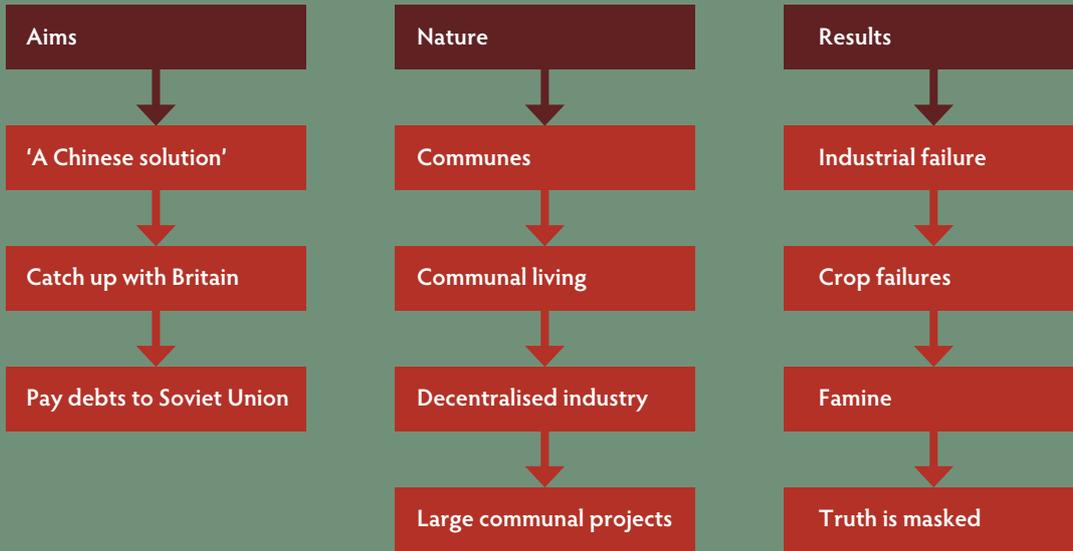
In the *Interactive Textbook*:

-  Video and audio sources and questions
-  Digital activities

◀ **Source 11.0** Propaganda poster of the successes on the Great Leap Forward

# Flow of chapter

## MAO ANNOUNCES THE GREAT LEAP FORWARD



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# Timeline

**1957**  
**4 OCTOBER**  
 Soviet Union launches first human-made satellite, Sputnik



**1958**  
**29 APRIL**  
 The Sputnik Commune begins, China's first

**1958**  
**AUGUST**  
 Politburo approves people's communes



**1957**  
**12 DECEMBER**  
 National Economic Planning Conference announces catching up to Britain in 15 years



**1958**  
**5 MAY**  
 Eighth Party Congress launches the Great Leap Forward



**1958**  
**DECEMBER**  
 The Party announces Mao Zedong will not stand for re-election as Chairman

## 11.1 What were the aims of the Great Leap Forward?

Mao no longer saw the Soviet Union's model of economic growth as the ideal, despite it beating the United States to launch the first human-made satellite, *Sputnik*. Russian loans and expertise were very expensive, and Mao wanted to clear the debt quickly. The target the Party set before the country was to 'catch up with Britain in 15 years'. (Note that the greater target of catching up to the United States was not announced.) Mao saw that the economic advantage of China was that its 600 million people could compensate for China's backward industrial and agricultural sectors.

### ANALYSIS ACTIVITY 11.1



#### A fable

Mao liked to quote a Chinese fable about 'The Foolish Old Man Who Would Move a Mountain'. An old peasant decided he did not like a mountain obstructing his way and declared he would remove it. When his neighbours pointed out he would be dead before he made any impact, he replied that his sons would take over and so would their sons, until the mountain was removed.

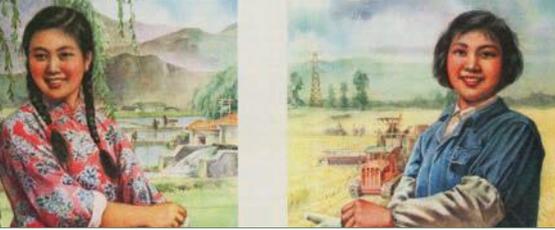
- 1 What is the point of this fable?
- 2 Propose what qualities would Mao admire in the foolish old man.
- 3 What does common sense tell you about the old man?

▼ **Source 11.1** Mao's Great Leap communal projects dragged labour from the fields.



▼ **Source 11.2** Construction of a dam during the Great Leap Forward; 400 000 people were employed for the dam, which holds 80 million tonnes of water and generates 20 000 kilowatts of electricity.





## 11.2 What was the nature of the Great Leap Forward?

**communes** large-scale collectives where private ownership of land disappears

**cadre** a leading CCP-appointed official

A key feature of the Great Leap was convincing peasants to move from cooperatives (often involving a whole village) to establish the even-bigger **communes**. Communes could involve 5000 families. Twelve families would constitute a ‘work team’, while 12 ‘work teams’ made up a ‘brigade’. Appointed Party members (**cadres**) would administer the commune.

In August 1958, Mao was reading a collection of journalists’ documents awaiting approval when he spied the term ‘people’s communes’ (*renmin gongshe*), which delighted him greatly. Later, when visiting a commune, he spied the term on a red banner and was obviously very pleased with it. A New China News Agency reported this, and soon Mao’s approval became a national edict. Of course, communes were the acceleration of production for which Mao had been impatient. By the end of 1958, there were over 26 000 communes in operation.

**KEY STATISTIC**



Taking a leaf from the communal life of the Red Army (now PLA), Mao encouraged communal kitchens in order to free labourers for work in the fields. Some communes even had communal dormitories – segregated, of course.

### Problems with communes

**iron rice bowl** guaranteed employment and wages (the rice bowl cannot be broken)

The first problem with the communes was what the Chinese called the **iron rice bowl** (*tiefanwan*), a reference to the connection between a guaranteed wage – regardless of effort – but a guaranteed supply of food, so that the food source is never broken. This highlights the fact that everyone shares from the labour of the commune, regardless of the amount of work completed by an individual. Consequently, there is a lack of incentive to work hard if you are not going to benefit personally from your extra labour. While this was not a problem at first, due to the enthusiasm of all involved, it did eventually emerge as a real concern.

Another problem was that the Great Leap drew farmers away from the fields to work on large-scale communal projects such as dams and roads. These projects took these able-bodied workers great distances from their homes, often during the sowing and harvesting season. As a result, crops were not productively maintained or gathered in. Thus, inadvertently, the policy of communal projects undermined the success of the commune program.

▼ **Source 11.3** Workers prepare food in a communal kitchen.





▲ Source 11.4 Children are deceptively perched on a table at Sputnik commune.

Having Party cadres set policy on the communes meant that the agricultural wisdom of the peasants, built up over thousands of years, was ignored. Following the theories of **Lysenko** it was decided that sprinkling chemical fertiliser was too slow and told the peasants to dig a pit, place all the fertiliser in it and sow the crop on top. Naturally the fertiliser burnt the roots. Others suggested planting crops closer together. Of course, peasants had long ago worked out the minimum distance, but they were ignored. There is a famous photo of visitors to a commune being greeted by children who were supposedly standing on the thick crop. In fact, extra plants were brought in for show and they hid the table on which the children were perched. With all this deception, a disaster was waiting to happen. However, the people had recently learnt the dangers of speaking up in Mao's China.

**Lysenkoism**  
A radical and untested (and disastrous) theory for increasing production

## Other problems

One of the communal projects for both rural and urban populations was the setting up of backyard steel furnaces. The idea behind the project was to decentralise steelmaking and lessen reliance on the expensive steel foundries. By having every commune and town run their own furnaces, and recycle scrap metal, the idea was to use the huge population to catch up to the output of a country such as Britain. One of the slogans was to make bombs to be used against Jiang Jieshi in Taiwan. Unfortunately, the failure of these furnaces to achieve high enough temperatures and the low quality of the metal fed into them meant that the 'steel' they produced was decidedly inferior. When Party dignitaries came to visit such sites, the local Party cadres would substitute commercial steel from a foundry to impress. A further problem was that agricultural implements needed to produce crops were often fed into the backyard furnaces.



▲ Source 11.5 People from the Weixin Commune smelting steel

▼ Source 11.6 A steel mill during the Great Leap Forward





**Four Pests (Sihai) Campaign** rats, sparrows, flies and mosquitoes; later, bedbugs replaced sparrows

Mao added to this madness by launching a campaign against the four pests. His **Four Pests (Sihai) Campaign** was launched against rats, sparrows, flies and mosquitoes. Adults in each work unit (*danwei*) were set quotas and children brought their matchboxes of dead flies to school to be recorded by the teacher. Mao's choice of sparrows was ecologically a bad choice. The people were mobilised to bang pots and pans to prevent sparrows from roosting until they fell exhausted out of the sky. Yet, while sparrows did eat some grain, they also ate many insects that attacked the crops. This, plus the energy put into this program, did not help agricultural production. Finally admitting his error, Mao dropped sparrows from the list of Four Pests and substituted bedbugs.

▼ Source 11.7 'Exterminate the four pests!'



▼ Source 11.8 'Beat the war drum of the Great Leap Forward even louder'



**FOCUS QUESTIONS**

- 1 What advice should Mao have been offered about his Great Leap Forward policies?
- 2 Why was he not given this advice?

## ANALYSIS ACTIVITY 11.2



## Great Leap Forward poster

- 1 Identify the 'Great Leap' features in this poster.
- 2 Identify the symbols that are used to indicate abundance.
- 3 To what extent does the poster represent the reality of the Great Leap Forward?



◀ Source 11.9 Great Leap Forward poster

Arguably the worst aspect of the Great Leap was the failure to tell the truth. Party officials were under great pressure to **'Catch the Stars and Moon'** – that is, bring in record harvests in the communes. When food was brought into the **'Good News Reporting Stations'** for weighing, the figures were exaggerated. Often other food products such as melons were added to inflate the figures. Newspaper reports of record harvests labelled them **'Sending Satellites to Heaven'**, and communes competed against other communes to boast impossible figures. Based on these figures, the government took its quota for the cities and even for export, leaving the villagers with very little.

**'Catch the Stars and Moon'** Great Leap Forward slogan encouraging record grain harvests

**'Good News Reporting Stations'** tally rooms for reporting harvest figures during the Great Leap Forward

**'Sending Satellites to Heaven'** Great Leap Forward term for record harvests (largely falsified)

## 11.3 The Great Famine

Very little of the backyard steel produced was really useful or of immediate value for the factories. Vehicles, weapons and tractors made from this steel were unreliable and often broke down.

By 1959, the harvests were insufficient for China's needs as the experimental methods had failed, farmers were absent from their fields and there had been poor weather. Add to this the government requisitioning (taxes) of grain based on false figures, and a huge famine was unavoidable. It was only on his second visit to his home town of Shaoshan that Mao was finally told the truth by the local peasants – that the bumper harvests did not exist and many people were starving. Despite this, the state took an increasing percentage of the harvest, through taxes and compulsory purchases. In 1957, it took 17.4 per cent; in 1958, it took 20.9 per cent; and in 1959, it took 28 per cent. While 1960 was the worst harvest year, the government still took a damaging percentage and even continued to export grain. In 1961, the government finally changed tack and imported grain.

**KEY STATISTIC**

Han Suyin, usually an apologist for Mao, wrote about the exaggerated harvest figures but suggested that Mao tried to put a brake on this unbridled enthusiasm. She mentioned no death figures, but optimistically wrote:

*Admiration goes to the Chinese working people, who gave all of themselves, in an unbelievable maelstrom of activity, to break the chains of stagnation, misery and ignorance. Without the Leap today's China would not be.*

**KEY QUOTE**

**Source 11.10** Han Suyin, *The Wind in the Tower: Mao Tse-Tung and the Chinese Revolution 1949–1975*, Jonathan Cape, London, 1976, p. 142.

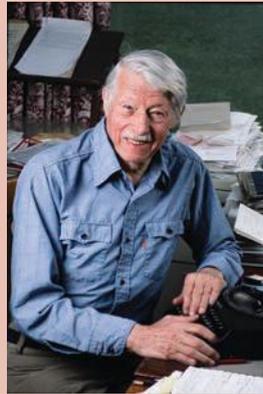


Harrison Salisbury, in *The New Emperors: Mao and Deng*, notes that Mao made no apology or public show of compassion. Privately, he gave up pork for a while: 'China was starving, and Mao went on a private diet.'

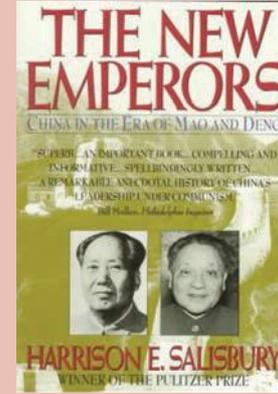
KEY HISTORIAN

Harrison Salisbury

Harrison Salisbury, in his *The New Emperors: Mao and Deng – A Dual Biography*, was among the first to reveal the personal weaknesses of Mao, particularly his sexual promiscuity. Importantly, Mao's leadership is presented as a series of ad hoc miscalculations rather than a systematic socialist policy. How this information was leaked to Salisbury is unclear, but it is unlikely that it happened without the elderly Deng's prior knowledge and approval.



▲ Source 11.11 Harrison Salisbury



▲ Source 11.12 Cover of *The New Emperors: Mao and Deng – A Dual Biography*

AMAZING BUT TRUE ...

Mao Zedong and Peng Dehuai were both born in Xiangtan county, Hunan province. In his desire to determine the truth of the Great Leap Forward's results, Peng Dehuai visited this county and Mao's birthplace, Shaoshan village. The extent of the disaster was soon obvious. He then visited nearby Pingjiang county, where the peasants informed him that local officials had swapped the harvest figures for 1957 and 1958 to give the appearance of a harvest increase instead of the decline that was the reality.

ANALYSIS ACTIVITY 11.3

The Great Leap Forward

In a 1976 article on the Great Leap Forward, Wilfred Burchett made the following startling observation:

*... the master strategic mainspring was the Great Leap Forward. This probably comes as a surprise, because in the outside world there was a general impression that it was one of Mao's failures – a viewpoint which was discreetly encouraged by leaks to journalists from official Chinese sources, not to mention those by diplomatic contacts in Peking [Beijing] who had obvious axes to grind.*

*According to our own on-the-spot observations at the time and follow-up investigations ever since, the Great Leap Forward was an epoch-making success, the full dimensions of which are only dimly being realized in the outside world ... virtually all major irrigation and road-building projects, all key economic developments ... had their genesis in this imaginative movement. Mao, in keeping with his style, said nothing publicly to rebut his critics, preferring to let history record the final verdict.*

Source 11.13 Wilfred Burchett, 'The Great Leap Forward 1958', republished in *Red and Expert*, Deakin University Press, Victoria, 1984, pp. 101–2.

- 1 Summarise Burchett's assessment of the Great Leap Forward.
- 2 Identify what in this extract suggests that Burchett was living in China at the time.
- 3 Deduce what is missing from this judgement of the Great Leap Forward.
- 4 Evaluate how Burchett living in China, and the date he wrote it, affected his assessment.
- 5 Describe the irony of the final sentence.

# 11.4 Dispute over the death toll

The state newspapers did not report the calamity, and many citizens (and overseas journalists) were unaware of the tragedy. We can only estimate the number of deaths as the calamity was not officially recognised until after Mao’s death. Then the estimated figure was 30 million. We can safely assume that this was a very conservative estimate, and that the true figure may be the 38 million estimated by Chinese demographers. Edgar Snow, in his later book *The Long Revolution*, merely refers to ‘heavy losses’, but never explains what this entailed.



Harrison Salisbury, who had unprecedented access to Deng’s China, wrote:

*The great Chinese journalist, Liu Binyan, first estimated that 20 million died in the aftermath of the Leap. Gradually, as he collected reports he raised his estimate to 30 million. A member of the brain trust run by future Party secretary Zhao Ziyang came up with an estimate of 43 to 46 million after visiting several provinces and sampling reports. A member of the Chinese Public Security Administration arrived at a total of 30 million by calculating the number of ration cards that were prepared for 1959, 1960, and 1961 but not issued because the presumptive holders had died.*

Source 11.14 Harrison Salisbury, *The New Emperors: Mao and Deng – A Dual Biography*, HarperCollins, London, 1992, p. 166.

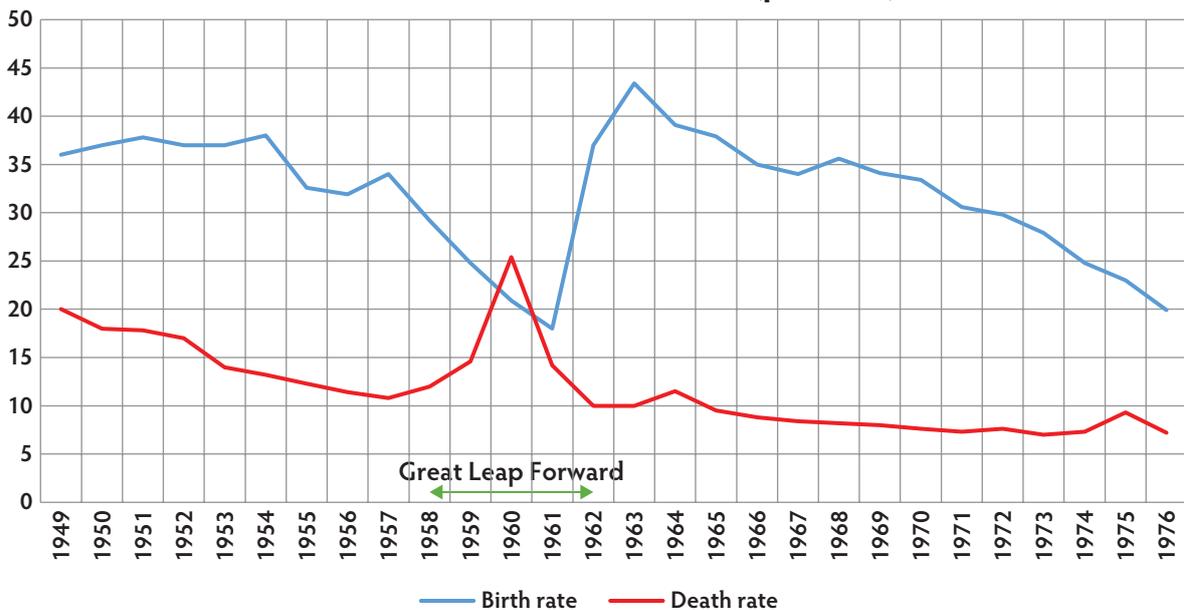
Yang Yisheng has probably completed the most thorough statistical analysis of the death toll of the Great Famine.

*My research in more than a dozen provinces leads me to conclude that the figure of 36 million approaches the reality but is still too low. Figures provided by those who experienced the Great Famine far exceed the figures used by the statisticians ...*

*Based on this analysis and on opinions from various quarters, I estimate that the Great Famine brought about 36 million unnatural deaths, and a shortfall of 40 million births. China’s total population loss during the Great Famine then comes to 76 million.*

Source 11.15 Yang Jisheng, *Tombstone: The Great Chinese Famine 1958–1962*, Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, New York, 2012, p. 430.

**Birth and death rates in China (per 1000)**



▲ Source 11.16 A graph of the birth and death rates in China, showing the increase of deaths during the Great Leap Forward. Adapted from International Historical Statistics, 2013, ed. Palgrave Macmillan



KEY HISTORIAN

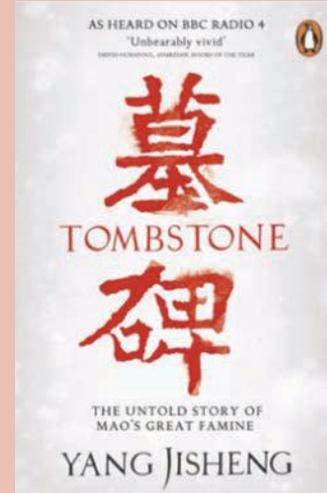


Yang Jisheng

Yang Jisheng was inspired to write *Tombstone* by a personal tragedy, but uses special access to official sources to put forward this harrowing account of human error and tragedy on an unbelievable scale. He worked for the official organ, Xinhua News Agency, from 1968 until 2001. The original Chinese version of *Tombstone* was published in May 2008.



▲ Source 11.17 Yang Jisheng



▲ Source 11.18 *Tombstone: The Untold Story of Mao's Great Famine*

11.5

SIGNIFICANT INDIVIDUAL



Liu Shaoqi (Liu Shao-ch'i) 刘少奇 (1896–1969)



▲ Source 11.19 Liu Shaoqi speaking with students in Beijing, 1957

Liu Shaoqi was born in Huomingla village, Ninxiang county in Hunan province. He attended middle school and then went to Shanghai to prepare for study in Russia. In 1921, he studied in Moscow where he joined the CCP. He returned in 1922 and led railway workers' strikes in central China. In 1925, Liu worked with Li Lisan in Shanghai. He was elected to the CCP Central Committee in 1927 and by 1932 was in the Politburo.

Like others, he travelled to the Jiangxi Soviet in 1932. Liu started in the Long March but was diverted to propaganda work in GMD areas, possibly due to contracting

tuberculosis. By 1937, Liu was in Yan'an as a political commissar. He led anti-Japanese movements in northern China. He became political commissar of the new Fourth Route Army in 1941. By 1945, Liu was the supreme head of all Communist forces in northern China.

Liu held various important positions in the new China. From 1956 to 1966, he was First Vice-Chairman of the Party. While he initially supported Mao's Great Leap Forward, he was critical by the 1959 Lushan Conference. He replaced Mao as Chairman, or President, of the PRC. In 1961, Liu was chosen as Mao's successor – a dangerous position, as Lin Biao was later to discover. He and Deng Xiaoping wound back the commune system to restart the economy, which infuriated Mao.

continued...

... continued

When Mao launched the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, Liu thought he could rein it in by sending work teams into the hot spots. Like a cat with a mouse, Mao played with him for a while before he publicly denounced Liu as the No. 1 Capitalist Roader. Liu was now on the defensive. The efforts of Zhou Enlai and the protection of the Zhongnanhai compound only gave him a short respite before Red Guards grabbed him and his fifth wife, Wang Guangmei. She was incarcerated for a decade, whereas Liu lasted only until 12 November 1969, dying naked in Kaifeng prison after being denied diabetes medication and treatment for pneumonia.

He was cremated under a false name and his family did not find out about his death for another three years. News of his death was made public 10 years later. In 1980, Deng Xiaoping had him posthumously rehabilitated and exonerated.



▲ Source 11.20 Mao, Liu Shaoqi and Song Qingling at Tian'anmen Square, October 1966

### THE STORY SO FAR

In his impatience to 'Catch Up with Britain' and free his country from debt to the Soviet Union, Mao chose to exploit China's greatest resource – its population. He launched the mass campaign to popularise communes and the decentralisation of industry. Unfortunately, Mao was no economist or steelmaker. Despite his rural origins, he did not know peasant farming well enough. Furthermore, his intolerance of dissent meant that it was some time before he was aware of the extent of the disaster: a famine of epic proportions, even for China. The short- and long-term effects of this disaster occupy the following chapters.

Use the QR code or visit the digital version of the book and watch the video summarising the chapter.





## Develop your historical thinking skills

### Define key terms

Write your own definition of each of the following key terms:

- Great Leap Forward
- communes
- work teams
- brigades
- cadres
- iron rice bowl
- backyard furnaces
- Four Pests Campaign
- 'Good News Reporting Stations'
- 'Sending Satellites to Heaven'.

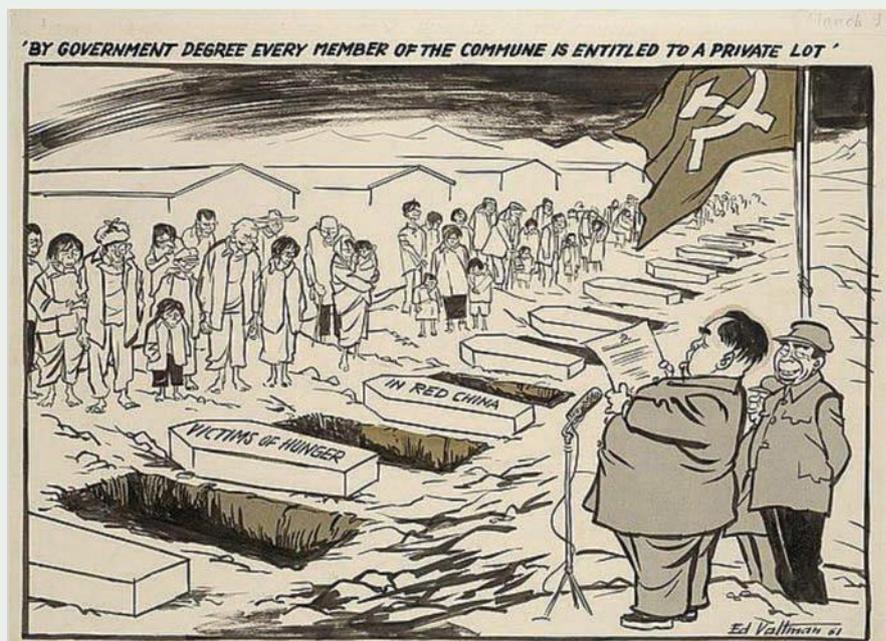
### Analysing cause and consequence

- 1 Critically evaluate what went wrong with the Great Leap Forward.
- 2 Account for why the madness went unchecked.

### Constructing historical arguments

To what extent was Mao responsible for the catastrophe that followed the Great Leap Forward?

### Analysing historical sources as evidence



▲ Source 11.21 *By Government decree every member of the commune is entitled to a private lot* by Edmund S. Valtman, 1961

- 1 Identify the two historical figures portrayed.
- 2 Identify the cause of the famine depicted.
- 3 Explain how the cartoonist uses black humour to mock the government's reference to 'private lots'.
- 4 Identify who actually led the government of the PRC by 1961, and outline their goal in relation to land.

## Analysing historian's interpretations

*Following the campaign against right deviation, the Great Leap Forward was revived in 1960, and that was the year in which the most people starved to death. In January 1961 the Ninth Plenum of the Eighth CCP Central Committee once again decided on a direction of 'adjustment, consolidation, replenishment, and enhancement' for the national economy, and a retreat from the Great Leap Forward. China's political system made it difficult for the policy makers in the Central Committee to understand what was actually going on at ground level, however. They learned of problems only several months after the fact, and what they were told was inevitably a pale shadow of the actual situation. The hindrance that the campaign against right deviation posed to rectification resulted in the Great Famine persisting for an extra three or four years.*

**Source 11.22** Yang Jisheng, *Tombstone: The Great Chinese Famine 1958–1962*, Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, New York, 2012, p. 433.

(Note: The use of 'rectification' here is not in the Maoist sense as used at Yan'an but in the normal sense of putting things right.)

- 1 In plain language, what does the political doublespeak of 'adjustment, consolidation, replenishment and enhancement' of the economy really mean?
- 2 Identify who led the campaign against 'right deviation' ('right' in the political sense).
- 3 Justify why it was necessary to dismantle the Great Leap Forward.
- 4 According to the article, and your own understanding, explain why the Central Committee was so slow to act.



# 12

## **MAO MOVED ASIDE, 1959–1965**

毛泽东退居幕后

*We have heard some thunder over the mountain.*

– LI RUI

## Overview

With the failure of the Great Leap Forward now obvious to members of the CCP, but not the nation, Mao ascended the Lu Mountains (**Lushan**) in 1959 to face the criticism for that disaster. Mao prepared a counter-attack that defeated his most vocal opponent but did not prevent Mao from resigning as Chairman of the PRC. Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping, with quiet support from Zhou, wound the clock back to revive China's economy. Meanwhile, Mao waited in the wings for his comeback.

**Lushan** a Jiangxi mountain resort famous as the location for Peng Dehuai's dismissal

## Key issues

- What happened at the Lushan conference?
- Who was Peng Dehuai?
- How did Liu and Deng attempt to revive China's economy?
- Why did the Soviet Union withdraw aid?
- What was the Socialist Education Movement?
- What was behind Mao's 'Learn from ...' campaigns?
- What were Mao's monumental constructions?
- What does 'Better Red than expert' mean?

## Digital resources for this chapter

In the *Interactive Textbook*:

-  Video and audio sources and questions
-  Digital activities

# Flow of chapter



# Timeline

**1959  
AUGUST**  
*Lushan Plenum meeting;  
Peng Dehuai dismissed  
as Minister of Defence*

**1965  
26 JUNE**  
*Mao Zedong calls for  
better health services  
for the peasants*

**1959  
10 MARCH**  
*Dalai Lama flees  
Tibet*



**1960  
16 JULY**  
*Soviet Union  
withdraws  
technicians*

**1962  
OCTOBER**  
*Border clash  
with India*



**1959  
27 APRIL**  
*Liu Shaoqi  
appointed  
Chairman of  
People's Republic  
of China*



**1959  
17 SEPTEMBER**  
*Lin Biao appointed  
Minister of Defence*



**1961  
FEBRUARY**  
*China arranges  
to import grain*



**1964  
16 OCTOBER**  
*China explodes  
an atomic  
bomb*

## 12.1 Mao turns defence into attack at Lushan

Lushan, or the Lu Mountains, is a mountain resort just south of Jiujiang in Jiangxi province. It had been a favourite of poets and of Jiang Jieshi. Mao chose this location for the Plenum of the CCP **Politburo**, which was to be the showdown for the dispute over the failure of the Great Leap Forward. By now the CCP was aware of the extent of the Leap's failure and it was time to apportion blame.

**Politburo** a key decisionmaking body of the CCP and PRC

Mao set what he thought would be a positive tone for the meetings, but as the conference broke into regional groups to discuss matters there was grumbling. On the eighth day, hearing of these complaints, Mao gathered the leaders and told them to remember the great gains made. This was a warning to cease criticism. On 14 July 1959, Peng Dehuai delivered a handwritten note to Mao, beginning with an account of the positives of the Great Leap but concluding with his criticisms. He did not directly blame Mao; nevertheless, it was a brave act from this straight-talking soldier of peasant background.

Mao had argued that the problems with the Great Leap were 70 per cent from natural causes (floods and drought) and 30 per cent from human causes (himself). Peng argued the reverse. Some members of the Lushan conference agreed with Peng. However, Mao threatened the Standing Committee of the Politburo, stating that he would go to the peasants and set up a new revolutionary party if he were not supported. They chose to back Mao and leave Peng out in the cold.

So, when Mao distributed Peng's letter to the various meetings, people rose to criticise Peng's 'Rightist' stance. Mao then attacked the letter at a combined meeting with Peng sitting at the back. Outside the meeting, an infuriated Peng refused to talk to Mao. Eventually the Party drew up a document accusing Peng and his few supporters of being bourgeois and anti-Party. Peng Dehuai was removed from leadership of the PLA and his place was given to Mao's supporter, Lin Biao.

### ANALYSIS ACTIVITY 12.1



#### Mao's speech at the Lushan conference of 23 July 1959 (an extract)

*There are about 700 000 production brigades; if each brigade makes one error, and you wanted to publish all 700 000 errors within a year, how could it be done? Moreover some articles are long and some short; it would take at least a year to publish them all. What would the result be? Our state would collapse and even if the imperialists didn't come, the people would rise up and overthrow us. If the paper you publish prints bad news every day, people will have no heart for their work. It wouldn't take as long as a year; we would perish within a week. To print 700 000 items all about bad things is not proletarian. It is more like a bourgeois country or party, like the political planning department of Chang Po-chün. Of course nobody present is in favour of this. I am exaggerating. But if we do 10 things and nine are bad, and they are all published in the press, then we will certainly perish, and will deserve to perish. In that case, I will go to the countryside to lead the peasants to overthrow the government. If those of you in the Liberation Army won't follow me, then I will go and find a Red Army, and organize another Liberation Army. But I think the Liberation Army would follow me.*



**KEY QUOTE**

Source 12.1 Mao's speech at the Lushan Conference

- 1 Justify Mao's defence in this extract, despite his earlier having admitted errors.
- 2 Identify the threat that ends this extract of Mao's speech.

## Lushan aftermath

Mao did not have it all his own way. The moderates in the Party managed to have Mao resign his chairmanship of the country while he retained the chairmanship of the CCP. The new Chairman was Liu Shaoqi, with Deng Xiaoping as his deputy. Mao had given up day-to-day power and the Party became deaf to his programs; however, as far as the people of China were concerned, his reputation was intact.

Mao also retained some important allies. Most ominously, as criticisms were levelled at Mao, his estranged wife, Jiang Qing, had rushed to Lushan to defend him. Lin Biao, who was also a late arrival, lined up to become the most vocal critic of Peng Dehuai. This combination of allies was vital for the upcoming Cultural Revolution that was to rock China.

### AMAZING BUT TRUE ...

In 1958, Jiang Qing – who was a hypochondriac – went searching for her nurse for medical assistance and found her in Mao’s bed. She was furious, and berated Mao and the nurse. Mao returned to Beijing, leaving Jiang Qing to regret her political indiscretion. She wrote Mao an apology and never again disturbed her husband’s amorous affairs. When the Great Hall of the People was built in 1959, adjacent to Tian’anmen Square, Mao had room 118, the ‘Beijing Room’, set aside for his personal dalliances with women.

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### ANALYSIS ACTIVITY 12.2



#### The political impact of Lushan

Harrison Salisbury succinctly summarised the political impact of Lushan:



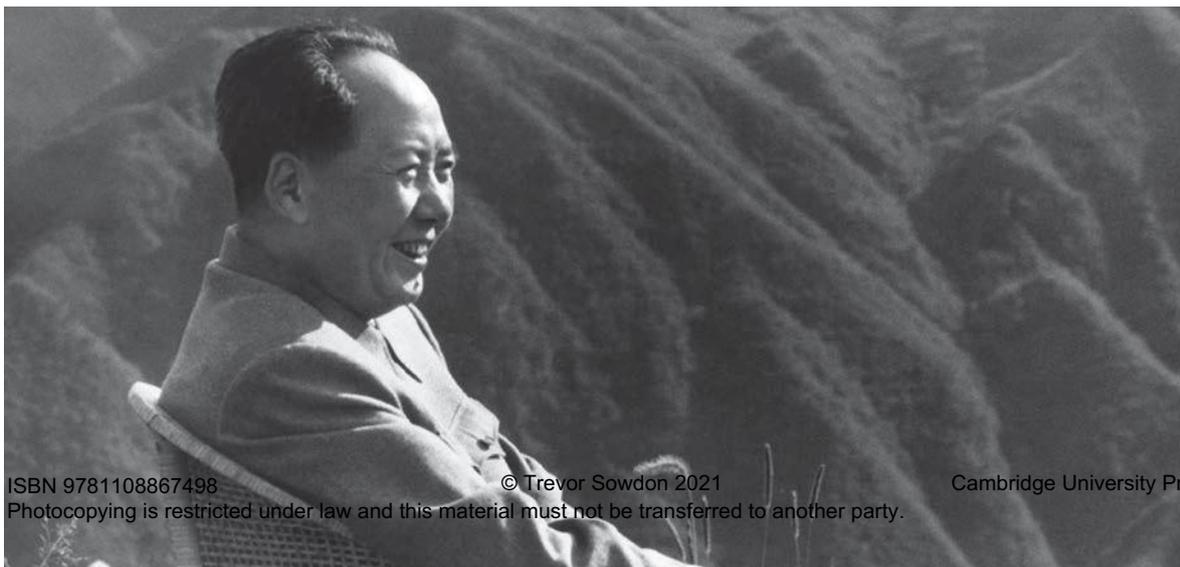
**KEY QUOTE** *The legacy of Lushan was not found in its regard for the truth but rather in the new, ominous bond forged between Mao and Jiang Qing, the barely noticed resurgence of Kang Sheng [head of State Security], and the quiet ease which Lin Biao now moved to the head of the table where sat the bewildered survivors of the Long March.*

*Later pondering these events, Zhu De, who had known all the comrades in good times and bad, shook his head and observed: ‘And to think that we once all ate out of the same rice bowl.’*

**Source 12.2** Harrison Salisbury, *The New Emperors: Mao and Deng*, HarperCollins, London, 1992, pp. 186–7.

- 1 Propose why Jiang Qing was not expected to play a political role.
- 2 Explain what Zhu De’s reference to the rice bowl means.
- 3 Examine why Zhu De would have sympathy for Peng.
- 4 Discuss what Salisbury is saying about the unity of the CCP.

#### ▼ Source 12.3 Mao at Lushan



## ANALYSIS ACTIVITY 12.3



## Mao's poem, 'Ascent of Lushan'

Following the Lushan Conference, Mao wrote the following poem about Lushan:

**Ascent of Lushan**

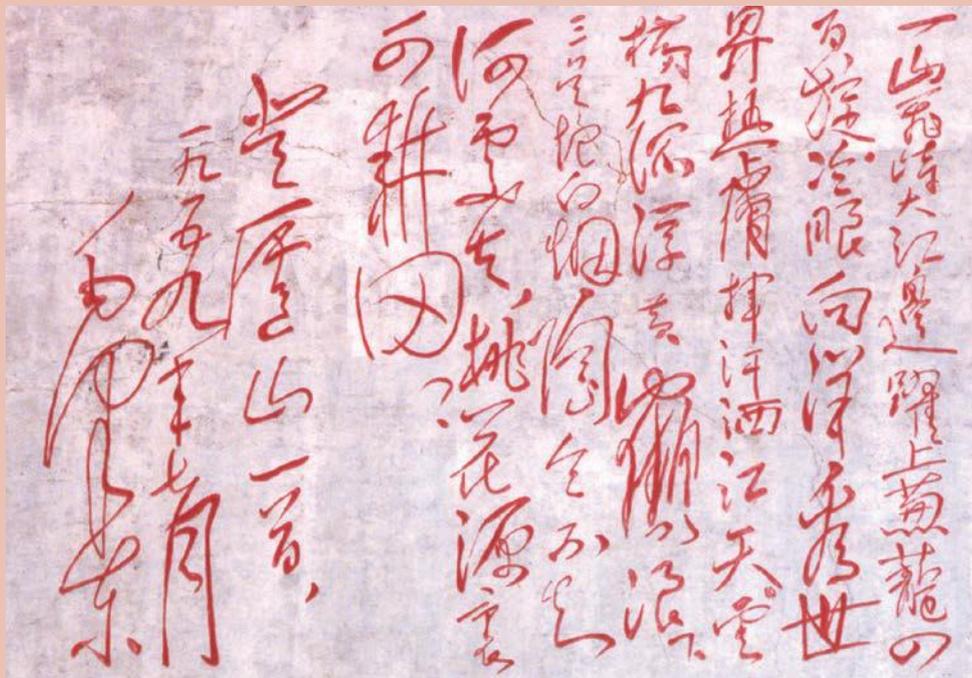
*Perching as after flight, the mountain towers over the great river;  
I have overleapt four hundred twists to its green crest.  
Cold-eyed I survey the world beyond the seas;  
A hot wind spatters raindrops on the sky-brooded waters.  
Clouds cluster over the nine streams, the yellow crane floating,  
And billows roll on to the eastern coast, white foam flying  
Who knows where Prefect Tao Yuanming\* has gone  
Now he can till the fields in the Land of Blooming Peaches?*

Source 12.4 Mao's poem

\* Tao Yuanming (365–427 AD) was a poet of the Eastern Jin Dynasty who resigned his post as a magistrate in Jiangxi rather than serve a corrupt regime. He returned to his village, where he grew crops and wrote poetry.

- 1 Although it is basically an optimistic poem, explore the misgivings suggested by references to Tao Yuanming, 'cold-eyed' and 'Land of Blooming Peaches' (heaven).
- 2 Evaluate what in the poem hints at the power of this poet.

## HISTORY THROUGH OBJECTS



▲ Source 12.5 'Ascent of Lushan' in Mao's calligraphy

Until recently, the illustration of Mao's poem, with his calligraphy and signature (on the left), featured on a billboard at the side of the road that climbs Lushan. Curiously, the poem has now been replaced by an advertisement.

## 12.2

## SIGNIFICANT INDIVIDUAL



**Peng Dehuai (P'eng Te-huai)**  
彭德怀 (1898–1974)

Peng Dehuai was born in Shixiang village, Xiantian county, in Hunan province, to a poor peasant family who could only keep him at school until he was 10. At the age of 16 Peng signed up as a soldier for a warlord. He rapidly rose to the rank of major. His forces were soon absorbed into the GMD military and Peng found himself fighting in the Northern Expedition. When the GMD split, Peng sided with the GMD left wing in Wuhan under Wang Jingwei. When the GMD reunited, Peng went back to the main GMD forces but soon quit, became a member of the CCP, and joined Mao and Zhu De at the Jiangxi Soviet.

Peng helped defend the Jiangxi Soviet against Jiang Jieshi's encirclement campaigns and supported Mao at Zunyi. He was also a senior commander in the defence of the Yan'an Soviet. When civil war with the GMD broke out, Peng was Deputy Commander of north-eastern China.

▲ Source 12.6 Peng Dehuai

Following the communist victory, Peng Dehuai was asked to be Direct Commander of the Chinese 'volunteers' in the Korean War, stepping in when Lin Biao had declined. Despite the deaths of over one million Chinese soldiers, the stalemate with the 'imperialist' powers was considered a victory as China had ended a century of military defeats and humiliations. Consequently, he became Minister for Defence from 1954 to 1959. Peng started to style the defence forces on the modern Soviet model, including the display of rank on uniforms. This was in contrast to Mao's vision of a people's army.

During Mao's Great Leap Forward, Peng visited his home county and witnessed the starvation and the way it was covered up. He informed the Party of what he saw and severely criticised the Great Leap. When Mao tried to explain the situation at the Lushan Conference as 30 per cent human error (i.e. Mao's error) and 70 per cent bad weather, Peng reversed the figures. At one stage of the conference, Mao wanted to consult with Peng about this, but Peng turned his back and gestured for Mao to stay away. Unfortunately for Peng, when Mao dug his heels in and the rest of the Party held back their support, he was dismissed as Minister for Defence, labelled part of an 'anti-Party clique' and purged from the CCP. In 1965, Liu and Deng tried to revive his political career, but in 1966 Lin Biao and Jiang Qing had him imprisoned. He was regularly trotted out for 'struggle sessions' where he wore the heavy board announcing his 'crimes' around his neck, was beaten and told to kowtow and confess his sins. The old warrior remained defiant.

Peng Dehuai died on 29 November 1974. In 1978, he was posthumously 'rehabilitated' and exonerated. He remains one of the 10 marshals honoured for their military contribution to the CCP.

## 12.3 Liu and Deng attempt to revive China's economy

Liu and Deng, with support from Zhou Enlai, began to undo some of the damage of the Great Leap Forward. Crops designated for industry made way for food crops. Light industry, such as the backyard furnaces, was replaced by heavy industry. It made more sense to have steel foundries located near iron and coal deposits. Communes were downsized and peasants were encouraged to cultivate private plots for personal needs or sale. Grain exports were stopped, and soon grain was imported. By 1962, China was again producing bountiful harvests.



▲ Source 12.7 Liu Shaoqi

| Exporting country | Million tonnes |
|-------------------|----------------|
| Australia         | 2.74           |
| Canada            | 2.34           |
| Burma             | 0.3            |
| France            | 0.285          |
| Germany           | 0.25           |
| Argentina         | 0.045          |
| <b>Total</b>      | <b>5.96</b>    |

▲ Source 12.8 Table of China's imports of grain by country in 1961



On the political front, the new leadership was beginning the process of rehabilitating those previously labelled 'Rightists'. **Rehabilitation** was simply restoring the reputation of those condemned as 'rightists' by the CCP, sometimes posthumously.

Mao was opposed to both such policies but found himself increasingly ignored – albeit still given respect. He felt his revolution had been betrayed by this Chinese New Economic Policy (NEP), which was Lenin's reversal of his own policy following famines in Russia.

**rehabilitation**  
welcoming back  
to the Party  
by reform or  
exoneration

## 12.4 Why did the Soviet Union withdraw aid?

Tension between China and the Soviet Union, and Mao and Khrushchev, had been brewing for years. China and Russia had brief clashes over border disputes. When China and India used violence to dispute their common border, the Soviet Union supported India. The Soviet Union was critical of China's unprovoked shelling of the Taiwan-held islands of Quemoy and Mazu, off the coast of Fujian, in 1958, whereas Mao was intolerant of Khrushchev's criticism of the Great Leap Forward and the Soviet Union's softer approach to the West. In August 1960, Khrushchev withdrew Russian funding, experts and blueprints for major projects.

China was forced to stand on its own two feet. The projects achieved without Russian aid became a source of national pride. One such project was the completion of the road and rail bridge over the wide and powerful Yangzi River at Nanjing. China discovered that it had the engineers and experience it needed, a fact overlooked by reliance on China's 'elder brother'.

## 12.5 What was the Socialist Education Movement?

*houmen* 'back door'; bypassing official channels

*guanxi* 'influence' or 'connections'; using connections for self-promotion

**Socialist Education Movement** Mao's attempt to counter Liu and Deng's policies

Mao was not a spent power, as he still had his prestige and nominal control over the CCP. While he could still initiate policies, he was unable to force their implementation. The Party nodded to his demands, but they were often ignored. Mao fumed over the dismantling of his brand of socialism and what he saw as China making the same errors as the Soviet Union. Most importantly, Mao did not like being ignored or betrayed.

To some extent, Mao had reason to be concerned. Education tended to be bookish and catered to the elite, while the best medical services were available to city dwellers – particularly Party members and their families. Transport and housing were also inequitable. The Party cadres and their families were the new elite. While their salaries were comparable with those in other sectors, their perks made them a privileged class. The old feudal practices of *houmen* and *guanxi* still thrived. *Houmen*, meaning 'back door', enabled party members to gain access to goods and entertainment without having to wait in line. This greatly encouraged bribery. *Guanxi*, meaning 'influence', ensured that family members were more likely to gain cushy employment or access to the best education.

**KEY EVENT**

To fight this trend – especially in the communes – Mao put forward the **Socialist Education Movement** in 1963 with a prime aim of restoring the communes and giving power back to the poor peasants in the brigades. This would encourage them to criticise the Party cadres. In his 'Ten Points', Mao wanted urban work teams to check on commune administration. Mao was annoyed when Liu Shaoqi issued his 'Ten Revised Points', which diluted Mao's proposal. The work teams investigating the communes were less radical than Mao had envisaged, especially when Liu's wife, Wang Guangmei, was in one of those teams.

▼ **Source 12.9** A student from China's People University in Beijing teaches agricultural techniques to rural youth.



## 12.6 What was behind Mao's 'Learn from ...' campaigns?

To push for a return to his view of China, Mao launched a series of campaigns designed to encourage the nation to emulate great socialist examples, much as Stalin had done with his model worker, Stakhanov. Appropriately, the three great campaigns focused on agriculture, industry and the army.

### Learn from Dazhai

**Dazhai** was a commune that had survived the Great Leap Forward. Its growth afterwards became the stuff of Maoist legend. The commune was in the tough hilly area of Shanxi province. Its chairman, Chen Yonggui, told the commune that it had to restore the flood-damaged fields during the day and work on housing at night. The peasants were not to ask for government handouts but to rely on their own labour and resourcefulness. They were given the three 'Nos' – no to money, no to shelter and no to gifts of grain. The success of the commune was published nationwide and, to Mao, was a ringing endorsement of his communes policy. Chen Yonggui was brought to Beijing, where he was received by Mao and spoke to the National People's Congress. Mao then coined the expression 'Learn from Dazhai'. Chen even made it to the Politburo. Politicians made pilgrimages to Dazhai, which soon had VIP accommodation and bus bays. Jiang Qing loved to visit 'her' Dazhai. National 'Learn from Dazhai' conferences were held there.

**Dazhai** a model commune

Unfortunately, it was all a sham. The initial effort at reconstruction was real, but soon Mao was pouring millions of Chinese yuan (dollars) from his unaudited slush fund into it and arranging for the PLA to dig aqueducts, build dams, construct roads and erect a hotel. Its production figures were as false as any from the Great Leap, and no other commune was permitted to exceed them. The moderate elements of the Party challenged the reports and the propaganda faded. But until Mao's death, the people of China still believed the myth.

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#### ANALYSIS ACTIVITY 12.4



##### Learn from Dazhai poster



- 1 Identify those features in the poster that suggest productivity and happiness.
- 2 To what extent did the poster match the reality of Dazhai?

◀ Source 12.10 A 'Learn from Dazhai' poster

## Learn from Daqing

**Daqing** a model work unit – oilfield

North of Harbin, in what was Manchuria and is now Heilongjiang, is **Daqing**.

Originally it was cold wasteland until a group of oil drillers led by ‘Iron Man’ Wang set up operations there. It was hard work in a hostile environment, but they struck oil and it was a bountiful supply, making China self-sufficient in oil. Mao kept this quiet until 1964, when he announced their success to the nation. ‘Iron Man’ Wang was also made a hero, and Mao urged the nation: ‘In Industry Learn from Daqing’. While this was more genuine than Dazhai, it was never really imitated as a worker-led model for Chinese industry. This did not stop Zhou Enlai, Deng Xiaoping and Liu Shaoqi making well-publicised visits to Daqing, however.

### ANALYSIS ACTIVITY 12.5



#### Learn from Daqing



**学习大庆精神, 坚持独立自主、自力更生的伟大方针**

▲ Source 12.11 A ‘Learn from Daqing’ poster

- 1 Identify the ‘heroic’ features of the Daqing workers.
- 2 To what extent did the poster match the reality of the Daqing oilfield?

### AMAZING BUT TRUE ...

In 1968, Red Guards came to Daqing and targeted ‘Iron Man’ Wang. He was beaten, humiliated, denied food and beaten again. They accused him of being a reactionary, as he had worked under the GMD when they were in power. Finally, they left him to drown in a cesspool. He was rescued but never recovered and died in 1970 of stomach cancer. Mao showed no sorrow or remorse.

## Learn from Lei Feng

Mao had wanted the PLA to continue in the vein of the Red Army, as an egalitarian army steeped in politics and intertwined with the people. Following the Soviet example, Peng Dehuai had tried to build a modern, professional army with all the ranks and trappings of modern armies. He brought in insignia on the uniforms to indicate rank. While this eventually disappeared after Peng's dismissal, Mao still considered the PLA to be removed from the people. As part of his 'Learn from the PLA' campaign, he raised an unknown soldier, called **Lei Feng**, to posthumous glory.

Lei Feng was a soldier who died saving others in a train wreck. It is difficult to separate fact from fiction in the accounts of Lei Feng. His diary was supposed to reflect his revolutionary zeal and his willingness to help others, even to the extent of sewing buttons on other people's clothes. In brief, he was the model PLA soldier who was more concerned with being a good comrade than becoming an elitist soldier. So a national campaign of 'Learn from Lei Feng' posters featured Lei Feng or PLA soldiers helping the people. Some of these posters are still in Chinese schools today.

Echoing Mao's thoughts, the new Minister for War, Lin Biao, produced a book consisting of the selected quotations of Chairman Mao and issued a copy to each PLA soldier. They were told to study the *Quotations of Chairman Mao* – or, as we know it today, *The Little Red Book*.

**Lei Feng** a model PLA soldier who died saving others

*Quotations of Chairman Mao*  
*The Little Red Book*, put together by Lin Biao



▲ Source 12.12 'Study Hard, Follow Lei Feng'

## 12.7 Mao's monumental constructions

'The Third Line' was Mao's preparation in case the United States should attack China. It was the vast shifting of industry and defensive capabilities to the west of China, involving difficult and costly rail links – not unlike Jiang Jieshi's policy in the war against Japan. The project was aimed at having Chinese industry and defence forces survive an atomic attack. It was a hugely expensive and unnecessary white elephant that cost the nation billions of dollars to set up and later dismantle.

Mao also wanted a parade ground to rival Red Square in Moscow. He had the land in front of Tian'anmen ('Gate of Heavenly Peace' in the southern opening of the Forbidden City) levelled and in 10 months the huge square was ready for the October Day parade to mark the 10th anniversary of the PRC – 1 October 1959 – including twin historical museums on the east, with one devoted to China's regular history and one to its revolutionary history.

## 12.8 'Better Red than expert'

Mao lamented the rise of intellectuals who had specialist knowledge but no sympathy with the common people or understanding of Maoist ideology. Universities were increasingly less likely to take on those without an academic background. Experience and a working-class background were no longer seen as important prerequisites. While the lesser institutions still catered for those who worked and studied in their spare time, such students tended to be scorned.

**barefoot doctors**  
those sent to serve the countryside with basic medical training

**KEY QUOTE**

Believing that being 'Red' (of correct ideology) was better than being 'expert', Mao decided to tackle the rural health crisis by reviving the practice of **barefoot doctors**. These were young people who were given basic training in health, including traditional Chinese medicine, and sent out into the rural communities. This was coupled with the promotion of medical clinics in the communes, financed by modest contributions from the peasants themselves. This theme of 'Better Red than expert' was to dominate even more in the forthcoming Cultural Revolution.

### FOCUS QUESTIONS

- 1 What was Mao trying to revive in these campaigns?
- 2 Who did Mao want the populace to emulate (imitate)?

### ANALYSIS ACTIVITY 12.6



#### Barefoot doctors



▲ Source 12.13 A team of barefoot doctors attends a rural patient of the Li minority.

- 1 Assess the propaganda value of having a person from an ethnic minority featured.
- 2 Outline the skills a barefoot doctor can bring to rural patients.
- 3 In terms of practical value, distinguish what this program delivers that the other 'reforms' of Mao do not.

## THE STORY SO FAR



While Mao was semi-retired following the failure of the Great Leap Forward, his image was intact through the Party's unwillingness to reveal the extent of the famines that followed. As Chairman of the Party, and having his choice as Minister for Defence, Mao was still a man of great influence despite Party members trying to undo his Great Leap Forward and restore China. Mao's attempts to revive the revolutionary spirit involved his 'Learn from ...' campaigns and the Socialist Education Movement. While none of these worked as well as he had hoped, Mao was flexing his muscles for his return to power in the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.



▲ Source 12.14 A convivial photo featuring, among others, Zhou Enlai, Zhu De, Mao, Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping. It wasn't long before Liu was removed, Zhu De was moved aside, Deng disappeared only to keep returning, and Lin Biao and Jiang Qing took centre stage for a while.



Use the QR code or visit the digital version of the book and watch the video summarising the chapter.

## Develop your historical thinking skills

### Define key terms

Write your own definition of each of the following key terms:

- Politburo
- rehabilitation
- *houmen*
- *guanxi*
- Dazhai
- Daqing
- Lei Feng
- barefoot doctors.

### Activities

- 1 Research the barefoot doctors' program. Check out its unexpected origins connected to Professor John B. Grant, the Chinese-born son of a Canadian medical missionary. See whether you can locate an English version of *The Barefoot Doctor's Manual*.
- 2 Without recourse to the original, draft the letter you think Peng Dehuai may have written to Mao at the Lushan Conference. Then compare it to any excerpts you can obtain of the original.

### Analysing cause and consequence

- 1 Explain how Mao was able to remain Chairman of the CCP when the great famine that followed the Great Leap Forward was so devastating.
- 2 What aspects of past history should have forewarned Peng Dehuai about speaking up?

### Constructing historical arguments

To what extent had Mao abandoned the careful planning of the First Five-Year Plan and adopted an 'ad hoc' (unplanned) policy?

## Analysing historical sources as evidence



▲ Source 12.15 A PLA barber cuts a boy's hair.

- 1 Identify the message that this poster sends about the PLA.
- 2 Explain the significance of the boy holding a toy rifle.
- 3 To what extent does this poster connect to Mao's 'Learn from Lei Feng' campaign?
- 4 Compare the image of this soldier to that of the GMD soldiers before 1945.

## Analysing historian's interpretations

*Before the Cultural Revolution when revisionism was the standard line in medicine, as it was in everything else, specialisation had become so minute that a physician knew nothing about pharmacy and a surgeon, so specialised in his own field, did not even know how to take care of a common cold. Those who were trained in Western medicine knew nothing about Chinese medicine, and vice versa; those responsible for curing diseases were completely lost when one spoke with them about the prevention of these diseases. They all worked in the cities, taking care of the needs of the privileged. Today's barefoot doctors, on the other hand, work in the countryside among the poor and middle peasants, with whom they completely identify. They study not just theories, but what the peasants actually need. They are so versatile that they know both Western and Chinese medicine. They are pharmacists as well as physicians, and they know not only how to cure but also how to prevent diseases. They constantly strive to improve their skill and, most importantly, they are always considerate and understanding in their relations with patients.*

Source 12.16 'People's Daily', Beijing, 15 June 1976, p. 1, in Dun J Li's, *Modern China: From Mandarin to Commissar*, Scribner, New York, 1978, pp. 376–377.

- 1 Compare how the barefoot doctors' program aligns with the slogan of 'Better Red than expert'.
- 2 Account for what, in the style of this article, lays it open to the charge of propaganda.
- 3 What are your thoughts when you consider that, at the time of this publication, Mao had a Western-educated personal doctor?



13

**CULTURAL REVOLUTION 1:  
CHAOS UNLEASHED, 1966–1969**

无产阶级文化大革命 ~ 天下大乱

*To rebel is justified.*

– MAO ZEDONG

**提高警惕, 保卫祖国!**

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## Overview

Mao looked unfavourably on the way Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping were reshaping China. After several attempts to win the Party back to his way of thinking, Mao realised that his road back to power was not through the Party that ignored him or through the PLA generals who were divided in their loyalties. He decided to appeal to the children of the Party members who were ignorant of the Great Leap failures and keen to be freed from their traditional restraints. What Mao released was a powerful force with only vague directions. So the period that the Chinese know as the Shinián *Luan* (Ten Years of Chaos) began.

*luan* 'chaos': a reference to the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (GCPR)

## Key issues

- What was the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution?
- Why did Mao swim the Yangzi River?
- What does 'Bombard the Headquarters' mean?
- Who were Mao's Red Guards?
- What is the significance of the *Quotations of Chairman Mao*?
- What was behind the Red Guard rampages?
- Why were the youth 'sent down' to the countryside?

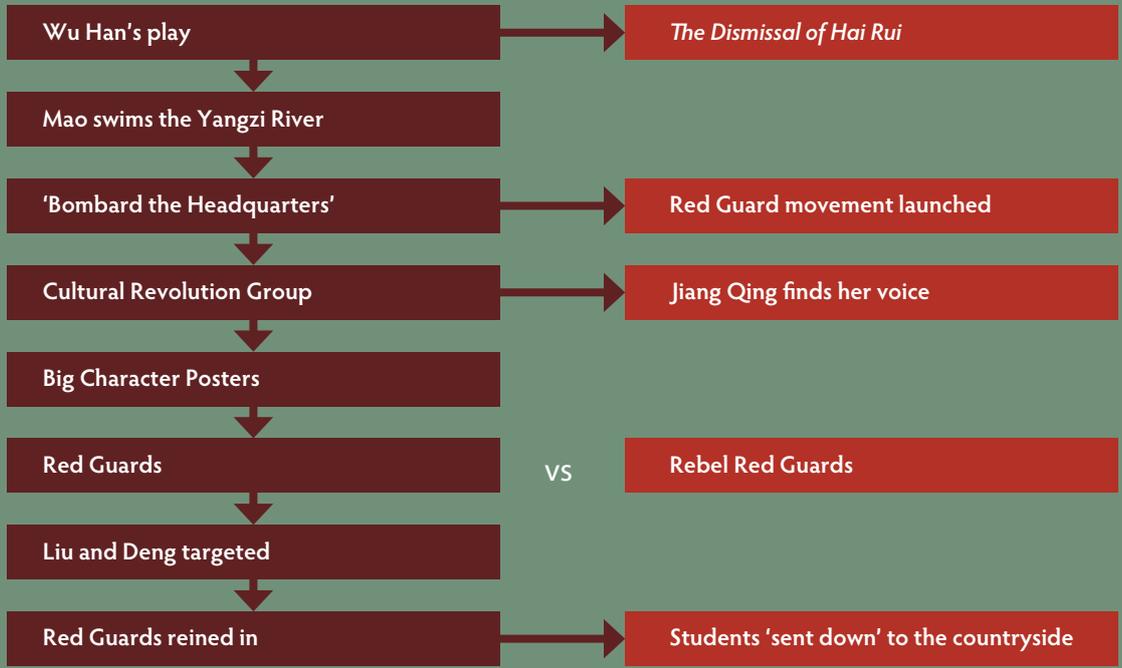
## Digital resources for this chapter

In the *Interactive Textbook*:

-  Video and audio sources and questions
-  Digital activities

◀ Source 13.0 'Vigilance, Defend the Motherland!'

# Flow of chapter



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# Timeline

1965  
10 NOVEMBER  
Yao Wenyan's article attacking The Dismissal of Hai Rui is published



1966  
16 MAY  
Politburo sets up Cultural Revolution Group

1966  
5 AUGUST  
Mao's poster 'Bombard the Headquarters' is published



1966  
SEPTEMBER  
The Little Red Book (Quotations of Chairman Mao) published for public use

1967  
23 JANUARY  
The PLA instructed to assist the 'revolutionary masses'

1969  
APRIL  
Mao Zedong Thought official basis of new constitution



1966  
16 JULY  
Mao Zedong's famous swim in the Yangzi River announces his return

1966  
20 AUGUST  
Red Guards begin attacks on the 'Four Olds'

1967  
30 MARCH  
'Red Flag' accuses 'top person' (Liu) of taking the capitalist road



1968  
31 OCTOBER  
Liu Shaoqi expelled from the Party

## 13.1 Wu Han's play and the Cultural Revolution

Wu Han, the deputy mayor of Beijing, wrote a play called *The Dismissal of Hai Rui*. It was based on the story of a Qing minister, Hai Rui, who was dismissed from office for being critical of the emperor Jiaqing. While he was in prison, he was served an excellent meal, which he assumed would be his last. The jailer informed him that the meal was due to the death of the emperor and that Hai Rui could expect to be released soon. Hai Rui rejected the meal and went into mourning for the emperor. Mao went to see this play in the early 1960s, and enjoyed it, particularly because of Hai Rui's continued loyalty to the emperor. Mao may have seen himself as an emperor, but he had no idea that the play referred to his dismissal of Minister for Defence Peng Dehuai.

This was unusual, as China has a long tradition of using allegory to make political criticisms and escape punishment. Perhaps Mao's ego did not allow him to see the point. However, others did see the play as a criticism, and informed Mao. Mao then used a crony to launch an attack on Wu Han's play, even though it had long ceased its short season of performance. Yao Wenyuan (soon to be a member of the Gang of Four) was chosen to write the attack on Wu Han in the Shanghai literary magazine, *Wen Hui Bao*. It was repeated in Beijing publications. Mao then called on the Five-Man Group of the Cultural Revolution, formed in 1964, to debate the article. Presenting the article as an academic debate were Peng Zhen, Mayor of Beijing and mentor of Wu Han, and Lu Dingyi, Head of Propaganda. Leading the attack was Mao's notorious henchman Kang Sheng (Head of State Security), who labelled the playwright as 'anti-Party' and 'anti-socialist'. Mao allowed Peng to publish an intra-Party circular, the *February Outline Report*, stressing the committee's view that discussion of the play was to be on an academic basis. Peng Zhen had walked into Mao's trap, from which would emerge the *Wuchan jieji Wenhua Dageming* – the **Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution** (GPCR, or Cultural Revolution).

Mao asked the Politburo to abolish the Five-Man Group. In its stead, a new group – the Central Cultural Revolution Small Group – was formed with Chen Boda, Kang Sheng, Jiang Qing and other pro-Mao leftists. Jiang Qing was finally free of the restrictions that had kept her out of politics since her marriage to Mao in Yan'an. She revelled in her newly acquired status, and her hypochondria of recent years vanished. Now she was free to seek revenge on those she felt had held her back or treated her with contempt.

**Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (GPCR)** Mao's return to supremacy, 1966–1976



**KEY EVENT**

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▲ Source 13.1 Yao Wenyuan



▲ Source 13.2 Zhou Enlai, Lin Biao, Mao Zedong and Jiang Qing

## 13.2 Why did Mao swim the Yangzi River?

Mao loved to swim at every opportunity, but when he swam in the Yangzi River on 16 July 1966, there was a political statement to be made. Mao was announcing to China that he was still fit and determined enough to lead the country, and to bring on the Cultural Revolution. Newspapers around

**capitalist roader**  
a derogatory term  
accusing one of  
moving away from  
communism

the world featured Mao's large head and frame bobbing out of the water, acknowledging that they also knew the significance of the event. Chinese newspapers reported a swimming speed to beat all swimming records, which would

be correct if one didn't allow for the fast current of the river!

This was a statement to the people that he was not retired, that the **'capitalist roaders'** were now on notice and that the CCP dared no longer to hold him accountable for the Great Famine that they had kept hidden from the masses. Like Vladimir Putin hunting bare-chested or Kim Jong-un on horseback, many leaders like to intimidate their opposition.



▲Source 13.3 Mao in the Yangzi River, 1966

## 13.3 'Bombard the Headquarters'

**'Bombard the Headquarters'**

Mao's call to attack his own party and leaders generally

**work teams (post 1966)** a group of government officials sent to investigate/suppress a problem.

**dazibao** Big Character Posters designed to criticise a supposed enemy

As he had done in Yan'an and with the Hundred Flowers campaign, Mao turned on the Party. When his article **'Bombard the Headquarters'** appeared in August, he gave the students the invitation to attack CCP cadres. Peng Zhen, who had tried to protect Wu Han, came under attack. Luo Ruiqing, the Chief of the Joint Staff who had been ousted by Lin Biao, was forced to make a self-criticism and later survived a fall from a building that may have been a suicide attempt. After that, he was unable to use his legs and was degradingly presented to rallies in a basket. Head of Propaganda Lu Dingyi, who had sided with Peng Zhen, was also forced to endure humiliation at rallies. The worst aspect of such vengeful tactics was that the families were often targeted too. This was a modern version of the imperial punishment to the third degree (three generations).

To try to rein in the growing chaos, which was most obvious in the two key universities – Beijing University and Qinghua University – the moderates in the Party decided to use the tactic of sending in **work teams** to redirect or subdue the student agitations. In most cases, the agitation had gone too far for these work teams to have much effect. By the time they arrived, the university students and radical teachers had removed or imprisoned the administration, and the walls were littered with **dazibao**, or Big Character Posters. While such posters were supposedly free expression of students' grievances and views, the hand of Mao was often behind their criticisms. Leaders such as Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping must have seen that they would be next in the firing line. Ironically, many of the students rallying to 'defend' Chairman Mao were the children of cadres. In a technique reminiscent of George Orwell's novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Mao was using his perceived enemies' own children against them.

## ANALYSIS ACTIVITY 13.1



## 'Bombard the Headquarters' poster



▲ Source 13.4 Mighty thunderbolts open up a new world – 'Bombard the Headquarters' poster

- 1 In the poster, Mao has just written 'Bombard the Headquarters'. Explain what the 'headquarters' refer to.
- 2 Comment on the diverse elements of the angry crowd that Mao is directing.
- 3 Discuss what this poster and your own knowledge suggests about Mao's motives and intention.

## 13.4 Who were Mao's Red Guards?

When Mao called on Chinese youth to defend him, the university students were first to respond. He justified their actions with the slogan, 'To rebel is justified'. Then came the high school students. Later, workers were encouraged to join in. They picked up the name Hong Weibing, or **Red Guards**, and began wearing red armbands emblazoned with that name. To be a Red Guard, you were required to be of suitable revolutionary background – the child of a Party official, peasant, worker or soldier.

In August 1966, the first big rally of Red Guards was held in Mao's enlarged Tian'anmen Square. There were about a million Red Guards from all over the country. They stood there for six hours, listening to speeches by Lin Biao and others. The highlight was when some were personally presented to Mao, who received them in what was to become typical attire – his shabby green military uniform. The Red Guards saw this as a cue for them to dress in this nondescript and, for the girls, asexual manner.

In his address, Lin Biao launched an attack on the **Four Olds**. These were old ideas, old customs, old culture and old habits. With such a broad agenda, the Red Guards were empowered to attack almost any target they chose – and they did. The chaos and trauma of this time later inspired a whole genre of personal accounts by surviving victims, called 'scar literature' or 'literature of the wounded', with Jung Chang's *Wild Swans* being the most famous of these.



KEY QUOTE

**Red Guards**  
Mao's 'Little Generals', whose devotion brought him back to power

**Four Olds** old ideas, customs, culture and habits



**link-ups** Red Guards travelling to Beijing to see Mao  
**Great Helmsman** a reference to Mao steering the ship of state

Such rallies became common for a while. They were called **link-ups**. Students armed with copies of *The Little Red Book* would march to Beijing or travel free on the trains. They would quote Mao, sing revolutionary songs and trade Mao badges for their collections. In Beijing, they were transported by the PLA to dormitories until it was time to assemble in Tian'anmen Square. There, they endured long hours waiting for Mao's appearance, which was so fleeting or distant that many missed actually seeing the **Great Helmsman**.



▲ Source 13.5 The Red Guards gather at Tian'anmen Square, 1966

ANALYSIS ACTIVITY 13.2



The Red Guards



▲ Source 13.6 Mao wearing a Red Guard armband

- 1 Outline the message this poster sends to the people of China about Red Guards.
- 2 How, and why, did Mao elevate the Red Guards?
- 3 The caption reads, 'Keep in step with Chairman Mao's progress amid the storms'. Interpret the meaning of this caption.

AMAZING BUT TRUE ...

At the first Red Guard rally, one of the female Red Guards, Song Binbin, was allowed to put a Red Guard armband on Mao. When Mao discovered her name was Binbin, meaning 'refined', Mao suggested she call herself Yaowu (Be militant). It was assumed that she would have heeded the suggestion of the Chairman, but when she was tracked down in 2008, she revealed that she did not in fact change her name.

Many Red Guards changed their names as a sign of patriotism. Jung Chang changed her name to Hong (swan-goose) because it was a homophone for *hong*, meaning ‘red’. Patriotic names involving ‘east’, ‘red’ or ‘vermillion’ became popular. So did the idea of having a one-character given name, in imitation of Lin Biao or Jiang Qing (but strangely not Mao Zedong). Even streets were being renamed by Red Guards. In Beijing, the road running past the British Mission was renamed ‘Anti-Imperialism Road’. There was even a move to have the red signal on traffic lights indicate ‘go’, but Zhou Enlai convinced them that the existing system was better because in the West the capitalists had to stop for red.

#### AMAZING BUT TRUE ...

Before the Cultural Revolution Jiang Qing suffered from hypochondria and Lin Biao lived a secluded life because of his phobias. Once they were on the crest of Cultural Revolution activities, Lin forgot about his phobias and Jiang no longer needed to be accompanied by a personal physician.



▲ Source 13.7 Red Guards demonstrate their support for Mao

## 13.5 Quotations of Chairman Mao

Also known as *The Little Red Book*, the selected quotations [from Mao's *Selected Works Vols I to IV*] originally appeared as an ongoing feature in the 'PLA Daily'. These were promoted by Lin Biao who enjoined the PLA to '... even learn by heart a few key sentences, repeatedly study and make use of them'. The next move was for the PLA to publish them as a book, originally with 355 quotations listed under 30 topics, in May 1964.

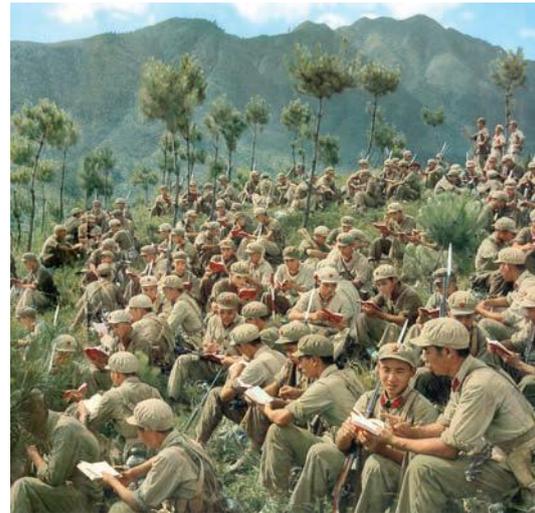
The initial print run was of 4.2 million copies, but demand exceeded supply so, by August 1965, over 12 million copies had been printed. Then plastic covers were added to make them more durable and they were made pocket-size. It soon became an indispensable accessory for Red Guards and those wanting to avoid criticism. Quotations from this book could be used to obtain a seat on a train or to condemn your enemy.

The calligraphy for the dedication was by Lin Biao and was itself a quotation from Lei Feng: ‘Study Chairman Mao’s writings, follow Chairman Mao’s teachings, act according to Chairman Mao’s instructions, and be a good fighter for Chairman Mao.’ From the mid-sixties to the mid-seventies this was the most printed book in the world, temporarily challenging the Bible.

*The Little Red Book* sold in foreign language editions and was bought by would-be socialists in France and English-speaking countries. It sold well in satellite Soviets of the USSR. However, it was not popular in Russia itself.



- Mao the brightest of Red Suns
- Mao in PLA uniform (imitated by Red Guards)
- On superstructure 'The East is Red'
- Mao steering the ship of state through stormy seas



▲ Source 13.8 The cover of *The Little Red Book*

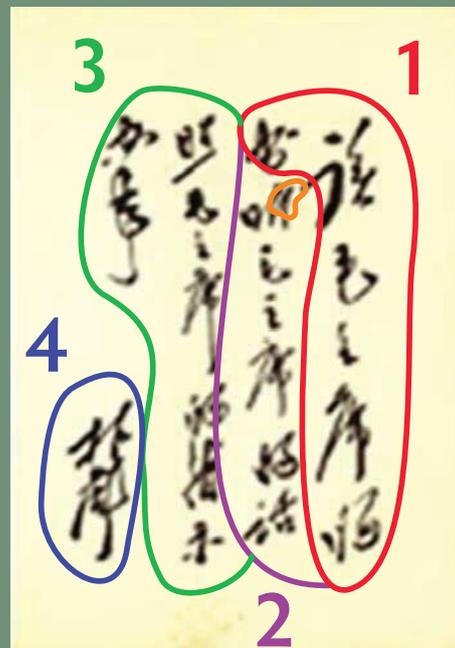
▲ Source 13.9 PLA soldiers reading *The Little Red Book*

AMAZING BUT TRUE ...

In his first calligraphic dedication in *The Little Red Book*, Lin Biao not only omitted Lei Feng’s fourth comment but miswrote a character by adding a superfluous dot.

- 1 Study Chairman Mao’s writings.
- 2 Follow Chairman Mao’s teachings.
- 3 Act according to Chairman Mao’s instructions, (missing) and be a good fighter for Chairman Mao.
- 4 Lin’s signature.

Orange circle: the embarrassing addition to the character ‘listen’.



## 13.6 What was behind the Red Guard rampages?

With all restraints removed, the Red Guards attacked anyone associated with the Four Olds. At first it was an opportunity to settle old scores against teachers who may have given them bad grades or who had been critical of them. This advanced to parading through neighbourhoods and destroying non-Marxist books, antiques, paintings and any souvenirs of the West. The attacks were Stalinist in that they were unexpected and based on the flimsiest of pretexts.

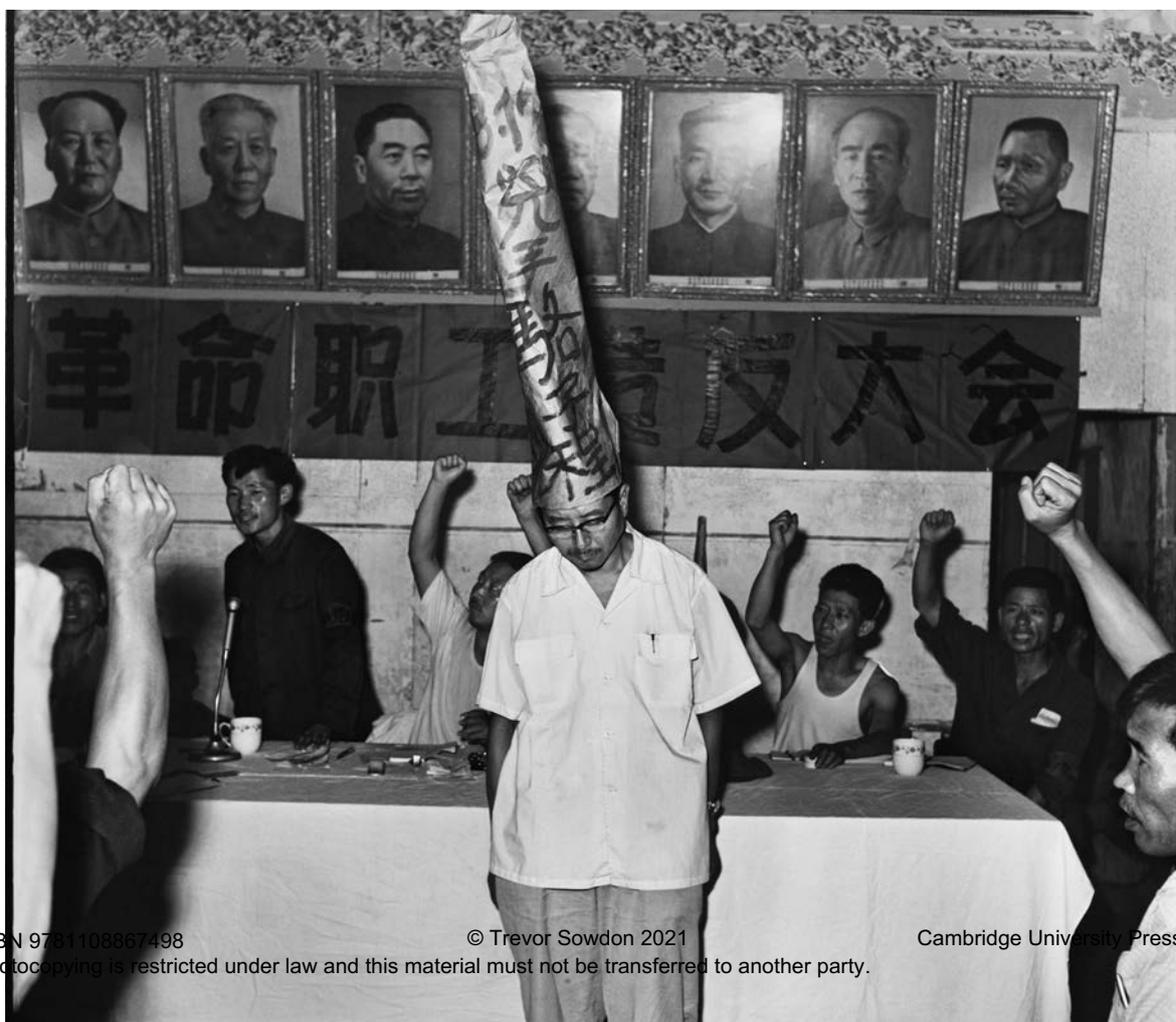
Among this almost random chaos, there was a pattern. The Red Guards were used by Mao to seek out and destroy his enemies – those who had criticised or ignored him. In the provinces, local officials would manipulate the Red Guards to bring down their rivals. This often resulted in one Red Guard faction fighting another. The clashes were often very violent, and the army often stood by while one faction of Red Guards raided their weapons depots to kill the other faction.

### Struggle sessions

Teachers and principals would find themselves brought in for struggle sessions, which involved them being criticised by the students and often beaten. Then they were forced to write self-criticisms before being locked up in places as degrading as a closet or set menial duties such as cleaning toilets or carting night soil. Those Party members or intellectuals who had been targeted often found themselves presented to large rallies with a large board placed around their necks with the wire biting deeply into their flesh. The board declared their names and their ‘crimes’. While being criticised, they might have their arms forced up behind them (**jet-planing**) or be forced to kneel on broken glass. If they failed to show enough contrition, they could be beaten then paraded through the streets wearing a ‘dunce’s hat’ as a further humiliation. Such victims knew this could be repeated at any time. This fear and the great humiliation proved too much for the many who chose suicide to escape.

**jet-planing** the painful practice of holding the victim's arms up behind their back

▼ **Source 13.10** A man is accused of ‘following the capitalist line’ and is forced to wear a dunce cap listing his crimes.





HISTORY THROUGH OBJECTS



◀ Source 13.11 A decorative stone 'drum' from the entrance to Xichan Buddhist Temple in Fuzhou, vandalised by Red Guards. It remained like this until at least 1984 when the author came across it and photographed it.

**Rebel Red Guards** an alternative to Red Guards, comprising those with a lesser background

When a man was targeted like this, he would often ask his family to disown him, thereby saving them from the scorn of the Red Guard tormentors. In another Orwellian touch, sometimes children would report their own parents. They had been taught: 'Father is close. Mother is close. But none is as close as Chairman Mao.'

Those whose class background was not spotless did not want to miss out or become victims, so they formed the **Rebel Red Guard** units. Many cities saw epic struggles between Red Guards and Rebel Red Guards. When asked which group was actually fighting for him, Mao replied that both were.

AMAZING BUT TRUE ...

At a rally to 'struggle' a member of the Central Propaganda Department, a man was refused entry as he had no ticket. There was a heated exchange until the man asked the ticket official the name of the person being 'struggled' that day. The official replied that it was Yu Guangyuan. The man said that he was Yu Guangyuan and suggested that there would be no session if he were not admitted. Yu Guangyuan's minders had trusted him to turn up that day, which he did.

ANALYSIS ACTIVITY 13.3



Jiang Qing's address at the Great Hall of the People

This account is from Sirin Phathanothai, a student from Thailand:

*The assembly room, though cavernous, was packed. Slogans hung everywhere, and Mao's Little Red Book bobbed in front of people's faces. When I entered, Jiang Qing was already on stage, leaping up and down as she shouted slogans in her unpleasant high-pitched voice. 'Learn from the Red Guards' was her principal one on this occasion.*

*'Learn from Auntie Jiang Qing' came back the chorus.*

*We read Mao's quotations out loud. We sang songs. We waved The Little Red Book.*

*Then she spoke. She told in minute detail how Chairman Mao had to fight off the wicked persecution and hostility of Liu Shaoqi's revisionist coup d'état attempt. The audience roared its support. She began to talk about Mao himself. She spoke about how his younger son had been damaged mentally by his suffering in the old society. I looked around; everyone was listening raptly. Never before in public had I heard Mao's family history mentioned. Jiang Qing wept as she recounted Mao's personal pain, drawing the audience in. Many appeared deeply moved, and then angry as she ended with a fierce denunciation of people I knew Zhou [Enlai] greatly respected: Peng Zhen, Ye Jianying, Chen Yi, Deng Xiaoping. As I left I heard rumours that Zhou himself was suspect.*

Source 13.12 Sirin Phathanothai, *The Dragon's Pearl*, Pocket Books, London, 1995, p. 223.

... continued

continued ...

- 1 Identify the means by which Jiang Qing controlled the crowd.
- 2 Assess how this extract helps pinpoint the source of Jiang Qing's power.
- 3 Propose what you believe the accused were guilty of.
- 4 From your interpretation of this extract, determine with whom the author's sympathies then lay.

## KEY HISTORIAN

### Sirin Phathanothai

Sirin Phathanothai was a young daughter of a Thai politician when she and her brother were sent to live with Zhou Enlai in the Zhongnanhai compound. In imperial times, leaders of tribute nations would send some of their children to be raised by the Chinese emperor as a token of the special relationship between the two countries. So Sirin's father secretly sent her brother and her to China to avoid US criticism of any attempt to deal with the PRC. Sirin lived with the Party elite through all the tough times, joining the Red Guards and then the PLA in the countryside to avoid becoming a victim of the Cultural Revolution. As an adult, she became a key liaison between her country and Deng's China.



▲ Source 13.13 Sirin Phathanothai

## The blacks

Lower than the rebels and also candidates for persecution were the **blacks**. The Chinese term *sileifenzi*, meaning the 'four categories', summed them up. The four 'black' backgrounds were: landlords, rich peasants, counter-revolutionaries and bad elements. To avoid such labels, it was necessary to show several generations of peasant, worker, soldier or revolutionary ancestry.

## No. 1 and No. 2 Capitalist Roaders

Mao had the men who had presided over China in his sights, but he did not rush to play his hand. He allowed Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping to try to use work teams to calm the students. They could not avoid appearing by Mao's side holding up *The Little Red Book* and wishing Mao a long life.

In 1967, the Red Guards turned on the Party elite at their headquarters in **Zhongnanhai**, in the south-west corner of the Forbidden City. Among their targets were the famous generals Chen Yi, Liu Bocheng and He Long. Spurred on by Jiang Qing, the Red Guards were keenest to punish Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping, whom Mao had publicly labelled 'No. 1 and No. 2 Capitalist Roaders', respectively. Initially, the Red Guards laid siege to the compound, but Zhou Enlai talked them out of entering. At one stage, Liu Shaoqi and his wife, Wang Guangmei, were tricked into thinking their daughter, Ping Ping, was seriously ill in the hospital, and Wang Guangmei was surrounded and held by Red Guards at the entrance. Again, Zhou Enlai came to the rescue.

By July, the Zhongnanhai compound was no longer a haven. *Dazibao* attacking Liu Shaoqi in particular now appeared inside the compound, obviously with Mao's permission. Mao and Lin Biao then conveniently left for a holiday in Hangzhou. Soon the Red Guards were inside the compound. Zhou had used up his dwindling influence while the

**blacks** those whom Mao considered as enemies of the revolution

**Zhongnanhai** the compound on the south-west corner of the Forbidden City where Mao and most of the leaders of China lived

▼ Source 13.14 Provincial party secretary Wang Yilun is accused of having a 'black' background during a struggle session.





compound guards merely stood aside. Liu Shaoqi and his wife were ‘struggled’, jet-planned, beaten and then isolated in their own home. Liu was deprived of his sleeping pills and medicine for his diabetes.

The punishments continued. In October, Jiang Qing had Liu expelled from the Party. By then he was barely able to move or speak. A year later, Lin Biao had Liu sent to Kaifeng City, where he died naked on a cold prison floor. Liu’s eldest son was ‘suicided’ (killed) and the other children were exiled to remote areas.

**AMAZING BUT TRUE ...**

Liu’s wife, Wang Guangmei, had accompanied him on an official trip to Indonesia, where they were hosted by the president and his wife. Wang Guangmei wore a pearl necklace for the occasion. Later, during a struggle session, she was forced to wear a ‘necklace’ of ping pong balls as a humiliation. Even later, Wang Guangmei’s name was on the top of a list prepared by Lin Biao for execution. Prior to signing it, Mao inexplicably removed her name.

Deng Xiaoping was to suffer similarly but was allowed to live. After the usual humiliation and beatings, Deng and his wife were sent to Nanchang, the capital of Jiangxi province, where they were isolated in an old military compound and later made to work in a tractor repair shop. Their children were also sent to remote areas, except for the oldest son, who survived a ‘suicide’ from a Beijing University building only to become a paraplegic.

Between them, Mao, Jiang Qing, Lin Biao and Kang Sheng had exacted their revenge. Mao was restored to supreme command and eliminated any opposing voices. As with the French Revolution and Stalin’s Russia, the ‘revolution had devoured its children’. Those comrades of the Jiangxi Soviet, the Long March, Yan’an and the Civil War were insignificant compared with Mao’s lust for power. The Red Guards had done their work well, and now it was time for Mao to dispense with them too.

**ANALYSIS ACTIVITY 13.4**



**Daily rituals**

*During that period, the political mood intensified. Every day, people had to perform at least two compulsory rituals of loyalty to Mao: ‘Zao-qing-shi’ (‘requesting instructions in the morning’) and ‘Wan-hui-bao’ (‘reporting in the evening’). In classrooms, factories, offices, barracks and many private homes, they had to stand and face Mao’s portrait, holding the ‘Quotations from Chairman Mao’ in their right hand. Normally, the ritual began with singing ‘The East is Red’. Before reading from the ‘Quotations’ a cheerleader shouted, ‘We wish our great leader, great teacher, great commander and great helmsman Chairman Mao a long, long life!’ and the others had to brandish the little red book and chorus: ‘A long, long life!’ ‘A long, long life!’ ‘A long, long life!’ ... Shop assistants had to say, ‘Long life to Chairman Mao!’ before they served each customer. To answer the phone the approved greeting was Mao’s famous quotation, ‘Serve the people’. In response, the caller must answer, ‘Whole-heartedly’ before starting the conversation. Little Auntie told me that one day, two colleagues sat in the public lavatory and recited Mao’s quotations like ‘Be resolute, fear not sacrifice and surmount every difficulty to win victory’ to encourage each other to defecate.*

Source 13.15 Aiping Mu, *Vermilion Gate*, Little, Brown and Company, London, 2000, p. 391.

- 1 Assess the ludicrousness of the last example.
- 2 Identify parts of the article that suggest that participation in these rituals was not optional.
- 3 List the hints that the writer gives that she no longer thinks the rituals are necessary.

## 13.7 Youth ‘sent down’ to the countryside

Now that Mao was back in control, he did not want rampaging Red Guards and Rebel Red Guards disturbing his plans to rebuild Chinese socialism. Already, in October 1967, the CCP had ordered classes to be resumed. However, many of these did little but study Mao Zedong Thought. The schools did not operate well, as the best teachers had been killed, suicided or moved out. Discipline had been totally undermined. Furthermore, many Red Guards realised that once they were back in school, they would become unimportant again.

In July 1968, Mao organised ‘Capital Mao Zedong Thought Work Propaganda Teams’ (the same tactic Liu was maligned for using) to enter Beijing campuses and encourage cooperation rather than conflict. At Qinghua University in July, such a work team was attacked by Red Guards and five people were killed. Mao called the key Red Guard leaders to a meeting in the Great Hall of the People and told them bluntly that they were to stop their warfare, pointing out that he could send more workers or PLA than they could counter with students. The Red Guard movement was dealt a death blow. The PLA moved into the campuses and leading Red Guard gangs were dispersed elsewhere.

So, under the pretext of having them learn from the peasants, these students were sent to remote villages to learn ‘grassroots’ politics. While the Red Guards were prepared to have others suffer, they knew that at the end of each ‘struggle session’ they could go to their homes in the cities, often to comparative comfort. To forsake the conveniences of city life for a rustic lifestyle among uneducated and crude peasants was devastating, especially when there was no guarantee of ever returning. For the remainder of the Cultural Revolution, over 12 million urban youth were **sent down** (*shangshan xiexiang*, meaning up the mountains and down to the villages).

Those from the most volatile cities were likely to be sent to remote border regions. While some of these ‘sent down’ youth found the experience benign or even rewarding, others didn’t. Some females were forced to marry local men and never returned.

### sent down

(*shangshan xiexiang*)

Mao’s despatch of Red Guards to the countryside

### FOCUS QUESTIONS

- 1 How did Mao gain the upper hand over his party?
- 2 Why were Liu and Deng particularly targeted?

▼ Source 13.16 Peasants at compulsory political study sessions





## THE STORY SO FAR



The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution really began with the attack on Wu Han's play. With Lin Biao and Jiang Qing as staunch allies, Mao began his climb back to the top. To overthrow his former comrades, Mao called on the students to defend him. The Red Guard movement was born, with students later joined by workers who also donned the Red Guard armbands. Mao originally called on them to attack the 'Four Olds', but when he was strategically ready, he turned them against his perceived enemies. Once secure in his position of Chairman of the PRC, Mao then betrayed those who came to his defence by sending the youth to the countryside. However, this was not the end of the Cultural Revolution nor the violence.



Use the QR code or visit the digital version of the book and watch the video summarising the chapter.

## Develop your historical thinking skills

### Define key terms

Write your own definition of each of the following key terms:

- *luan*
- Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution
- *Quotations of Chairman Mao*
- work teams
- Zhongnanhai
- *dazibao*
- Red Guards
- Rebel Red Guards
- Four Olds
- link-ups
- Great Helmsman
- jet-planing
- blacks
- capitalist roader
- sent down.

### Activities

- 1 As a Party official who has just been 'struggled' against, explain to your young child why so many people want to hurt you.
- 2 Write a Big Character Poster (*dazibao*) denouncing a fictitious local politician, using the language of the Cultural Revolution.

## Analysing cause and consequence

- 1 Mao said, 'To rebel is justified'. Explain what justification there was.
- 2 Summarise how the balance of power in China had shifted by 1966.

## Constructing historical arguments

Discuss what Mao's purpose was in launching the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.

## Analysing historical sources as evidence



▲ Source 13.17 A cover on a primary school textbook from the region of Guangxi

Handwritten on the textbook are the characters 好好学习, 天天向上. It is a slogan still used today in Chinese schools: 'Study well and each day you will improve'. It clashes somewhat with the printed image.

- 1 Identify what group of students is depicted here and explain how can you tell.
- 2 Identify their weapons of propaganda.
- 3 According to the image and your understanding, propose what purpose are they serving.
- 4 Explain why was it necessary for Mao to call on the children.

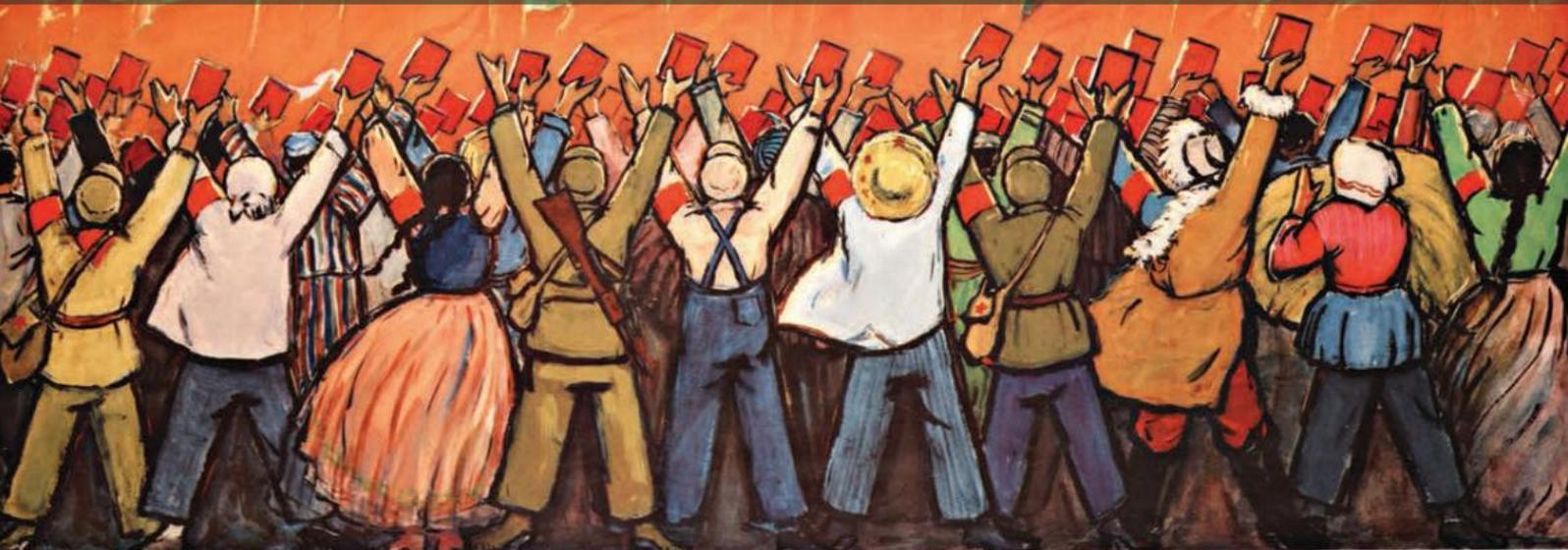


# 14

## **CULTURAL REVOLUTION 2: FALL OF LIN BIAO, 1969–1972** 文化大革命 ~ 林彪之死

*The Reddest of Red Suns (最红的红太阳)*

– A RED GUARD REFERENCE TO MAO



**我们心中最红最红的红太阳毛主席万岁! 万万岁!**

## Overview

With Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping out of the way and top generals humiliated, there was little to stand in the way of Mao, the **Gang of Four** and Lin Biao. Zhou Enlai had to use all of his diplomacy to remain as a moderating force. Lin Biao owed his rise to the fall of Peng Dehuai and his loyalty to Mao. In fact, he was largely responsible for expanding the cult of Mao. As Mao's successor, he was No. 2 in China, but this proximity to Mao made him vulnerable. Lin became more critical of Mao's approach to the United States and increasingly aware that Mao was beginning to distance himself. He decided to act first in a failed coup that cost him his life and Mao his credibility. Meanwhile, Jiang Qing and the rest of her Gang of Four rewrote the popular culture of the day.

**Gang of Four** Cultural Revolution group of Jiang Qing, Zhang Chunqiao, Yao Wenyan and Wang Hongwen

## Key issues

- How did Lin Biao promote the cult of Mao?
- Why was China warming to the United States?
- Why did Lin Biao turn against Mao?
- Who was Lin Biao (Part 2)?
- What were the consequences of the failed coup?
- How did the Gang of Four attempt to remould Chinese culture?
- Who was Jiang Qing?

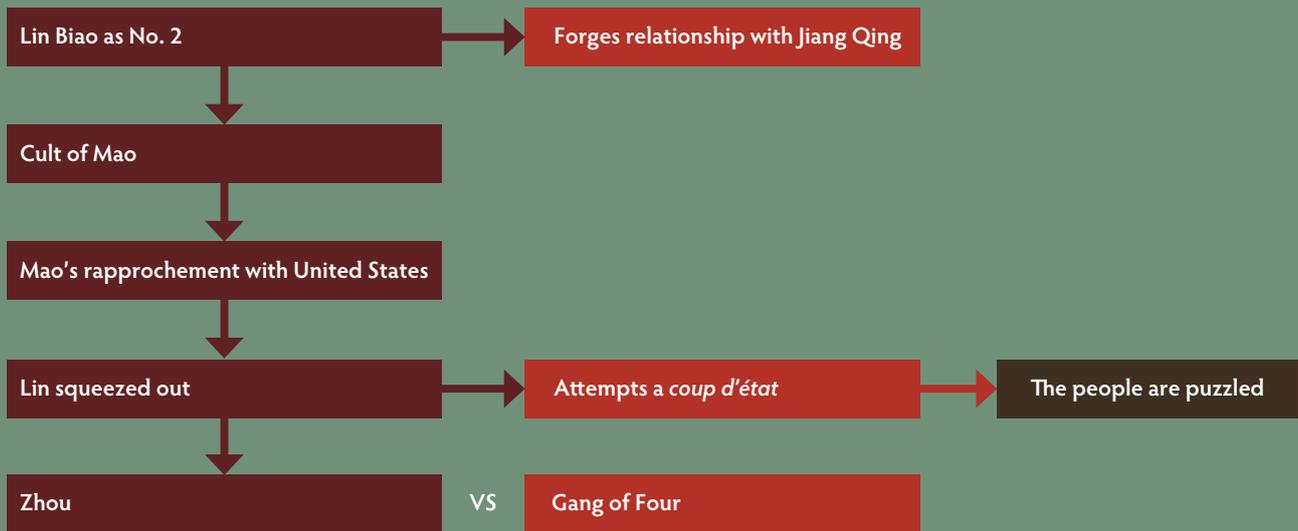
## Digital resources for this chapter

In the *Interactive Textbook*:

-  Video and audio sources and questions
-  Digital activities

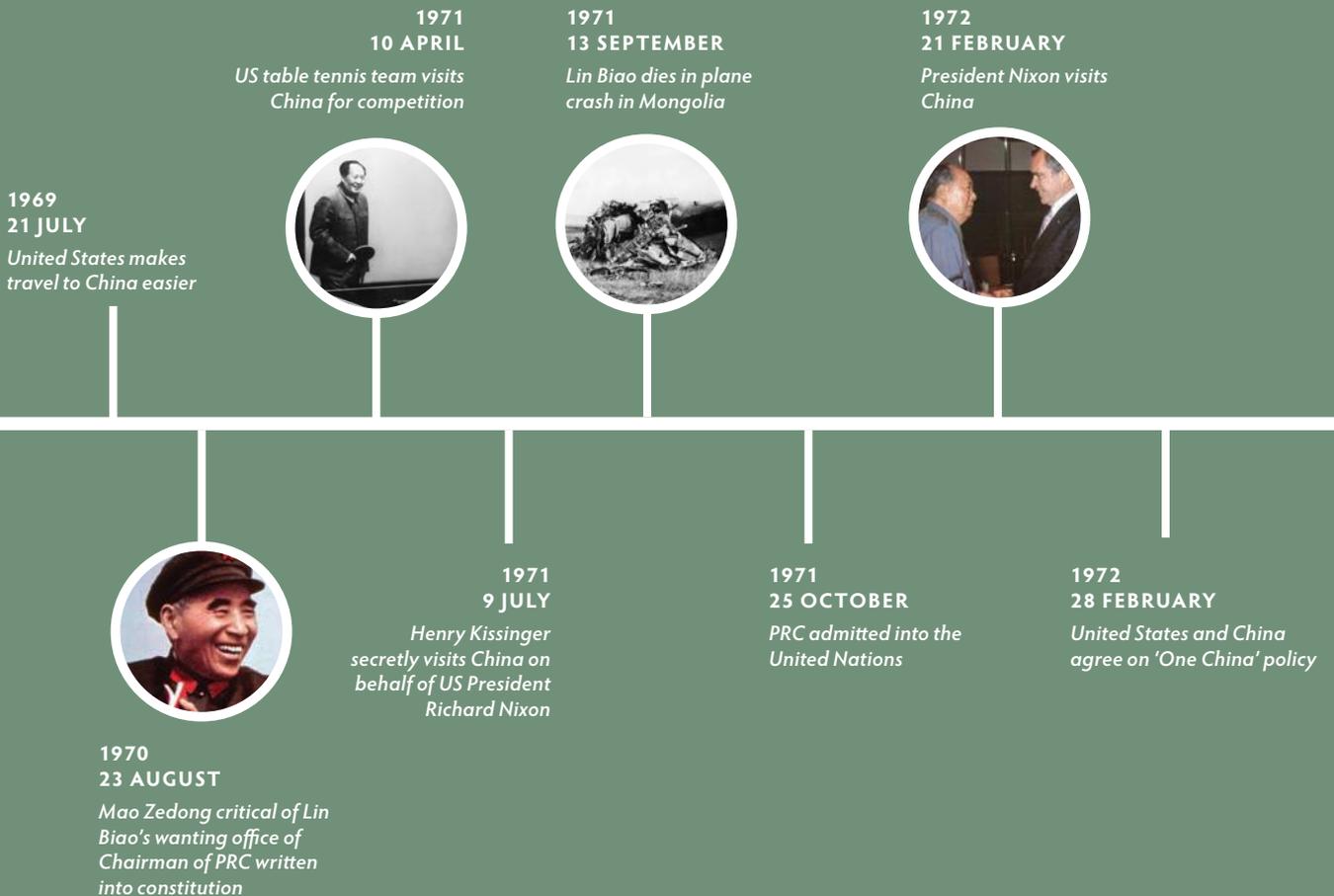
◀ **Source 14.0** Poster reading 'Long live in our hearts the reddest of red, red suns, Chairman Mao. A long, long life'

## Flow of chapter



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## Timeline



## 14.1 How did Lin Biao promote the cult of Mao?

Lin Biao had been one of the Red Army's greatest generals in the civil war, or 'War of Liberation', having won Manchuria for the CCP. Following his rise to Defence Minister after Peng Dehuai's dismissal, he realised that his rise was linked to Mao's restoration to power. He agreed with Mao that the PLA must be politically aware. He also removed the rank insignia on uniforms introduced by Peng. With the beginning of the Cultural Revolution, he started to remove defence officials loyal to Peng and replace them with his own cronies (later to become a matter of concern to Mao).

It was Lin Biao, in September 1966, who assembled and published (originally for the PLA) the book *Quotations of Chairman Mao*. However, before then he was exhorting the PLA and the people to follow the wisdom of 'Mao Zedong Thought'.

It was Lin Biao who encouraged the crowds of Red Guards at Tian'anmen Square rallies to switch from *Mao Zhuxi wan sui* (10 000 years to Chairman Mao), which was the greeting for the emperors, to *Mao Zhuxi wan shou wu jiang* (10 000 long lifetimes without limit to Chairman Mao); that is, eternal life. In this one change of greeting, Mao had surpassed the emperors.

Each morning in homes, schools and workplaces, people bowed towards a portrait of Mao with *The Little Red Book* in hand and wished him long life. This was called *Zao qingshi* or 'Requesting morning instructions'. In the evening the ritual was repeated but was called *Wan huibao* or 'Evening report'. Up to now such deferential respect to a portrait was only reserved for deceased ancestors. Mao had gone from political leader to something much greater. Even inadvertently marking a photo of Mao in a newspaper would bring on painful retribution.

▼ Source 14.2 Bowing to a portrait of Mao



### AMAZING BUT TRUE ...

According to Mao's personal physician, Li Zhisui, Lin Biao had a great fear of water. Rather than use a toilet, he would sit on a bed pan and cover himself with a quilt.



▲ Source 14.1 'Raise high and advance the glorious red banner of Mao Zedong thought.' Mao pictured with the three worker groups – workers, peasants and soldiers.

*wan sui* (10 000 years) wishing long life (to emperors, Mao or the Party)

*wan shou wu jiang* (live forever) wishes for Mao during the GPCR



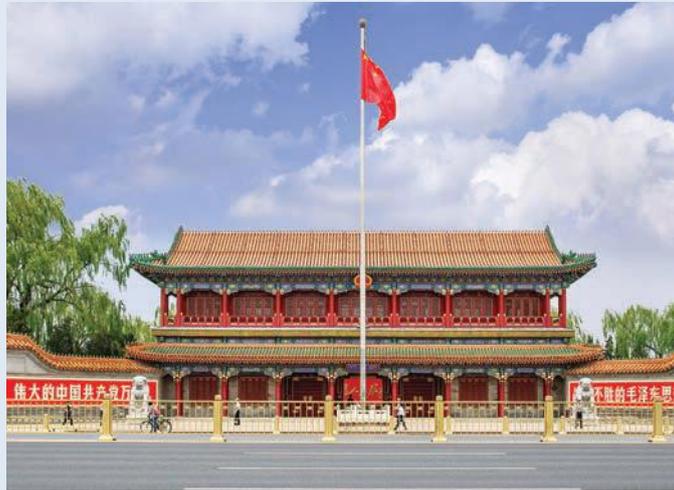
HISTORICAL INTERPRETATIONS 14.1



Was Mao the new emperor?

It seems incongruous that a Marxist who had sympathies with the peasants could be regarded as an emperor, but the first Ming emperor was a peasant who successfully led the revolution that overthrew the Yuan dynasty. As a 'Marxist', Mao was more likely to be reading the histories of various dynasties than the theories of communism.

Mao's choice of residence for the high-ranking Party members was Zhongnanhai, which had been the personal retreat of the emperors and their families. In fact, Mao chose for his residence the 'Chrysanthemum Study', the personal study of the former emperors.



▲ Source 14.3 Xinhua Gate (the 'Gate of New China'), built by Yuan Shikai, and one of the entrances to Zhongnanhai

While Mao stated, 'Women hold up half the sky', his attitude to women could be very imperial. Mao's doctor, Li Zhisui, revealed that Mao was supplied with troupes of females from the various armed forces for his sexual pleasure, and that he usually retired to a special room during the twice-weekly dance parties. Even in the Great Hall of the People, Room 118 was set aside for Mao's sexual pleasures. This was common knowledge to the Inner Party members, but they turned a blind eye.

As with the emperors, Mao also used a food taster to prevent being poisoned. Mao also punished the families of his 'enemies' almost to the 'third degree' of the first emperor Qin Shi Huangdi. Finally, the fact that Mao named his own successor without consulting the CCP was reminiscent of how Cixi selected the next emperor.

Li Cunxin, recollecting his reaction to Mao's death, wrote:

*But this time, crying for Chairman Mao, it was like a religious experience mixed with a certain fear. I had worshipped Chairman Mao. His name was the first word I had learnt in school. The words from his famous Red Book were embedded in my brain. I would have died for him.*

Source 14.4 Li Cunxin, *Mao's Last Dancer*, Viking, Australia, 2003, p. 232.

As the Reddest of Red Suns was at his political greatest, the party he founded was at its worst. As Immanuel C.Y. Hsu perceptively wrote in 1970:



*Yet, in the final analysis, the deification [making a god of] process is a defensive measure designed to restore the sacrosanct image of a failing leader.*

Source 14.5 Immanuel C.Y. Hsu, *The Rise of Modern China*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1970, p. 779.

FOCUS QUESTIONS

- 1 What qualities do we associate with emperors?
- 2 What reasons would a Red Guard give to deny the accusation of Mao being an emperor?
- 3 What does Hsu mean in his quotation?

## HISTORY THROUGH OBJECTS



◀ **Source 14.6** Mao badges were a must-have accessory and a collector's item during the Cultural Revolution. After Mao's death they were quickly shelved, lost or destroyed. Now they are once again collector's items, but they do not have the power they once had.

## 14.2 Why was China warming to the United States?

Lin Biao felt China's loyalty should be to the Soviet Union, and he was not happy with the cooling relationship between the two nations. The border clashes reflected this falling out between the two major socialist nations. Mao was quietly warming to the United States as an alternative ally and a balance to Russian military power. Also, by lessening Cold War tension, Mao would be reducing Lin's PLA from a major player in Chinese politics to a supporting role. Zhou Enlai had encouraged this tactic after picking up hints that the United States was interested in rapprochement (an agreement reached by opposing groups or people). Zhou had also asked Edgar Snow to convey a willingness to talk to President Nixon. While the rest of the country was still officially learning Russian as the second language, Mao started learning English from his personal doctor, although he never retained much.

In 1971, an American table tennis squad was invited to compete in China. This thaw between the two nations became known as **ping-pong diplomacy**. It was followed up by a secret visit from Nixon's Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, two months later.

**ping-pong  
diplomacy**  
opening up to  
the United States  
using table tennis



▲ **Source 14.7** Henry Kissinger



▲ **Source 14.8** Mao playing table tennis



### FOCUS QUESTIONS

- 1 How was this the right time to befriend the United States?
- 2 How did the rapprochement with the United States threaten Lin Biao?

Most annoying to Lin Biao was that if the approach to the United States were successful, then Zhou Enlai, as the architect, would have the advantage over him. But Lin Biao had died by February 1972 when Nixon landed in Beijing and shook hands with Zhou – the first visit by a US president to the PRC. This rapprochement between the two nations pushed the Soviet Union somewhat off centre stage in world politics. China took a seat in the UN Security Council, which meant that Taiwan was banished from the United Nations. The United States had abandoned its ‘Two Chinas’ policy. The positive side was that China was then committed to ‘wooing’ Taiwan rather than threatening it with invasion. After Mao’s death, China opened the doors to tourism, investment and ‘foreign experts’ to help with its drive to modernisation. Unfortunately for those Chinese who had spent their lives studying Russian in order to advance their education, English now became the language that opened the door to career advancement.



▲ Source 14.9 A feeble Mao manages to greet President Nixon

### AMAZING BUT TRUE ...

Because Zhou Enlai’s dealings with the United States were not fully supported by Party members, he was very careful when proposing a toast to ensure that, at the moment of their glasses clinking, the rim of his glass was no lower than that of Nixon’s glass. Normally, out of politeness, his glass would be lower than his guest’s.



▲ Source 14.10 Zhou Enlai toasting Nixon in the Great Hall of the People

**AMAZING BUT TRUE ...**

In 1971, China had a team in the world table tennis tournament in Japan. A US player who missed his morning bus to the venue jumped on the next one, which happened to be carrying the Chinese team. He sat with members of the astonished squad, who were confronted with a player from the '*paper tiger*' (looks ferocious but no real strength) enemy, and exchanged badges.

The political minders panicked about this fraternisation with the enemy. They later contacted Beijing for orders, and Zhou Enlai told them to invite the US team to China.

**paper tiger**  
Mao's put-down for nations with nuclear power

## 14.3 Why did Lin Biao turn against Mao?

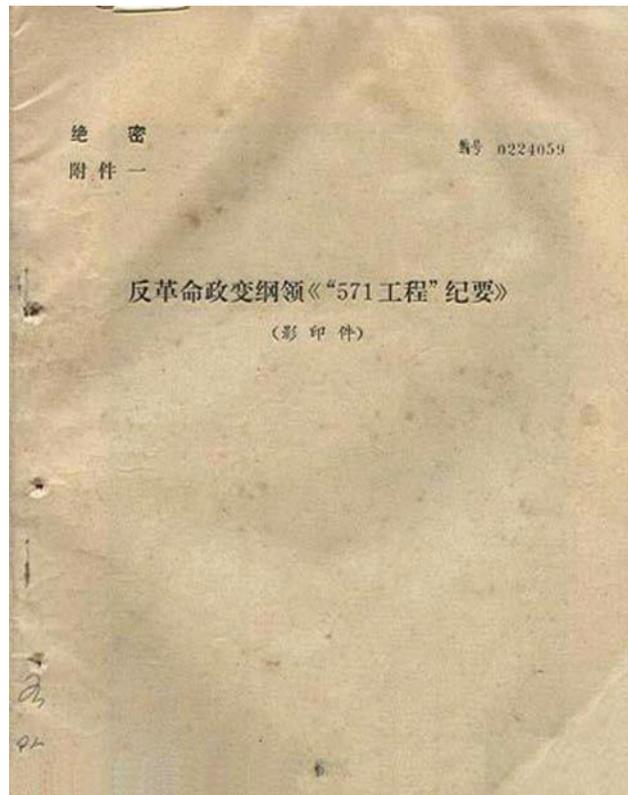
Lin Biao was not an obvious candidate to be Mao's successor. Unlike most top Party officials, he chose not to live in the Zhongnanhai compound, residing in a nearby mansion instead. When the Korean War broke out, it was Lin – not Peng Dehuai – whom Mao wanted to lead the 'volunteers' against the United States and its allies. Lin pleaded illness and flew to Moscow for treatment. (This plea of illness had been used by imperial officials to avoid carrying out orders from the emperors.)

Lin was also a morphine addict, a habit he possibly picked up during the Long March. Mao was aware of this addiction but found it difficult to turn down Lin's support at Lushan in 1959. As the new Defence Minister, Lin had been there when Mao had launched his comeback in 1966. In April 1969, Lin was announced as Mao's successor. Such success brought with it the seeds of failure. Mao was aware that the emperors of the past were very watchful of those next in line in case they wished to accelerate the succession. Lin's attempt to have Mao enshrined as a figurehead at the Lushan conference of April 1970 was a trap that Mao rejected.

By now, Lin knew his days were numbered. He prepared a coup, which he called **Project 571** (in Chinese, *wu qi yi* – which sounds like 'armed uprising'). He referred to Mao as **B52** (an American long-range bomber). According to Harrison Salisbury, Lin planned several assassination scenarios with his wife and son, Lin Liguo, an air force official. The final choice was to attack Mao's train but, due to Mao's change of plans, they missed the opportunity. On 12 September 1971, after fleeing to the seaside resort of Beidaihe, they boarded a Trident plane and flew towards Russia but crashed in Mongolia. All on board died.

This version of Lin's death has been challenged, but it is backed up by Dr Li, Mao's personal physician. It also has specific details, and there is no accepted alternative theory.

▼ Source 14.11 The outline of 'Project 571'



**FOCUS QUESTIONS**

- 1 How was Lin's attempted coup a huge embarrassment to Mao?
- 2 How did Lin's departure alter the political balance?

**Project 571** Lin Biao's code to overthrow Mao

**B52** a large American bomber; Lin Biao's code for Mao



▲ Source 14.12 The wreckage of the plane that was carrying Lin Biao and his family

# 14.4

## SIGNIFICANT INDIVIDUAL



▲ Source 14.13 Lin Biao in 1970

### Lin Biao (Lin Piao) 林彪 (1907–1971)

#### Part 2

With the 1949 Communist victory, when most leaders settled into the Zhongnanhai complex in Beijing, Lin lived separately in the Maojiawan area. In 1950, Lin pleaded illness to avoid leading the Chinese 'volunteers' in the Korean conflict. In fact, he was a morphine addict, which may have caused his fear of water, loud noise, light and wind. Lin's doctor, Nelson Fu, informed an unsurprised Mao of Lin's morphine habit and later became another victim of Lin's in the Cultural Revolution.

In 1954, Lin Biao became Vice-Premier of the State Council. In 1959, he came to Mao's defence at the Lushan conference and was given Peng Dehuai's position as Minister of Defence. He reorganised the PLA along the old Red Army lines, with political consciousness a priority. This included issuing every soldier with a copy of *Quotations of Chairman Mao*, which he had commissioned. He also retired some of the old marshals who had served the revolution and replaced them with his cronies. In 1969, Lin became Vice-Chairman of the CCP and Mao's designated successor.

Mao quickly became suspicious of successors in case they wished to speed up the succession. Mao started to distance himself from Lin, and Lin was aware of his peril. He decided to strike first and, using his son and favoured generals, launched Project 571, a homophonic code for 'armed uprising' against Mao, who he labelled B52 after an American bomber plane. Zhou Enlai got wind of the plot, possibly through Lin's daughter, Lin Doudou. In haste, Lin, his son and wife fled in a partially fuelled Trident plane which crashed in Outer Mongolia, killing all on board. Conspiracy theorists offer other views of what happened but the reliable accounts of those close to Mao tell the same story. For the people of China, the real story was not Lin's death but how the very man who had promoted the cult of Mao could have turned against him.

## 14.5 What were the consequences of the failed coup?

The attempt of a coup by his most public admirer was a shock to Mao. The man who had extolled the greatness of Mao and the importance of Mao Zedong Thought had turned against him. Mao's credibility as China's salvation was greatly shaken. Mao, who was suffering from Parkinson's disease, took to his bed and developed pneumonia. The annual 1 October parade in Beijing was called off because Mao was unable to attend, but the public remained ignorant of his ill-health.

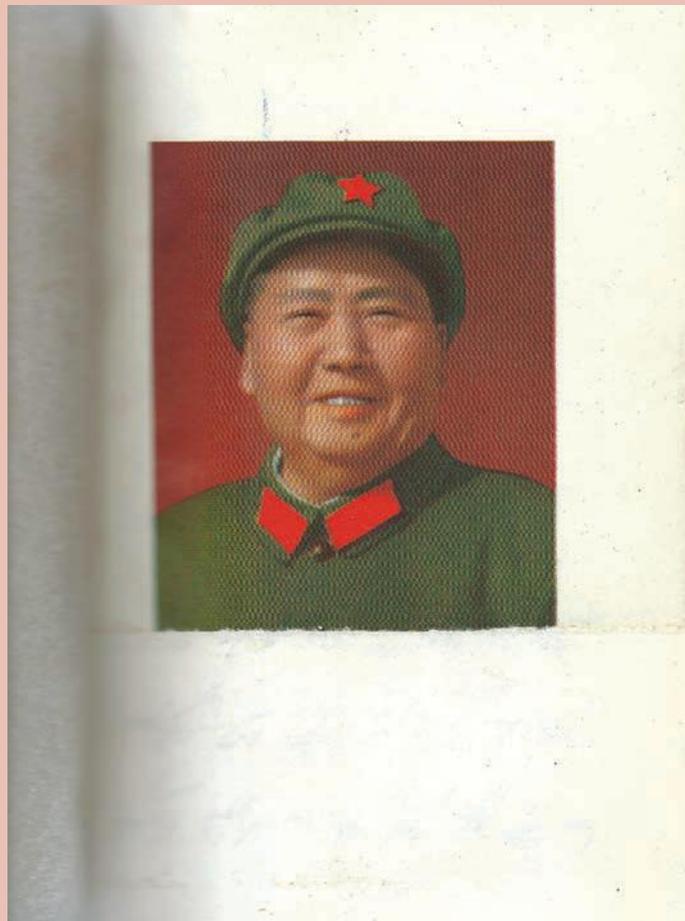
Lin Biao's betrayal and death were kept quiet, and it was not until 1972 that it was announced to China and the world. Until then, Lin's books and portraits were slowly being removed without explanation.

Jiang Qing, who had common cause with Lin, was lessened by this connection. This left Zhou Enlai, who was succeeding in negotiations with the United States, as the man of the moment. While Jiang Qing admired the charm and intellect of Zhou, who had always treated her with courtesy, she knew that Zhou stood in the way of her extreme policies.

The death and betrayal of the man he had so richly rewarded led Mao to reconsider those he had considered disloyal. Deng Xiaoping was revealed as someone upon whom Mao could rely. The time was right to start 'rehabilitating' some of the survivors of Mao's campaigns.

### HISTORY THROUGH OBJECTS

Since Lin Biao had written a tribute to Mao under Mao's photo at the beginning of *The Little Red Book*, there was the problem, after Lin's fall, of how to remove Lin's tribute without desecrating Mao's picture. The solution was to paste a piece of paper over the tribute.



► Source 14.14  
*The Quotations of Chairman Mao* with Lin Biao's dedication covered up



## 14.6 The Gang of Four tries to remould Chinese culture

The Gang of Four had tried to remould China by replacing traditional culture with a modern culture that used the arts to serve political purposes.

**The Red Detachment of Women** one of a handful of approved GPCR productions

The old operas, with their mix of drama, music, martial arts and acrobatics, gave way to eight officially sanctioned productions personally overseen by the former actor Jiang Qing herself. Besides favourites such as *The White-haired Girl* and *The Red Lantern*, there was *The Red Detachment of Women* ('A Modern Revolutionary Ballet'). It tells the story of a peasant slave girl, Wu Qinghua, who is treated badly by a landlord. She escapes on her second attempt and is taken in by the Red Army's 'Red Detachment of Women' and its male Party representative, Hong Changqing. When taking on the landlord and the GMD forces, the Party representative is captured but bravely dies shouting revolutionary slogans. Later the landlord is captured by the escaped slave and is executed. Jiang Qing took President Nixon to see this opera and he was very complimentary in his appraisal to his host.

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### ANALYSIS ACTIVITY 14.1



#### Scene from *The Red Detachment of Women*



▲ Source 14.15 Scene from *The Red Detachment of Women*

*Revolutionary truth illuminates the fighters' hearts like the sun. Standing before the ranks, Hong encourages them to unite closely, shoulder to shoulder and hand in hand, under the leadership of Chairman Mao and the Chinese Communist Party, and join in the revolutionary torrent which will sweep away the old world.*

*Class is dismissed. Qinghua remains behind. She studies the shining words on the blackboard, then walks and sits on a stump.*

*She rises slowly, her mind in ferment, and tries to grasp the significance of what the Party member has just said.*

*Regretfully, she recalls her mistake in opening fire without permission in Coconut Grove Manor. 'In the whole world is there any proletarian who hasn't been steeped in blood and tears? Why do I think only of vengeance for myself?'*

**KEY QUOTE**

*She runs to the blackboard, reads it carefully. Suddenly, she understands. She strides resolutely to greet the rising sun. Fist raised, she vows: 'I will follow Chairman Mao and the Chinese Communist Party forever and be a conscious proletarian vanguard soldier fighting all my life for the liberation of mankind!'*

*The Company Commander, returning from target practice, fondly hails her. Qinghua, ashamed, walks over and criticizes herself. Pleased to see Qinghua maturing politically, the Company Commander cannot restrain her affection for the stubborn new fighter. She urges Qinghua to continue raising her proletarian consciousness and to transform her hatred for the class enemy into combat skill in annihilating them.*

Source 14.16 *The Red Detachment of Women: A Modern Revolutionary Ballet*, Foreign Language Press, Beijing, 1972, pp. 40–2.

Note: The author has converted the names from Wade-Giles to Pinyin.

...continued

continued ...

- 1 Identify the aspects in this script that indicate it is a product of the Cultural Revolution.
- 2 In this scene, determine the source of all revolutionary wisdom.
- 3 Identify the qualities of a revolutionary soldier that are depicted.
- 4 An annotation to the title of this version states, 'Revised Collectively by the China Ballet Troupe'. Explain what this suggests.

### AMAZING BUT TRUE ...

Since Liberation, Chinese women had been encouraged to wear the same clothes as men and to wear their hair short. In the media, women were not portrayed with any sexual allure. So it was not surprising that many young men went to watch operas such as *The Red Detachment of Women* with the aim of seeing the female dancers exposing their legs in their military shorts. Part of the violence of the Red Guard wars was the uncharacteristic sexual assaults and rape of females.

'The East is Red'  
(*Dong fang hong*)  
popular GPCR  
song

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As well as opera, songs served a political purpose. Common songs of this period were 'The East is Red', 'Long Live Chairman Mao' and 'The Helmsman Sets the Ocean Course'. These common themes were praising Mao and the Party.

Art tended to follow the 'social realist' style of the Soviet Union, with strong and determined people helping to rebuild the country or driving out the enemy. *The Little Red Book* featured prominently, as did Mao, who was usually surrounded by the adoring masses. Representations of the people often used the three desirable classes of proletariat (often in blue overalls), peasant (with the towelling head piece of the north or the bamboo conical hat of the south) and the green-clad PLA soldier. Common themes were bumper harvests, preparing to defend the Motherland, emulating Lei Feng, Daqing or Dazhai, and striking down reactionaries.



▲ Source 14.17 Anchee Min

## Artists from the Cultural Revolution

Anchee Min grew up in Shanghai, where she became – like so many others – a Red Guard. She suffered the fate of many Red Guards when she was 'sent down' to the countryside to work on Red Fire Commune. Later, she was spotted by a film unit sent by Jiang Qing to find fresh working-class beauties to feature in a semi-biographical film based on Jiang Qing. Anchee Min was selected from 20 000 candidates to play the lead in this film, *Red Azalea*. Life was not easy in the film studio's work unit. Just as Anchee Min's moment of stardom was near, Mao died, the members of the Gang of Four were arrested and Ms Min went back into obscurity until she wrote her autobiography, *Red Azalea*.

Li Cunxin was an 11-year-old peasant boy living in New Village in the north of China when, not long after Lin Biao's death, a group of four adults representing Jiang Qing visited his village school. They were looking for children to train in patriotic ballet. At first, Li was bypassed, until the teacher suggested they test him too. Li and one girl were then selected to train at the ballet school in Beijing. Through perseverance, Li Cunxin became a leading ballet dancer. Unlike Anchee Min's situation, the death of Mao and the arrest of the Gang of Four did not stop Li's career, as his classical training saw his star rise in the new era. He is now living in Australia and his book, *Mao's Last Dancer*, has been a bestseller.



▲ Source 14.18 Li Cunxin



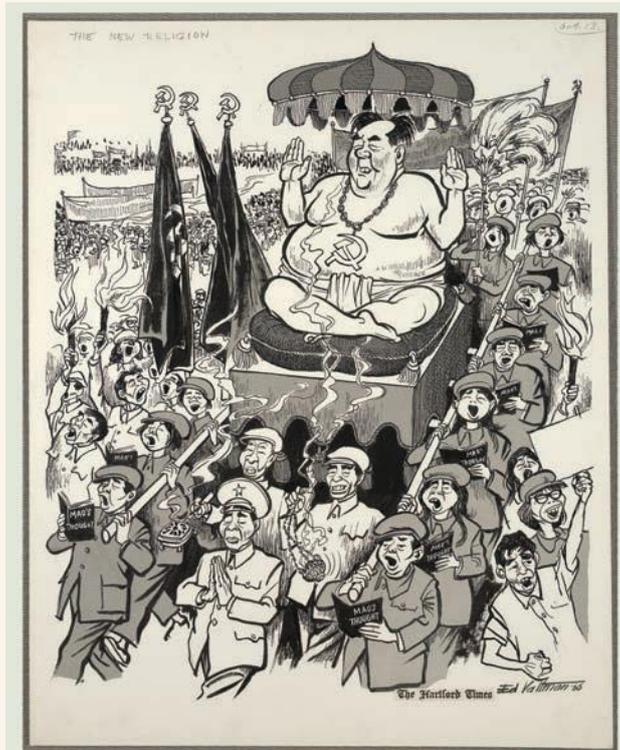
FOCUS QUESTIONS

- 1 Why do you think Jiang Qing was not using traditional channels and recruits to train the next generation of stars?
- 2 Why do you think Jiang Qing went to rural China to find these stars?

ANALYSIS ACTIVITY 14.2



The new religion cartoon



▲ Source 14.19 The new religion by Edmund S. Valtman, 13 October 1966

- 1 Evaluate how is Mao being depicted here.
- 2 Propose why this cartoon would not have appeared in a Chinese paper at the time.
- 3 Examine how the cartoon is critical of Mao's followers in the Cultural Revolution.

14.7

SIGNIFICANT INDIVIDUAL



Jiang Qing (Chiang Ch'ing) 江青 (1914–1991)

Jiang Qing was born as Li Shumeng in Zhucheng in Shandong Province. Her father was abusive to her and her mother. While living at her grandfather's house in Jinin, she changed her name to Li Yunhe (Crane in the Clouds). Later, she studied literature at Qingdao University where she became interested in politics and in 1933 joined the CCP. That year she travelled to Shanghai where she joined the Shanghai Work Study Troupe. She was arrested at one stage by the GMD.

Under the name Lan Ping (Blue Bottle) she became a B-grade film actress. Her personal life was unconventional and in 1936 she married her third husband, Tang Na. In 1937, Shanghai was under Japanese attack, so Lan Ping fled and arrived in Yan'an in 1938 where she went to the Lu Xun Academy as

continued ...



▲ Source 14.20 Jiang Qing on trial as part of the Gang of Four

a teacher and actor. She soon replaced Mao's wife, He Zizhen, who was sent to Moscow for treatment. Mao suggested she adopt the poetic name of Jiang Qing (Green River). The Party was suspicious of any influence she might have over Mao, so she was banned from direct political involvement for 25 years.

This inability to contribute directly to politics brought on bouts of hypochondria, which plagued her until the 1960s. When Mao came to power in 1949 Jiang Qing had minor roles in the new order, but her hypochondria returned when she was forced to resign from her post as chief of the General Office of the Party's Central Committee. This resulted in two trips to the Soviet Union for treatment. Her illness was exacerbated by Mao's sexual relations with various women the Party provided for him.

In 1959, she hastened to Lushan to side with Mao when he came under attack following the Great Famine. With this new alignment with Mao, Jiang Qing had a renewed purpose. She became preoccupied with Marxist class analysis of the performing arts. Her health

correspondingly improved. In 1964, Jiang worked on 'reforming' opera and ballet so that they reflected Marxist working class values. She appeared with Mao above Tian'anmen at the 1 October National Day parade. In December, she was elected to the National People's Congress.

In 1965, Jiang organised Yao Wenyuan's critique of Wu Han's play, *Hai Rui Dismissed from Office*, which was an allegory critical of Mao's treatment of Peng Dehuai. Increasingly, Jiang Qing was recruiting former Shanghai friends to support her (as well as seek revenge on former Shanghai enemies). In 1966, she was appointed cultural adviser to the PLA by Lin Biao. She also became a member of the Cultural Revolution Group of the Central Committee. In July, Jiang became secretary to the Standing Committee of the Politburo. With the Cultural Revolution Jiang Qing had found her voice and mission. Red Guards now referred to her as 'Auntie Jiang'.

By 1967, Jiang headed the Small Cultural Revolution Group responsible for all national literature and arts. The Gang of Four was now in effect. In April 1969, Jiang was 'elected' to the Politburo. By 1971, she joined the group organising the anti-Lin Biao campaign. This soon included 'Confucius' (Zhou Enlai) despite the fact he had always been courteous to her, even when others had not. While Jiang Qing did not support warmer relations with the United States, she was pleased to take President and Mrs Nixon to a theatrical performance of 'her' opera, *The Red Detachment of Women*. Another favourite of hers was the model commune Dazhai, to which she made many visits.

Jiang's power waned from 1975, as a bedridden Mao was increasingly dependent on his nurse to receive news and pass on instructions. Another blow to Jiang Qing was Mao's appointment of Hua Guofeng as his successor. With Mao's death in September 1976, Hua Guofeng ordered the arrest of Jiang Qing, along with Wang Hongwen, Zhang Chunqiao and Yao Wenyuan – the Gang of Four. They became the scapegoats for all the evils of the Cultural Revolution. In 1981, they received a suspended death sentence. Jiang stated in her trial: 'I was Mao's dog. What he said to bite, I bit.' This was largely true, but she was happy to do his bidding. On 14 May 1991, under house arrest due to ill-health, Jiang fashioned a noose out of handkerchiefs and hanged herself.



### THE STORY SO FAR



During the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, power was dispensed by Chairman Mao. It was Mao who raised Lin Biao to No. 2 in the nation. But Mao began to trust Lin less and less. While Mao and the moderate Premier Zhou Enlai were making overtures to the United States, Lin Biao was preparing the assassination of Mao. Both Lin's failed attempt and his death were a great embarrassment to Mao. Meanwhile, the members of the Gang of Four were using a revolution in Chinese culture to reshape China. The balance of power was uncertain as the ageing Mao was increasingly fragile and bedridden.



Use the QR code or visit the digital version of the book and watch the video summarising the chapter.

## Develop your historical thinking skills

### Define key terms

Write your own definition of each of the following key terms:

- 'The East is Red'
- ping-pong diplomacy
- paper tiger
- Project 571
- B52
- Gang of Four
- *The Red Detachment of Women*.

### Activities

- 1 Research one of the productions allowed during the Cultural Revolution.
- 2 Draw up a list of insults Communists may have used against their neighbours to attack their political correctness in the period of the Cultural Revolution.
- 3 Find Cultural Revolution posters on the internet and see how well you can interpret them. Look at the symbols, classes and language used.

### Analysing cause and consequence

- 1 Explain why Mao was often mistrustful of other members of the CCP leadership.
- 2 Discuss why it was seen as important to replace the old culture with a new one.

### Constructing historical arguments

Was Mao a Marxist or a new emperor? Discuss.

## Analysing historical sources as evidence



◀ Source 14.21 Poster reading 'Long live the ever-victorious war of Marxist-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought'

- 1 Visually, compare Mao with the 'great' Marx and Lenin.
- 2 Identify the significance of the books the background characters raise in their hands.
- 3 From your reading and understanding, to what extent does Mao align with Marx and Lenin, politically and in practice?

## Analysing historian's interpretations

Han Suyin was born in Beijing of Eurasian parents, studied in London and started writing in Hong Kong. She had a personal acquaintanceship with the Chinese leaders, giving her access to their accounts – personal and written. She was very sympathetic to Mao and is very much a Maoist in her stance.

Below is an extract from Han Suyin on how the CCP handled the death of Lin Biao. Note that Han Suyin uses Wade-Giles spelling. The quotation at the end is from the journal of the writer Lu Xun, who died in 1936.

*A meeting of the enlarged Central Committee was held in the western hills near Peking [Beijing] following Lin Piao's [Lin Biao's] death. The October 1 march-past at Tien An Men [Tian'anmen] was cancelled and replaced by a far more agreeable program of operas, plays, open-air dances in parks – enjoyment for the population. But the wildest rumours circulated, and it was only on October 7, with a sigh of relief, that the people of China knew that Chairman Mao was safe, for he was seen on television with Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia.*

*From October 20, documentation on Lin Piao began to be disseminated at all Party levels. Lin Piao's writings on Confucius, his Project 571, and other documents were read, debated, studied. In May 1972 the first semiofficial revelations came out, but it was not until the summer of 1972 that the matter became openly commented on. By then a major purge of all Lin Piao's followers and a shake-up in the PLA had been almost completed.*

*What were Mao's feelings? They are epitomized in a line quoted on October 20 by Peking Radio: 'The enemy is nothing to fear ... What hurt and disappointed me most was the sinister arrow fired at my back by my ally, and his smiling face after I was wounded.'*

**Source 14.22** Han Suyin, *Wind in the Tower: Mao Tse-tung and the Chinese Revolution 1949–1975*, Jonathan Cape, London, 1976, pp. 350–351.

- 1 Explain how the selection of documents about Lin released after 20 October were designed to discredit him.
- 2 Suggest why the 1 October (National Day) parade was cancelled.
- 3 Justify the motivation there was for such a delay in releasing the matter of Lin Biao's death.
- 4 The quotation at the end is employed by the CCP and Han Suyin to evoke sympathy for Mao. Why might an historian see the death of Lin Biao differently?



15

**CULTURAL REVOLUTION 3:  
MAO'S DEATH, 1972-1976**

文化大革命 ~毛泽东之死

*Long Live Chairman Mao! (毛主席万岁 Mao zhuxi wan sui!)*

– A POPULAR CHANT AND SONG

## Overview

Mao's health continued to decline, while the Gang of Four tried to maintain the chaos. Many citizens were disenchanted with the GPCR and were pleased when Mao promoted an insignificant and moderate Hua Guofeng as his possible successor. Zhou was too ill with cancer to be considered. He and Zhu De predeceased Mao in 1976. Crowds openly defied the Gang of Four to honour Zhou Enlai. A horrific earthquake in Tangshan prefigured the removal of the Mandate of Heaven and the end of a 'dynasty'. After Mao died, Hua, with the support of the PLA, arrested the Gang of Four and put them on trial.

## Key issues

- What were the effects of Mao's decline?
- What was the 'Criticise Lin Biao and Confucius' campaign?
- What events foreshadowed the end of a 'dynasty'?
- Who was Zhou Enlai?
- Who was Deng Xiaoping?
- What was the aftermath of Mao's death?
- What was the legacy of the Cultural Revolution?

## Digital resources for this chapter

In the *Interactive Textbook*:

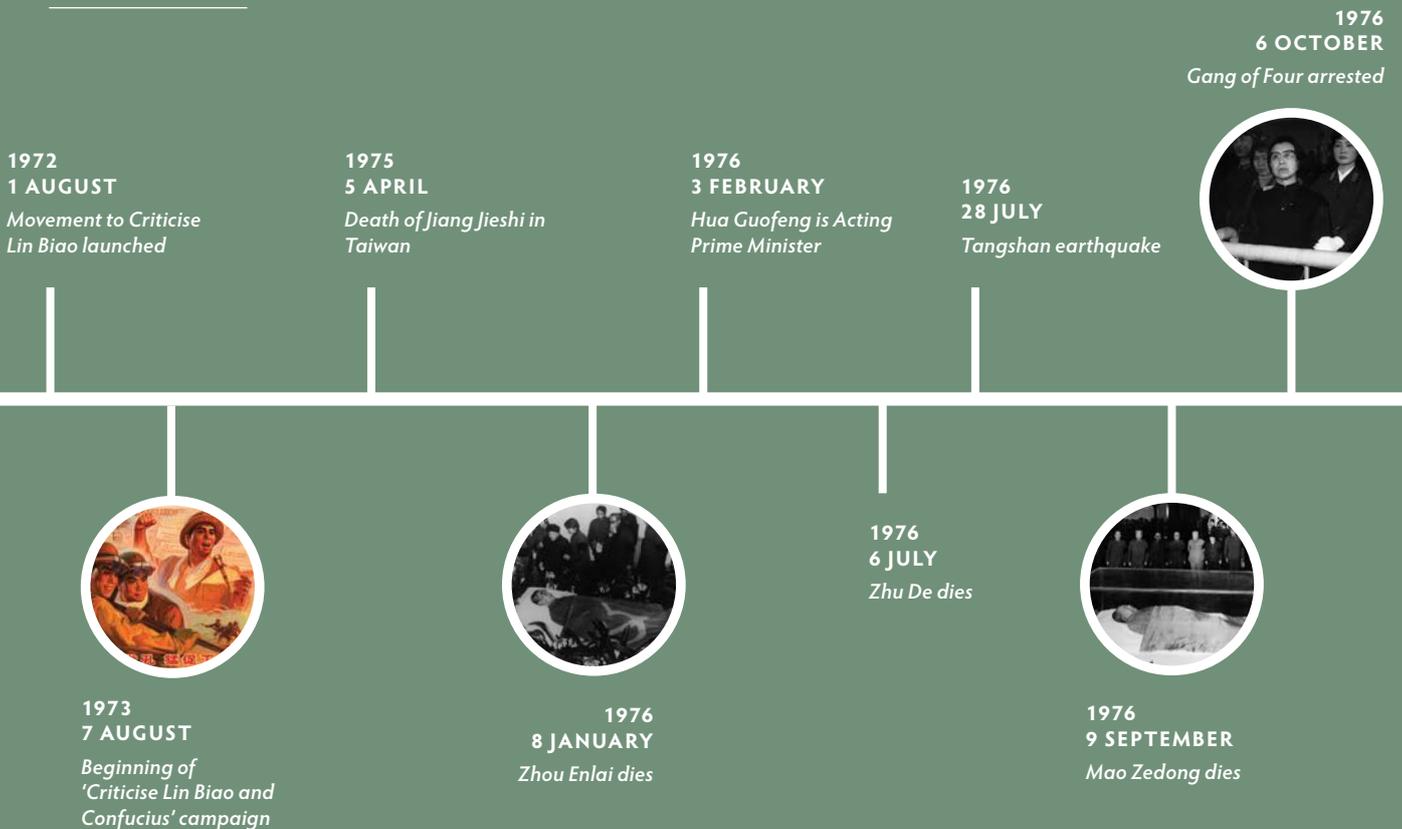
-  Video and audio sources and questions
-  Digital activities

# Flow of chapter



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# Timeline



## 15.1 What were the effects of Mao's decline?

Not long after Lin Biao's abortive coup, Mao fell unconscious and stopped breathing. He was revived but was not in vigorous health. He seldom appeared in public. When he shook hands with President Nixon, the Chinese press commented on his good health, while the American press thought he must have had a stroke. In fact, Mao was suffering from congestive heart problems and was bloated at the time. Despite a period of recovery, he deteriorated and became dependent on his personal attendant, Zhang Yufeng, who became the unofficial means of communication with Mao. Even Jiang Qing would pander to Ms Zhang to obtain Mao's approval for any ventures. To make it worse for Mao's doctors, the Chairman refused most tests and any procedures. Mao even refused to allow Zhou Enlai to have treatment for his bladder cancer.



▲ Source 15.1 Zhang Yufeng, Mao's personal attendant, in 2013

### AMAZING BUT TRUE ...

On 23 July 1975, Mao underwent a successful operation on his left eye. To maximise the likelihood of success, the ophthalmologists practised on 40 old men beforehand.

## 15.2 'Criticise Lin Biao and Confucius' campaign

After Lin Biao's death, the Gang of Four initiated a series of 'Criticise Lin Biao and Confucius' posters. The hatred towards Lin was obvious, but why include Confucius, who was not seen as a threat? The answer lies in the Chinese tradition of allegory. Confucius, the quiet and venerated sage, was seen as a reference to Zhou Enlai, whose quiet and diplomatic manner made the Gang of Four seem raucous and savage. Those in the Gang of Four were not in a position to openly attack Zhou so the references to Confucius were a roundabout means of attacking the Premier. However, Mao was happy to keep the Premier on a knife's edge, just to remind Zhou who was in charge.

▼ Source 15.2 A 'Criticise Lin Biao and Confucius' poster urging citizens to 'Deepen the criticism of Lin (Biao) and Confucius, energetically increase industrial production'



## 15.3 What events foreshadowed the end of a 'dynasty'?

### Death of Zhou Enlai

As Premier, Zhou Enlai worked long hours to run the government, especially as Mao had removed, through the GPCR, many of the competent officials. Zhou had spent much of the GPCR trying to protect national monuments, old comrades and even the dying Puyi in 1967. However, Zhou's health was deteriorating and by November 1975 he was too weak to shake hands. He died in January 1976, survived by his wife Deng Yingchao. Mao appointed a political lightweight Hua Guofeng, who had joined the Party after the Long March. Hua replaced Deng Xiaoping, who was again demoted by Mao and the Gang of Four.

Thanks to Mao and Jiang Qing, the funeral for Zhou was low key and not befitting his office or devotion to the Party and China. As Qingming, the annual festival to honour the dead, approached, people came to lay wreaths to honour Zhou at the Monument to Revolutionary Martyrs in Tian'anmen Square. Thousands of wreaths were laid, flags were waved and speeches denouncing Jiang Qing were given. The Politburo met and, with Mao's approval, the wreaths were removed on the night of the actual festival and people were arrested. On 5 April, the crowd turned violent and 10 000 militia, 3000 police and five battalions of security police surrounded the square and beat and arrested the 'counter-revolutionaries' inside it. Jiang Qing was delighted with the suppression. Mao believed Deng Xiaoping was behind the protests. Deng was yet again purged, while Hua Guofeng was made Zhou's permanent replacement, thus making him Mao's successor.



▲ Source 15.3 Death of Zhou Enlai, 1976



▲ Source 15.4 The monument to revolutionary martyrs where people gathered to honour Zhou Enlai

### Death of Zhu De

Just as other leaders had been targeted by the Red Guards, so too was Zhu De. Called a 'warlord' and 'black general', Zhu's brilliant leadership of the Red Army and complete loyalty to Mao meant nothing. Mao did not help his old comrade, the 'Warhorse'. Zhu survived the struggle sessions, but in 1976 at 90 years of age, he died. The year 1976, the Year of the Dragon, had claimed another Long Marcher.

## The Tangshan earthquake

Tangshan is a coal-mining town 180 kilometres east of Beijing. In the early hours of 26 July 1976, Tangshan was hit by an earthquake measuring 7.8 on the Richter scale. Some 242 000 people died in Tangshan and as many again in surrounding areas, including Beijing. The PLA supplied basic assistance but, because of the Cultural Revolution, emergency services were inadequate. Jiang Qing insisted that China not accept offers of aid from overseas. As well as a humanitarian and economic disaster, the earthquake was seen as a sign that the Mandate of Heaven had been removed and that there would be a change of regime. Jiang Qing knew it would be read that way and tried to have the media downplay the earthquake – a callous, politically motivated move.



▲ Source 15.5 Aftermath of the Tangshan earthquake

### AMAZING BUT TRUE ...

Former Australian prime minister Gough Whitlam and his wife, Margaret, were in Beijing when the Tangshan earthquake hit. They would have felt the tremors from there. One Australian cartoonist depicted them in bed at the time with Gough saying, 'Did you feel the earth move, too?'

## Death of Mao

By June 1976, Mao had suffered two heart attacks. He had a medical team constantly attending him at his villa at Zhongnanhai. The chief of Mao's security staff, two members of the Gang of Four and Hua Guofeng took it in turns to check on the medical team. Jiang Qing often came in to criticise the medical treatment or to ask Mao to read documents. In July, Mao's kidney function was poor and he was blind in his left eye, but he was alert enough to give instructions. When Mao's bed was shaken by the Tangshan earthquake, he was moved to a more secure building. On 2 September, Mao suffered a third heart attack. Seven days later, he was dead. The Chairman who was wished 'eternal life' by the masses died just before his 83rd birthday.

FOCUS QUESTIONS

- 1 What series of events 'foreshadowed' Mao's death?
- 2 Why was Zhou Enlai's death so critical for China?



▲ Source 15.6 Mao's mausoleum in Tian'anmen Square

ANALYSIS ACTIVITY 15.1



Images of Mao



This picture shows Mao at four different ages. See whether you can connect them to a particular period of his life.

▲ Source 15.7 Four Maos

## 15.4

## SIGNIFICANT INDIVIDUAL



▲ Source 15.8 Zhou Enlai

**Zhou Enlai (Chou En-lai) 周恩来  
(1898–1976)**

**Part 2**

After the Xi'an Incident, Zhou became the official liaison between the CCP and GMD (1937–1946), necessitating prolonged stays in Xi'an (Eighth Route Army headquarters) and Chongqing (Jiang Jieshi's wartime capital). He was recalled to Yan'an during Mao's Rectification Campaign and feared he would become Mao's victim. By then he was cowed and unable to stand up to Mao.

With the CCP victory in 1949, Zhou was appointed Premier (a position he held until his death). He also remained a member of the Politburo and was Foreign Minister from 1949 to 1958. While Zhou supported Mao with his various policies up to the Lushan Conference of 1959, he also supported Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping in their attempts to revitalise the economy and bring in Zhou's 'Four Modernisations'.

However, when Mao resumed power in 1966 with the Cultural Revolution, Zhou was again supporting Mao. For the next 10 years he tried his best to mitigate its effects. He tried to protect victims such as Liu and Deng. He declared certain national treasures such as the Forbidden City off limits to Red Guard destruction.

He tried in vain to obtain good medical treatment for the ailing ex-emperor, Puyi. After the death of Lin Biao, Zhou was able to push through better relations with the United States and was able to 'rehabilitate' Deng and some former generals. The Gang of Four resented his calm prestige and attacked Zhou under the guise of 'Confucius' in the 'Attack Lin Biao and Confucius' posters. Yet, in the end, Zhou was unable to protect himself when Mao forbade him to seek medical attention for his bladder cancer. He died as he had lived, working hard for a better future for China.

Following Zhou's death, on 30 January 1976, the Gang of Four and Mao planned a low-key funeral. Mao chose not to attend. The people felt cheated, so on the *Qingming* festival for the dead (5 April) they flooded Tian'anmen Square with flowers to honour him, defying troops sent to prevent them. Zhou's biographer, Gao Wenqian, has stated that his death 'announced the bankruptcy of the Communist myth'.

15.5

SIGNIFICANT INDIVIDUAL



▲ Source 15.9 Deng Xiaoping in 1976

**Deng Xiaoping (1904–1997)**

Deng Xiaoping was born into a family of some wealth and a tradition of scholarship in the Sichuan village of Paifang. They were from the Hakka (Kejia) minority but fitted into the classification of rural gentry. Overall there were eight children from four wives, with Deng one of three born to his mother.

His father, Deng Wenming, was a patriotic and literate man but was not a revolutionary. He did lead militias for a local warlord, Yang Sen. At the local school, Deng Xiaoping was remembered as brilliant but mischievous. Later he went to the capital Chongqing where his tutor was an old revolutionary who encouraged his pupils to learn French and encouraged them to go to France.

In 1920, Deng sailed to France but, through necessity, did more work than study. He worked variously at the Creusot Iron and Steel Works and as a fireman on locomotives. It was in France that Deng met Zhou Enlai who encouraged him to become a communist, which he did in 1925. In 1927, he returned to China after a short stay in the USSR.

Deng attended the military academy of the warlord, Feng Yuxiang. Later, he took charge of a communist militia which joined Mao and Zhu De at Jinggangshan. In Ruijin, he rose to party secretary of Ruijin county where he humanely put an end to the violent continuation of the Futian reprisals. However, his 'failure' to do the impossible and capture Guangzhou as commanded by Stalin and the 'Twenty-eight Bolsheviks' led to his demotion to an ordinary political worker. However, his support for Mao at Zunyi, during the Long March, saw his star rise again.

During the Anti-Japanese War, Deng and Liu Bocheng commanded the 129th Division which captured Shanghai. Then, during the Civil War, Deng, as commissar, was able to keep the various generals supplied with the goods as they needed them. While he was never an officer, the generals considered him as one of them.

On 1 October 1949, Deng stood on the Tian'anmen rostrum next to Mao as the latter announced the founding of the People's Republic of China. He was Vice-Premier in 1952 and member of the Standing Committee of the Politburo. Mao used him to punish those Anti-Rightists who spoke up during the One Hundred Flowers Campaign. However, his support of Liu Shaoqi in trying to rescue China's economy from 1959 to 1966 led to his being labelled No.2 Capitalist Roader by Mao. His resilience was again tested by the purges by Red Guards during the Cultural Revolution. Unlike Liu he was not killed but kept on hand if needed. However, his brother Deng Shiping was 'suicided' by the Red Guards. His first son, Deng Pufang, was paralysed after 'falling' from a third-storey building.

After the death of Lin Biao, the return of former generals to power ensured that Deng now had powerful allies. After Mao's death in 1976, Deng was rehabilitated and in a few years peacefully ousted Mao's successor, Hua Guofeng. From 1980 onwards, Deng restored the rural sector with some privatisation and then brought in a capitalist economy which he called, 'Communism with Chinese characteristics'. He then gave up official positions but remained the power broker in China. It was he who ordered the Tian'anmen Square Massacre in 1989, removed the conciliatory leader Zhao Ziyang, replacing him with the hardliner Li Peng, and forced Britain to hand over Hong Kong in 1997, dying months before the event.

Unlike Mao, Deng Xiaoping did not develop a personality cult. Pictures of him did not appear in public on any great scale. He did not directly attack Mao's legacy but he did allow Mao's image to be understandably tarnished. When he was not setting government policy, Deng liked to swim, play bridge and eat the occasional croissant – a taste he picked up from his time in France.

## 15.6 What was the aftermath of Mao's death?

Mao's body was taken to The Great Hall of the People, where it lay in state for official mourning. Meanwhile, the Gang of Four was moving to secure military support in Shanghai and eliminate Deng Xiaoping, who was being protected by Marshall Ye near Guangzhou. Marshall Ye had the support of Wang Xiaodong, Mao's Chief of Security, and had eventually convinced Hua Guofeng to arrest Jiang Qing and the rest of the Gang of Four. By a ruse, three of the Gang were to attend a meeting in Huairan Hall in Zhongnanhai. As each entered the building, Zhang Chunqiao, Wang Hongwen and Yao Wenyuan were read an indictment by the Politburo and arrested. A group was sent to Jiang Qing's quarters, where she was arrested without incident as her security guards had withdrawn. The only resistance was from Mao's nephew, Mao Yuanxin, who had sided with the Gang of Four. He fled to a military airport and wounded two security guards before being arrested and was eventually sentenced to 17 years in prison.



▲ Source 15.10 Zhang Chunqiao



▲ Source 15.11 Jiang Qing



▲ Source 15.12 Yao Wenyuan



▲ Source 15.13 Wang Hongwen

Mao was mourned by the nation. Yet, while many genuinely wept for the Great Helmsman, others were secretly pleased about his passing. Jung Chang wrote in *Wild Swans*:

*The news filled me with such a euphoria that for an instant I was numb. My ingrained self-censorship immediately started working: I registered the fact that there was an orgy of weeping going on around me, and I had to come up with some suitable performance. There seemed nowhere to hide my lack of correct emotion except the shoulder of the woman in front of me ...*

Source 15.14 Jung Chang, *Wild Swans*, HarperCollins, London, 1991, p. 658.

In her biography co-written by Larry Engelmann, Xu Meihong had a different response:

*With the death of Mao an old world died for all of us and a new age began. At the time we believed the sun had died and that the new age would be one of darkness for China.*

Source 15.15 Xu Meihong & Larry Engelmann, *Daughter of China*, Headline, London, 1999, p. 267.

A mausoleum was built for Mao in the centre of Tian'anmen Square and his body was preserved – although not very successfully, as there have been suggestions that it is occasionally replaced by a wax model when the original undergoes repairs. The CCP obviously felt it was necessary to keep the image alive. Was this self-preservation on their part? A large portrait of Mao hangs on the Gate of Heavenly Peace, and it gazes southwards towards his own mausoleum. On either side of his portrait hang two signs. One says: 'Long live the Chinese Communist Party' and the other 'Long live the united peoples of the world'.

### FOCUS QUESTION

What were the varying reactions to Mao's death?



Certainly, the man who controlled the CCP for 41 years and the nation for 27 years was gone. A huge gap had been left, not only by his own death but also by the deaths of those comrades who had gone before him. The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, which had dragged on for 10 years, was officially over with the death of the man who had brought it all into being and who alone knew why it was necessary.



▲ Source 15.16 Party members stand as guard to Mao's body in 1976

## 15.7 What was the legacy of the Cultural Revolution?

### Economy

While communes were still the basis of rural development, there was no attempt to bring back the Great Leap Forward. Zhou Enlai had promoted stable growth based on standard factory methods and production. Former factory managers were 'rehabilitated' to revive the economy. A more stable political environment encouraged steady economic growth, which was aided by schools returning to normal. Zhou Enlai set the goal of **Four Modernisations**: agriculture, industry, technology and science, and defence.

**Four Modernisations**  
agriculture,  
industry, science  
and technology,  
and defence

### The People's Liberation Army

Under Lin Biao, the PLA had become a political force. With *The Little Red Book*, the PLA was brought on to the political stage to 'rescue' Mao and organise the mass rallies in Beijing. The PLA was eventually engulfed in the conflicts between Red Guard factions. Then Mao used it to suppress the Red Guards. Generals in the PLA were soon torn in their loyalty to either Lin or Mao, with the older generals supporting Mao and Lin's appointees supporting him. With some generals complicit in Lin's attempt to overthrow Mao, this meant a purge and a restoration of many of the old guard who had survived Red Guard torment. The CCP had resumed control over the PLA.

## Politics

The death of Lin Biao was a huge contradiction in that the man who **deified** Mao had tried to assassinate him. How could this be explained? An about-face of propaganda was to turn this 'Leftist', through a fictional retrospective of Lin Biao's career, into a scheming 'Rightist'. However, the people of China were not all duped by this. Disillusionment with the Cultural Revolution and personality politics set in. Even Mao was prepared to tone down the cult of personality, which he blamed Lin Biao for creating. The victor in all this was the Party that the Cultural Revolution had targeted. It was now enshrined in a new constitution as the supreme authority. While he needed to be rehabilitated twice, Deng Xiaoping survived the GPCR and, when he took power in 1981, avoided having himself as the focus of a personality cult. Meanwhile, the Gang of Four became the scapegoats for all the ills of the GPCR. Mao's image was largely unscathed.

**deify** to worship someone as if they were a god

## Foreign policy

Following Zhou Enlai's plan, China was to continue opening up to the West and would separate itself from the 'Communist bloc' of nations (those largely under the control of the Soviet Union). It occasionally took the side of conservative governments. It even reacted moderately to Nixon's bombings of North Vietnam. With a seat in the United Nations from 1971, China was more likely to align itself with developing nations than the socialist bloc.

## The people

The Chinese masses were not to receive any apology from those who fostered the GPCR. So many had been harmed by their government, along with their workmates, neighbours and sometimes even family members. They could not start to seek redress for their grievances, so had to be content with blaming the Gang of Four, repairing their lives and hoping for a better future.

### HISTORY THROUGH OBJECTS



#### ◀ Source 15.17

A Chinese postage stamp from 1966 showing Mao and Lin Biao working constructively together. Only some years later, Lin Biao was an enemy of the state.

## Memoir of a former Red Guard

Deng Dehua was a Professor of English who had befriended the author of this book. He had been a member of the 8–29 (August 29) group of Red Guards who had travelled from Xiamen (Amoy) to the provincial capital of Fuzhou to unseat the government official supported by the local Red Guards. Here is his account of that period:



▲ Source 15.18 Professor Deng Dehua

*My name is Deng Dehua. I graduated from the Peking [Beijing] Institute of Foreign Languages in 1965 and was assigned to work in Fujian province in the university for overseas Chinese.*

*When I got there I was ordered to go to the people's communes and work together with the peasants and was also asked to do some propaganda work with them there. One year later, when I was about to go back to my college, the Cultural Revolution took place. I heard all kinds of posters, called dazibao, had appeared in my university. All these posters were directed against the teachers. Two months later I went back to my university and found all my former colleagues were attacked. Some were seriously beaten and some were forced to commit suicide. That movement lasted several months.*

*The next thing that happened was I became a loyal member of the Red Guard. At the time it was very fashionable for us to go to Beijing to see Chairman Mao. Maybe you can't believe it but if you went to Beijing during these days you needn't pay for a train ticket. The train tickets were provided for you. You needn't pay for anything on board, the rooms where you lived and the meals. Everything was free as we were followers of Chairman Mao. At the time we thought China was*

*becoming a revisionist country and that it was time for us to do something and we thought Chairman Mao was right to start the Cultural Revolution. We became faithful followers of the movement. We went to Beijing to see Chairman Mao – I didn't see him because one million people were assembled in the People's Square. So I had to stand several hundred metres from the Tian'anmen rostrum and I could just see a very vague figure of Chairman Mao at the time, but we were very excited. We thought we had achieved the goal of our lives because we saw the Great Leader. We were really faithful followers of the movement at the time.*

*I went back to Fujian Province after I saw Chairman Mao in Beijing. Something happened then. The high-school students of Xiamen went to Fuzhou, the capital of the province. Their aim was to overthrow the then secretary of the Communist Party of Fukien [dialect for Fujian] province. They didn't know, we didn't know, that the head of the military region of the province was behind all this. Then they went to Fuzhou to throw over the Party secretary of the province and they achieved their aim. Some of the Red Guards were against this secretary, but on the other hand some of the Red Guards were supporters of the Party secretary of the province and were against the commander of the army of the Fujian region.*

*After that, serious conflict took place between the supporters of the commander of the army and the supporters of the party secretary of the province. This lasted for two years. People began to fight against each other. Some people began to take guns and began to shoot each other. This became sort of a real war; a war between the two factions of the Red Guard. This lasted until 1971.*

*After that, Chairman Mao finally got rid of all his opponents in the government and he had captured the rule there. Then the local governments were set up again and all the teachers and students were sent back to the campus. After that another form of struggle began. The students targeted their teachers. The teachers were forced to make self-criticisms and some of the teachers were forced to admit they had committed crimes against the students. They had spread what they called capitalist and revisionist ideas. For this, many of the teachers were beaten again and some of them were forced to commit suicide because they could not put up with these beatings. This lasted another year.*

*After a while, when what we call the self-criticism movement was over, all the teachers were sent down to the countryside. I was one of them.*

*I went to a small village near Quanzhou [port city north of Xiamen] to spend one year there. While we were in the countryside something important happened in China. During the Cultural Revolution the number one leader of China was Mao. His number two was called Lin Biao, a general from the army. Towards the end of the 1960s, a split began to appear between Mao and Lin Biao. So Lin Biao tried to fight against Mao. In this fight, Mao had the upper hand and Lin Biao was forced to fly to escape from China. During his escape his plane fell down and he was killed in Mongolia. Well, that almost brought to an end the first period of the Cultural Revolution in China.*

*After Lin Biao died in Mongolia, Mao was still the head of China but the actual policies were carried out by Premier Zhou Enlai. Zhou had a difference from Mao about all these things. Then a split appeared again between Zhou and Mao. Zhou was more careful about all these things.*

*He didn't dare to stand against Mao's principles openly. Anyway something happened between them and so Zhou was criticised. When Zhou was criticised he knew that something would happen to him, but fortunately, or unfortunately, Zhou died of cancer in 1976. By then most Chinese, including Red Guards like me, were disillusioned because people's lives in China were going from bad to worse. Everyone was unhappy about life. Although we didn't dare stand against Mao openly, we all became supporters of Zhou.*

*So, when Zhou died in 1976, a lot of people went to Tian'anmen Square to try to memorialise him. Mao's followers – what we call the Gang of Four – tried to put them down. I was personally involved in this because I passed on a message of the people's support for Zhou. When the Tian'anmen Square incident took place, the people were suppressed and we were also suppressed in Fujian. People began to criticise people like me who were the followers of Premier Zhou.*

*This happened in 1976. I was to be criticised or attacked for this when suddenly Chairman Mao died. A month later the Gang of Four were deposed or overthrown so I was saved from this misfortune. I was not seriously criticised for this. When the Gang of Four was overthrown in 1976, it was October 1976. That was nearly the end of the Cultural Revolution.*

*The Cultural Revolution started in 16 May 1966. It lasted 10 years. All of the Chinese spent a sort of nightmare in these 10 years. At first we were the real followers of Chairman Mao. We all believed something should be done to change China to prevent China from becoming a capitalist or revisionist country. We were followers of Chairman Mao, but during these 10 years of the Cultural Revolution people's lives went from bad to worse and we lost all our faith. So people begin to be disillusioned about all this and people began to understand that the Cultural Revolution was not doing anything good for the Chinese people. So when it ended in 1976, everyone was happy. Certainly we knew there was still a long way to go. There would be still fights, but the people became the masters of their own destiny. That's what I want to say about the Cultural Revolution in China and some of my personal experiences.*

### FOCUS QUESTIONS

- 1 Why, at first, did many Chinese feel that there was a need for the Cultural Revolution?
- 2 Who was behind the actions of the Red Guards?
- 3 Why did people eventually become disillusioned?

▼ Source 15.19 Poster of Red Guards with Mao





▲ Source 15.20 A poster depicting the Gang of Four being roasted

### THE STORY SO FAR



A dying Mao meant a power struggle was inevitable. Jiang Qing and the rest of her Gang of Four expected to take over after Mao. Just prior to the death of Zhou Enlai, Mao made Jiang Qing's goal difficult by grooming Hua Guofeng to be his successor. Despite the government crackdown, the popular support for Zhou's memory would have given encouragement to the enemies of the Gang of Four. However, the Tangshan earthquake heralded a change of dynasty. After Mao's death, Hua Guofeng, with the support of the PLA, arrested the Gang of Four. Hua was leader of China, but the door was now open for Deng Xiaoping's return to power.



Use the QR code or visit the digital version of the book and watch the video summarising the chapter.

## Develop your historical thinking skills

### Define key terms

Write your own definition of each of the following key terms:

- 'Criticise Lin Biao and Confucius' campaign
- Qingming festival
- Four Modernisations.

## Activities

- 1 Search the internet for 'Anti-Confucius' Cultural Revolution posters. What are the themes? What classes are represented? How is Mao portrayed? Note the strong physiques of the workers portrayed.
- 2 Read Xinran's *Good Women of China*, particularly the chapter on the Tangshan earthquake.
- 3 Place yourself in Zhou Enlai's position. Would you have openly opposed Mao? Why?

## Establishing historical significance

- 1 Investigate why it is so often necessary for a dictator to die before reforms can be made.
- 2 Explain why the impending death of an 'emperor' creates so much panic and anxiety among his close followers.

## Analysing cause and consequence

- 1 Justify why it was necessary for the Party to uphold Mao's image after the Cultural Revolution.
- 2 Assess whether the members of the Gang of Four had overplayed their hand.

## Constructing historical arguments

- 1 What was gained by the Cultural Revolution, and at what cost?
- 2 Explain why reactions to Mao's death varied so much.

## Analysing historical sources as evidence

Closing words to Jiang Qing from a dying Mao Zedong:

*You have been wronged. Today we are separating into two worlds. May each keep his peace. These few words may be my last message to you. Human life is limited, but revolution knows no bounds. In the struggle of the past ten years I have tried to reach the peak of revolution, but I was not successful. But you could reach the top. If you fail, you will plunge into a fathomless abyss. Your body will shatter. Your bones will break.*

**Source 15.21** Roxanne Wittke, *Comrade Chiang Ch'ing*, Little, Brown & Company, Toronto, 1977, p. 478.

In mid-March 1991, when her health deteriorated, Jiang was taken to a hospital operated by the Ministry of Public Security. There, tiring of a meaningless life, she committed suicide late on the night of 14 May 1991. She made a rope out of handkerchiefs she had knotted together and hanged herself in her bathroom. Before doing this, she penned a note:

*Over more than twenty years, the people defeated the Guomindang reactionaries under the leadership of Chairman Mao and won the victory of the revolution. Today the revolution has been stolen by the revisionist clique of Deng, Peng Zhen, and Yang Shangkun. The Chairman exterminated Liu, but not Deng, and the omission bestowed endless evils upon the people and the nation. Chairman, your student and co-fighter is coming to see you now.*

**Source 15.22** Ross Terrill, *Madame Mao: The White Boned Demon*, Hale & Ironmonger, Sydney, 1995, p. 400.

- 1 Assess whether Mao's warning to Jiang Qing was accurate.
- 2 Identify what is unusual about the way Jiang Qing refers to herself.
- 3 Was Mao correct in saying Jiang Qing had been wronged? Why?
- 4 Why would Mao feel he had not been successful?



16

**THE DIVERSE EXPERIENCES OF  
DIFFERENT SOCIAL GROUPS IN  
THE CHINESE REVOLUTION**

中国革命时期不同社会阶层的多样生活

*Revolutions have never lightened the burden of tyranny: they have only shifted it to another shoulder.*

– GEORGE BERNARD SHAW

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工业学大庆

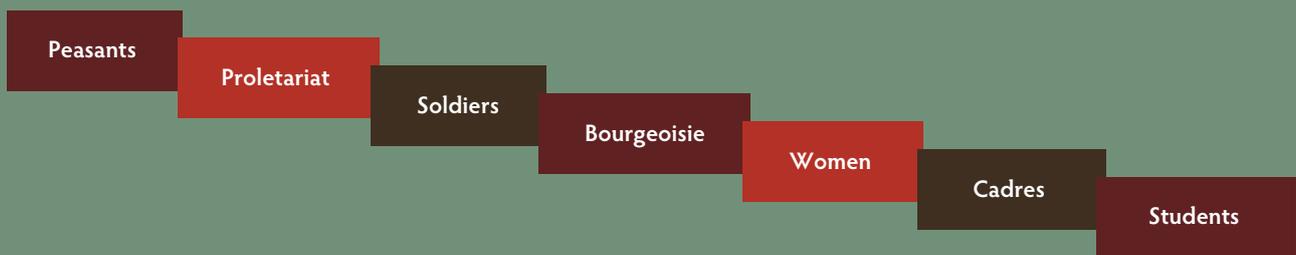
# Overview

While it is not always easy to identify ‘classes’ or groups in any society, it was somewhat easier in Old China where one’s occupation tended to define you – even to the extent that the colour of the clothing you wore was dictated by your position. Until recently, peasants were recognisable by the blue cotton clothes they wore. With the 1949 Revolution it became important to prove or deny certain class labels. Class consciousness prevailed until the end of the Cultural Revolution.

This chapter is devoted to examining how the political, social and economic changes which occurred between 1912 and 1976 affected the main groups: the peasantry; the urban workers (or **proletariat**); soldiers; the wealthy middle classes; women; cadres; CCP party members; and urban youth.

**proletariat** a Marxist term for the urban workers

# Flow of chapter



◀ Source 16.0 ‘Shipyard Workers Learn From Da Qing’ poster

## 16.1 The peasants

For millennia Chinese peasants have underpinned the Chinese economy and way of life. They have supplied the nation with food, borne the brunt of heavy taxes, become cannon fodder in wars waged by ambitious men and suffered the most when plagues, droughts or floods devastated their animals and crops.

In 1949, peasants constituted 89.4% of China's population. Most of them lived barely above a subsistence level (merely feeding themselves) with any profits swallowed up by rent and taxes paid to landlords. In times of famine, many faced greater debt, eating the bark from trees, selling a child or starving to death. One of the aims of the 1911 Revolution was 'People's Livelihood', but if the peasants hoped to benefit, the revolution was diverted by the warlords who merely changed the nature of the country's leadership.

However, the peasants were capable of revolt, as shown in the earlier Taiping Rebellion and in the Autumn Harvest Uprising of 1927. But due to lack of political support, the latter only lasted a few days.

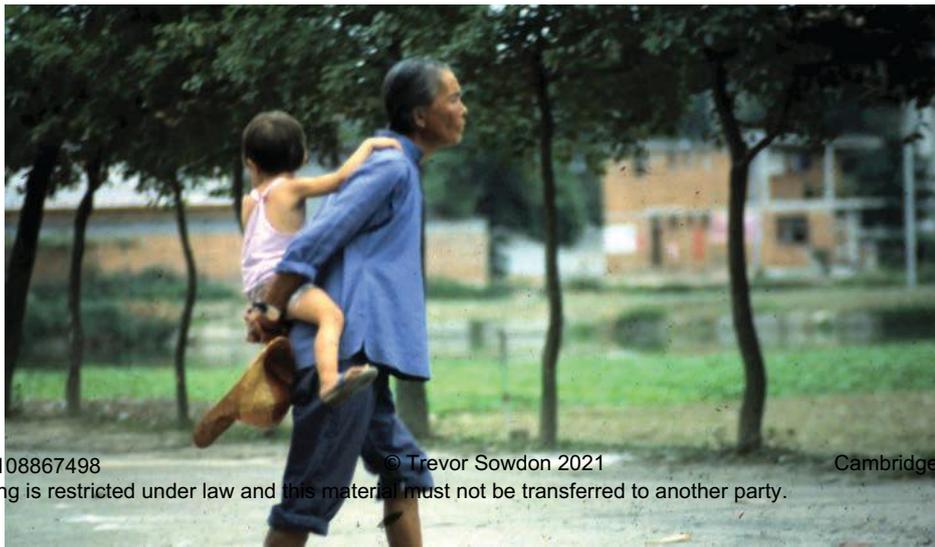
When the Guomindang assumed control in 1928, Sun Yixian's 'People's Livelihood' was endorsed but effectively put on the back burner. Jiang Jieshi was more occupied with modernisation and subduing his perceived enemies than rural reform. When the Japanese invaded in 1937, peasant males were forcibly drafted into the army. When Jiang decided to destroy the dykes (dam walls) without warning on the Yellow River (Huang He) in June 1938, thousands of peasants drowned, millions were displaced and crops were destroyed.

The party that promised a better life for the peasants was the CCP which, under Mao, saw the peasants as the vanguard (strike force) of the socialist revolution and, therefore, a class to be admired rather than scorned. More importantly, in the soviets, set up in the mountainous border areas, they were given land of their own and were freed from the landlord yoke. Even the final soviet set-up in Yan'an was painted as a peasant utopia with PLA soldiers assisting with farming as opposed to the tradition of armies looting villages they passed through. However, when the CCP abandoned the Jiangxi Soviet in 1934, hundreds of thousands of peasants were left behind to face the cruel wrath of the GMD troops.

With the CCP victory in 1949, peasants through violence or law were granted land and security. They prospered under the First Five-Year Plan and were reluctant to surrender their gains to the collectives, and then later the communes of the Second Five-Year Plan. The Great Leap Forward ignored the farming wisdom of the peasants, distracted many with communal projects and imposed unrealistic quotas. Starvation on a massive scale broke out in poorer provinces such as Anhui, with over 30 million dead overall.

Under the revised policies of Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping, agriculture and peasant livelihood improved. Despite the overthrow of Liu and Deng in 1966 the extreme policies of the Great Leap remained buried. Since 1976 peasant livelihood has seen, on the whole, steady improvement. However, a popular Chinese radio personality Xinran, in her book, *Good Women of China*, discovered that extreme poverty still existed in the 'cradle' of communism – Yan'an – where, in one instance, three sisters had only one set of clothes between them. Sun Shuyun in *The Long March* noted that in the Jiangxi Soviet membership in the CCP was currently way below the national average, a reflection of how the CCP abandoned them earlier.

► Source 16.1  
Peasant woman  
carrying her  
grandchild



## 16.2 Urban workers (or proletariat)

Initially, urban workers were not a defined or clear element of old China. They may have been ‘coolies’ who carried loads for shopkeepers, apprentices for manual trades or labourers for shipping companies. With the increase in trade and factories, this small but noticeable class grew.

Silk and tea factories needed cheap labour. Railways, road-making and public works grew through the ability of Chinese labourers to endure harsh conditions. Some took advantage of labour shortages in Europe in World War I. Others joined peasants as soldiers in the armies of the warlords.

In the cities, workers were tempted to organise into unions, often encouraged by members of the emerging Chinese Communist Party. Under Guomindang rule commerce increased, but benefits for workers were minimal. Corruption, police antagonism and gangland activities made unionisation a dangerous business, especially when Jiang Jieshi saw the ability of the unions to open Shanghai to the Northern Expedition in 1927. The Shanghai massacre was repeated in other major cities. Any workers suspected of being allied to the CCP were tracked down and killed on the streets of Shanghai, Beijing, Nanjing and Guangzhou (Canton).

The rural CCP soviets were not easily accessible to the urban workers. Workers fared no better after the Japanese occupation of the cities following 1937. Like the peasants they were liable to be coerced into the poorly equipped GMD armies.

With the 1949 ‘Liberation’ of China, conditions initially improved for the workers. The PLA offered a prestigious career path for those who escaped or survived participation in the Korean War. The First Five-Year Plan saw economic growth which brought education for their children as well as free medical care. If they were cautious enough to escape the Three- and Five-Antis campaigns, the workers were able to survive the Great Leap Forward much better than their unfortunate rural cousins.

Under Liu and Deng, the workers were able to benefit from the economic recovery. With the Cultural Revolution those with the poorest and most consistent working-class background were least likely to be persecuted, but many joined the Red Guard movements just to be sure. While the Cultural Revolution was chaotic, factories still continued production and the urban workers were better placed than they had ever been. They benefited from the ‘iron rice bowl’ (guaranteed employment). However, workplace safety still remains an issue today, especially in the coal mines.

▼ Source 16.2 Urban transport labourer in 1983



## 16.3 Soldiers

While Chinese culture venerated the heroic generals of the past, the common foot soldier was (contrary to the Japanese view) regarded as low on the social scale. Soldiers, whether in imperial or warlord armies, were feared because of their destruction and abusive behaviour, regardless of which side they fought on.

While their prestige and training in the Guomindang armies improved, the soldiers more often than not found themselves against fellow countrymen, especially the Communists. This was distasteful considering the more imminent danger of Japanese aggression. After the open war with Japan following 7 July 1937, the image of the soldiers diminished as a result of Jiang Jieshi withholding his best troops, despite some brave efforts by the GMD army in defending Shanghai and their forestalling the Japanese occupation of Nanjing.

▼ Source 16.3

A poster celebrating the 50th anniversary of the PLA

It was Zhu De's Red Army that garnered praise in the soviets as the three main rules of discipline and eight principles of behaviour allied the soldiers to the peasants (many of whom were themselves peasants).

After Edgar Snow's *Red Star Over China*, the image of the Red Army soldier rose further. However, they suffered miserably in the Long March and in Yan'an where many were required to issue 'self-criticisms'.



In 1949 the CCP army was now the People's Liberation Army and it successfully captured China for the Communists. Within a few years about a million of them perished on the battlefields of Korea. However, the image of the army that withstood the mighty 'imperialist' powers was enhanced. By 1959, Lin Biao was appointed Minister for Defence and he used the PLA to promote Maoist worship. During the Cultural Revolution, the PLA remained on the outskirts of the Red Guard conflicts. Largely untarnished by the Cultural Revolution, the PLA soldier had a reputation and a secure lifestyle that other classes envied. Even today, having a family member in the PLA is a source of pride.

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## 16.4 The middle classes

Just as Marxists viewed China at the beginning of the twentieth century as lacking an effective proletariat, they also had difficulty in labelling the middle classes as 'bourgeoisie'. Big enterprises had tended to fall into the hands of imperial officials. However, under the warlords and more so under the Guomindang a wealthy and powerful middle class did arise, often in association with corrupt political figures such as Jiang Jieshi's family. Trade, shopkeeping and banking began to thrive again. The development of transport and foreign investments provided the opportunity for those with initiative to grow rich.



▲ Source 16.4 From small beginnings: a bicycle repair shop in 1983

Patriotic businessmen were shocked by Japanese military and economic encroachments. Others were able to adapt to the changing environment. Later, when open war broke out with Japan, many of the middle class were still able to make their profits – a situation which can be found in all wars.

With the 1949 'Liberation', many of the middle class chose to leave for non-threatening areas such as Hong Kong and Singapore or hoped to fit in as 'patriotic middle class'. While landlords suffered initially, the middle class eventually found their factories and shops nationalised by the government. Often these former owners were invited to remain as leaders because of their expertise. However, they became easy targets of the Anti-Rightist Movement and, later, of the Red Guards.

After 1976, it no longer became shameful to be rich and the Chinese middle class's propensity to make profits has seen China become an economic superpower.

## 16.5 Women in China

Traditionally, the place of women in imperial China was a lowly one. They were regarded as less than men and it was only their ability to give birth to male heirs that increased their status. The few women rulers, such as Empress Wu Zetian of the Tang Dynasty and Empress Dowager Cixi, had to use guile and cruelty to gain and maintain their control.

In imperial China, a woman could be one of several wives or merely a concubine (rarely by choice) and always at the mercy of her husband and mother-in-law. At family gatherings she seldom sat at the family table. She worked at home and in the fields, often with the painful ‘lily feet’ (distorted by foot-binding) admired by men.

With the 1911 Revolution some female students demanded a greater role in society but, on the whole, the role of women did not improve.

Under the Guomindang rule some women, such as the famous Song sisters, did make their presence felt. However, they were the exception to the rule.

In the soviets, women were promised a greater role. However, when the First Route Army of 80 000 plus broke out of the Jiangxi Soviet only 35 women went, most of them wives of Party officials and the rest token inclusions. As yet there were no female soldiers.

At Yan’an, CCP leaders became attracted to the younger and more sophisticated females who joined the forces there. A number of CCP officials left their wives and took on a new wife. Mao sent He Zizhen away and took Jing Qing as his wife.

After ‘Liberation’, the 1950 Marriage Law stated women were allowed to divorce, own property, select their own employment and remarry. Many occupations were now open to women, including the PLA. Foot-binding was also banned, but the GMD had basically eliminated it anyway. This was a huge legislative step, but it took time for old prejudices to be eliminated, especially in the rural areas.

Despite these milestones, women did not significantly feature in Chinese politics – with two exceptions. By association with her late husband, Song Qingling was given honour and ceremonial positions. Unlike Cixi and Wu Zetian, Mao was the sole source of Jiang Qing’s power. However, her power only remained while she had Mao’s support, and while he was alive.

Since 1976, Chinese women have made even greater gains but still remain conspicuously absent from the upper echelons of power.

▼ **Source 16.5** A female student contemplates her career in 1984



## 16.6 Communist Party members (cadres)

The ideas of communism entered China through Marxist groups in the universities and students returning from Paris after World War I, with its appeal enhanced by the successful overthrow of the Russian tsar by the Bolsheviks.

The deal struck between Sun Yixian and the Bolsheviks allowed the infant CCP to grow under GMD protection and to be included in the Military Academy in Huangpu (Guangzhou). The combination of GMD militarism and CCP propaganda ensured the success of the Northern Expedition. The ease which they entered Shanghai, thanks to CCP and union efforts, scared Jiang Jieshi who turned on the Communists in the Shanghai Massacre of 1927. Soon suspected CCP members were rounded up in the major cities and executed on the spot. Eventually, CCP members, including the Central Committee, sought refuge in the rural soviets.

Those who survived the various evacuations of the soviets and became ensconced in Yan'an had to then survive Mao's Rectification Campaign, which meant not challenging his supremacy and offering the occasional self-criticism.

With the CCP victory in 1949 the cadres entered a period of calm and privilege. Those who avoided Mao's invitations to speak up in the One Hundred Flowers period escaped the Anti-Rightist recriminations. Those who falsified the Great Leap harvest results did not seem to suffer for their lies and certainly did not starve alongside the peasants.

However, the privileged children of the cadres were turned against them in the Cultural Revolution and many suffered for their tacit support of Deng Xiaoping and Liu Xiaoyi. Beatings, public denunciation and death were Mao's retribution for their perceived betrayal of him.

After Mao's death they were safe, but since then their power and privileges have declined, unless they were at the top of the political pole.

▼ Source 16.6 Provincial leaders dining, 1984



## 16.7 Urban youth

Youth were almost unnoticed in imperial China unless they passed the imperial exams – the gateway to government positions. However, the 1912 Revolution opened up public schooling and the educated urban youth were exposed to new ideas and new freedoms. Some took the opportunity to join the protests against the pro-Japanese provisions of the Treaty of Versailles following World War I. Some joined the GMD as they believed in Sun's Three Principles. Others, disillusioned with the GMD, joined the newly born CCP and, like Jung Chang's mother, were hunted by the GMD Blueshirts. For others, a good education was a means of gaining a career in banking, trade or the government bureaucracy.

Even with the 1949 Revolution, urban youth found themselves living under the old moral code of complete obedience to the family, which included a rather sheltered and rigid lifestyle – still Confucian in many ways.

Because urban youth were unaware of the Great Famine, they were unaware of Chairman Mao's role in that catastrophe. Consequently, they saw his demotion as unjust and counter-revolutionary. So, in 1966, they were quick to respond to Mao's call to 'Bombard the Headquarters' and come to his rescue as his Red Guards. This gave them purpose, escape from the schools and a chance to seek revenge upon unpopular teachers. Moreover, it gave them the freedom to disobey parents, travel the country and break the Confucian codes of behaviour.

However, by 1969 they had served Mao's purpose and he had them 'sent to the countryside' to learn from the peasants or, more precisely, keep out of Mao's way. Many were never to return to the cities again, particularly the girls forced into marriage with a peasant male. By 1976, those who did return kept their heads in their books, seeking a promising career path.

▼ Source 16.7 University students with their foreign teacher, 1984





17

**WHO'S WHO OF THE CHINESE  
REVOLUTION**

中国革命著名人物

人 民 领 袖

◀ **Source 17.0** A poster of the leaders of the People's Republic of China. Left to right: Hua Guofeng, Zhou Enlai, Liu Shaoqi, Mao Zedong, Zhu De and Deng Xiaoping

Note that, due to a lack of birth records and the Chinese custom of counting a newborn as one-year-old, several of the birth dates are unreliable.

**Bethune, Norman (1889–1939)** – A Canadian surgeon who served in World War I, he was a surgeon against the fascists in the Spanish Civil War, and in 1938 worked for the Eighth Route Army in their encounters with the Japanese. He died of septicaemia, contracted while operating on a CCP soldier. He is regarded as a hero in China.

**Borodin, Mikhail (1884–1951)** – Born in Russia, he joined the Bolsheviks in 1903. From 1923 to 1927 he was a Comintern agent advising the GMD. He had encouraged Sun to allow the CCP to join the GMD as well. He returned to the Soviet Union in 1928. In 1949 he was sent by Stalin to a gulag (concentration camp), where he died two years later.

**Braun, Otto (Li De) (circa 1900–1974)** – A German Communist, he was sent to China by the Comintern to advise the CCP. In 1933, he went to the Jiangxi Soviet, where he had great influence on military tactics until the Long March reached Zunyi. He left Yan'an in 1939.

**Cai Yuanpei (Tsai Yuan-p'ei) (1868–1940)** – A Qing official, he joined the Tongmenghui after the failure of Guangxu's reforms. In 1916, he became Chancellor of Beijing University, where he welcomed new ideas, academic freedom and the New Culture.

**Chen Boda (Ch'en Po-ta) (1904–1989)** – He arrived in Yan'an in 1937, and in 1942 became Mao's political secretary. He rose to prominence during the GPCR, when he edited *Red Flag* (CCP paper) and may have helped compile *Quotations of Chairman Mao*. He became a member of the Central Committee and Politburo and was a figure behind the Big Character Posters. Chen was one of the cruellest figures of the GPCR. He fell from power in 1970.



**Chen Duxiu (Ch'en Tu-hsiu) (1879–1942)** – While Dean of the College of Letters in Beijing University in 1915, he founded *New Youth* magazine and was jailed for participating in the May Fourth Movement. With Li Dazhao and others, he founded the CCP in Shanghai in 1921 and was elected as the party's first General Secretary. In 1927, at Comintern insistence, he was removed for opposing GMD and CCP cooperation. He was jailed by the GMD from 1932 to 1937.

**Chen Yi (Ch'en Yi) (1901–1972)** – From 1919 to 1921 he studied and worked in France, after which he returned and worked for warlord Yang Sen. In 1923, he joined the GMD and CCP and worked at Huangpu Academy under Zhou Enlai. He took part in the Nanchang Uprising, retreated with Zhu De to Jinggangshan and was on Mao's side in the Futian Incident. He was part of the rear guard of the Long March. He distinguished himself as a military leader during the Anti-Japanese War and the Civil War. In 1956, he was elected to the Politburo and in 1958, he became Foreign Minister. He was later persecuted by Red Guards. Chen Yi was one of China's famous 10 marshals.

**Chen Yun (Ch'en Yun) (1905–1995)** – Chen was a labourer in Shanghai when he joined the CCP in 1924. He later organised handicraft workers in Jiangxi Soviet. Sent to Russia for training, he returned to Yan'an and gave support to Mao's Rectification Campaign. In the civil war, he worked under Lin Biao. From 1949, he held positions in industry and finance planning. In 1954, he became a Vice-Premier and was attacked by Red Guards during the GPCR. Later he was an economic adviser to Deng Xiaoping.



**Deng Xiaoping (Teng Hsiao-p'ing) (1904–1997)** – Born in Sichuan, he worked and studied in France. He joined the CCP in 1924 and was a private in the Long March, but was promoted because he supported Mao at Zunyi. As a political commissar in the civil war, he won the respect of the generals with his organisational ability. He was Vice-Premier in 1952 and member of the Politburo Standing Committee in 1956. He assisted Liu Shaoqi to revive China between 1959 and 1966, but he was purged at the beginning



of the GPCR as 'No. 2 Capitalist Roader'. In 1976, he was again purged after crowds defied the Gang of Four to mourn Zhou Enlai. With the help of Marshal Ye Jianying, he gradually assumed control in between 1977 and 1981. He was in power during the Tian'anmen Massacre of 1989.



**Deng Yingchao (Teng Ying-ch'ao) (1904–1992)** – Born in Henan, she was well educated. She was briefly imprisoned in 1919 for her involvement with the Awakening Society. In 1925, she married Zhou and became a member of the CCP. She participated in the Nanchang Uprising and was one of 35 women on the Long March. She played a leading role in women's organisations. In 1969, she was elected to the Central Committee of the Party



**Du Yuesheng or Big-Eared Du (Tu Yueh-sheng) (1888–1951)** – Through violence and threats, the young Du rose from poverty in Pudong to be the leader of the Shanghai Green Gang. He was an early ally of Jiang Jieshi, helping him to kill Communists in the streets of Shanghai in 1927. Through Jiang, he was able to mix with Song Ailing and her brothers. He was useful in disposing of Jiang's enemies. In 1949 Du helped Jiang empty the Shanghai Bank of China prior to his escaping to Hong Kong.

**Gao Gang (Kao Kang) (1905–1954)** – Born in Shaanxi and a founder of the northwest guerrilla base, he was placed in charge of Manchuria by Mao. After Stalin's death, he was accused of plotting on the Soviet Union's behalf and committed suicide.

**Guangxu (Kuang-Hsu) (1871–1908)** – Nephew of Cixi, he was adopted by her to be emperor following the death of her son, Emperor Tongzhi, in 1875. In 1889, Guangxu ruled almost independently but, following his 100 Days of Reform in 1898, he was placed under house arrest until his death (possibly murder) in 1908.

**He Long (Ho Lung) (1896–1969)** – As a boy, he raised peasant armies in Hunan. By the age of 21, he had 19 000 followers. In 1920, he raised a brigade for the GMD. In 1926, he joined the CCP. He joined the Nanchang Uprising and later joined Mao and Zhu De in Jiangxi. Decisively, he refused to support Zhang Guotao against Mao. He held major military commands against the Japanese and then the GMD. In 1955, he became a PLA marshal. He was criticised in the GPCR by Lin Biao and Jiang Qing, and he died in a hospital they chose for him.

**He Zizhen (Ho Tzu-chen) (1909–1984)** – Mao's second wife, she was the daughter of a Jiangxi landlord. She joined the CCP in 1926 and married Mao in 1928. She had to leave children behind when the Long March began and also had to abandon one born on the journey. Only the daughter born in Yan'an, Li Min, stayed with her. In 1937, He Zizhen went to the Soviet Union for treatment for shrapnel wounds received during the Long March. While she was away, Mao married Jiang Qing.

**Hu Shi (Hu Shih) (1891–1962)** – Upon his return from the United States in 1917, he became Professor of Philosophy at Beijing University. He popularised *baihua*, or plain speech.

**Hurley, Patrick (1883–1963)** – Born in New Mexico, a member of the Choctaw nation, he studied law and was a colonel in World War I. In 1944, he was President Roosevelt's personal envoy to China. Despite his mission to Yan'an in 1945, he was unsympathetic to providing aid to the CCP forces.



**Jiang Jieshi (Chiang Kai-shek) (1887–1975)** – Born in Zhejiang and trained in Japan and Russia, after connections with the Shanghai gangs, he became a follower of Dr Sun and later commander of the Huangpu Military Academy. He divorced Jennie Chen to marry Song Meiling. After Sun's death, Jiang won control of the GMD and led the Northern Expedition. In 1927, in Shanghai, he massacred the Communists. He established Nanjing as the capital. He was captured by his own general, Zhang Xueliang, in the Xi'an Incident of 1936. Until 1949, he fought both

the Japanese (from Chongqing) and the CCP, as well as dealing with difficult warlords. He lost the civil war to the CCP and established his republic in Taiwan in 1949, where he ruled until his death.



**Jiang Qing (Chiang Ch'ing) (1914–1991)** – Born in Shandong, she became a B-grade actor in Shanghai under the name of Lan Ping. She went to Yan'an in 1938 and soon replaced He Zizhen as Mao's wife. The CCP had her banned from politics, but in 1966 she found power by supporting Mao in the GPCR, and through the Cultural Revolution Group, which transformed into her Gang of Four. She was arrested in 1976 and suicided in prison in 1991.

**Kang Sheng (K'ang Sheng) (1898–1975)** – Born in Shandong, he met Jiang Qing in 1918. In 1924, he joined the CCP. He led the 1945 Rectification Campaign in Yan'an and became Mao's chief of the secret police. Active in the Great Leap Forward and the GPCR, he led attacks on key Party members. A cruel man, he was posthumously expelled from the CCP in 1980.

**Kang Youwei (K'ang Yu-wei) (1858–1927)** – A political philosopher who advised Guangxu on the 100 Days of Reform of 1898, he fled to Japan after Cixi's crackdown. He returned in 1914 but opposed Dr Sun's policies, as he was a Confucianist.

**Li Dazhao (Li Ta-chao) (1889–1927)** – The Librarian at Beijing University, he influenced Mao in communism and the idea of peasants as revolutionaries. Co-founder with Chen Duxiu of the CCP, he was executed by hanging, as ordered by the warlord Zhang Zuolin in 1927.

**Li De** – See Braun, Otto.

**Li Lisan (Li Li-san) (1900–1967)** – Born in Hunan, he met Zhou Enlai in France. In 1921, he organised labour unions in Shanghai. He became an influential CCP leader in 1928. In 1930, he was removed from this post after his insistence on the Comintern line that revolution would be led by the proletariat and not peasants. He worked in Russia under duress until Mao secured his release and rehabilitation in 1945. He escaped GPCR persecution.



**Lin Biao (Lin Piao) (1907–1971)** – Born in Hubei and a graduate of Huangpu, he led breakthrough forces in the Long March and supported Mao at Zunyi. Lin distinguished himself during the war against the Japanese and against the GMD in Manchuria. Appointed Minister of Defence instead of Peng Dehuai in 1959, he published *Quotations of Chairman Mao* for the PLA. He became Mao's successor, but he died in 1971 after a failed plot to assassinate Mao.



**Liu Bocheng (Liu Po-ch'eng) (1892–1986)** – Born in Sichuan, he attended a military school and lost an eye in the 1911 Revolution. He joined CCP in 1926 and led part of the vanguard forces of the Long March. He held key positions against the Japanese and GMD. A member of the Politburo in 1956, he kept out of GPCR politics.



**Liu Shaoqi (Liu Shao-ch'i) (1898–1969)** – Born in Hunan, he assisted Mao in organising miners. He studied in Moscow where he joined the CCP. He joined the Jiangxi Soviet in 1932 but missed the Long March due to tuberculosis. He went to Yan'an in 1937, where he became a political commissar and theoretician. He was influential in the civil war. In 1958, he replaced Mao as chairman of the PRC, but was attacked in 1966 for taking the 'capitalist road'. He died in Kaifeng prison from medical and general neglect.



**Lu Xun (Lu Hsun) (1881–1936)** – Chinese author and writer in the *baihua* style, his incisive short stories such as ‘The True Story of Ah Q’ attacked traditional beliefs and attitudes. While never a member of the CCP, he was regarded as a revolutionary writer by the Party.

**Ma Haide (Ma Hai-te, or George Hatem) (1910–1988)** – A Lebanese–American doctor who went to China in 1933 and to Yan’an in 1936, he joined the CCP and became a citizen in 1950. He died in Beijing.

**Mao Anying (Mao An-ying) (1922–1950)** – Mao’s first son by Yang Kaihui, he was released from captivity after his mother’s execution and taken to Shanghai. He studied in the Soviet Union and returned to China in 1948. He was in command of a division of ‘volunteers’ in Korea when he was killed.



**Mao Zedong (Mao Tse-tung) (1893–1976)** – Born in Hunan and originally an assistant to Li Dazhao, he saw peasants as revolutionaries and set up the Jiangxi Soviet. During the Long March, he became Chairman of the CCP and won the civil war from Yan’an. He became Chairman of the PRC in 1949, but stepped aside after the failure of the Great Leap Forward. He regained power in 1966 owing to support by the Red Guards and the GPCR. He died in bed in 1976.

**Mao Zemin (Mao Tse-min) (1896–1943)** – Younger brother of Mao, he followed him into CCP, and was in the Northern Expedition, Jiangxi Soviets and Long March. He was a financial adviser to Xinjiang warlord Sheng Shicai, who executed him.

**Mao Zetan (Mao Tse-t’an) (1905–1935)** – Mao’s brother, he followed his brothers into the CCP and worked in Hunan and Jiangxi. He was left behind when the Long March began, and he was captured and executed by the GMD in 1935.

**Marshall, George C. (1880–1959)** – An American general who was a military observer in China from 1924 to 1927, he was made special ambassador to China from 1945 to 1947 to try to prevent civil war between the GMD and CCP. He was later involved in the dismissal of General MacArthur during the Korean War.



**Peng Dehuai (P’eng Te-huai) (1898–1974)** – Born in Hunan, he became a soldier for a warlord. He joined the CCP and the Jiangxi Soviet. He distinguished himself on the Long March. Peng was a deputy commander in the north-west during the civil war. He led the Chinese ‘volunteers’ in the Korean War. For his criticism of Mao’s Great Leap Forward, he was dismissed as Minister for Defence in 1959 and purged. In 1966, he was imprisoned and suffered a long period of beatings, but remained unrepentant. He died in 1974.

**Peng Zhen (P’eng Chen) (1902–1997)** – Born in Shanxi, he was influenced by the May Fourth Movement. He joined the CCP in 1926 and worked under Liu Shaoqi in the underground activities. In Yan’an, he worked under Lin Biao on rectification indoctrination. In 1956, Peng Zhen was elected to the Politburo and became a spokesman abroad for CCP policies. As mayor of Beijing, he supported his deputy, Wu Han, whose play upset Mao. In 1966, he was denounced as a ‘revisionist’ and was removed from his post as mayor. He spent the next 12 years in prison and exile. In 1978, he was brought back to political life to assist Deng Xiaoping.



**Puyi (Aisin Gioro Puyi) (1906–1967)** – In 1908, he was sent for by the dying Cixi to be the next (and last) emperor, Xuan Tong. In 1911, he was deposed, but was allowed to live in the Forbidden City until he was removed in 1917. As Henry Puyi, he lived as a playboy in Tianjin. He was then invited to Japan prior to being installed as puppet emperor of Manzhouguo (Manchukuo). After Japan's surrender, the Russians eventually handed him over to the PRC in 1949. He was imprisoned and 're-educated'. In 1959, he was released to become a gardener and then a researcher.



**Snow, Edgar (1905–1972)** – Born in Missouri (United States), Snow was a journalist who lived in China for more than a decade. In 1936, he was the first Western journalist to interview Mao Zedong and other party leaders, and to observe the Red Army in action. His book *Red Star Over China* (1937) was a bestseller and opened the eyes of the Chinese and the world to the fact that the CCP was thriving. His account of the CCP was strongly influenced by Mao and Zhu De.



**Song Meiling (Soong or Sung May-ling) (1898–2003)** – Educated in the United States, she married Jiang Jieshi, who needed a closer connection to her brother-in-law, Sun Yixian. She was influential in securing loans for China during the Second Sino–Japanese War (1937–1945). She moved with Jiang to Taiwan and survived him there.

**Song Qingling (Soong or Sung Ch'ing-ling) (1893–1981)** – Born in Shanghai, she was educated in the United States. She became Sun Yixian's secretary and then his second wife. When the GMD split in 1927, she stayed on the left, separated from her sister and Jiang Jieshi. While never a member of the CCP, she supported it against the GMD. She became Vice-President of the PRC and editor of *China Reconstructs* until her death in 1981.

**Stilwell, Joseph (1883–1946)** – Born in Florida in the United States, he was sent to West Point Academy to control his rebellious spirit. He served in France in World War I. He subsequently served in China from 1935 to 1939, where he learnt the language. He was soon sent by George G. Marshall to be Chief of Staff to Jiang Jieshi. Stilwell clashed over Jiang's reluctance to use all his troops and the corrupt misuse of the money sent from the United States. He also clashed with General Chennault, who commanded the Flying Tigers in China. Stilwell was recalled from China in 1944.



**Sun Yixian (Sun Yat-sen) (1866–1925)** – Founder of the Tongmenghui and then GMD, provisional president of the Republic of China and known as the 'Father of the Chinese Revolution' (1911), his 'Three People's Principles' were highly regarded by all parties. His Huangpu Academy was the basis for the Northern Expedition. Sun died in 1925.

**Von Seeckt, Hans (1866–1936)** – Born in Schleswig (Germany), he entered the Prussian Army in 1885. He served in command positions during and after World War I, but was forced to resign in 1926. From 1934 to 1935, he was adviser to Jiang Jieshi and recommended a scorched earth policy, supported by a blockhouse system to put pressure on the Jiangxi Soviet. He returned to Hitler's Germany, but was disillusioned with Hitler.



**Wang Guangmei (Wang Kuang-mei) (1921–2006)** – Born in Beijing, her father was a government minister and diplomat. While she graduated from Beijing University in physics, she could speak French, Russian and English fluently and served as an interpreter during the negotiations with George C. Marshall. In 1948, she became Liu Shaoqi's second wife. She held some important posts and accompanied Liu on overseas trips. During the GPCR, she was persecuted by Red Guards acting for Jiang Qing. Unlike Liu, she survived the GPCR and became vice-president of the Chinese Academy of Social Science.

**Wang Hongwen (Wang Hung-wen) (1935–1992)** – Born in Jilin, he rose to power in the GPCR. Appointed vice-chairman of the CCP Central Committee in 1971, he was one of the Gang of Four arrested in 1976.

**Wang Jingwei (Wang Ching-wei) (1883–1944)** – As a youth, he tried to assassinate Prince Gong. In 1927, his left faction of the GMD sided with the CCP after the split. However, this alliance soon folded. In 1938, he rejoined Jiang's GMD but was soon ousted. He became a puppet governor of Nanjing for the Japanese and died in disgrace in Japan in 1944.

**Wedemeyer, Albert Coady (1897–1989)** – Born in Nebraska in the United States, he graduated from West Point Academy and worked for the War Department during World War II. In 1943, he was made Chief of Staff to Britain's Lord Mountbatten in South-East Asia. In 1944, he was assigned to replace Joseph Stilwell as Chief of Staff to Jiang Jieshi in China. He found that convincing Jiang to take on the Japanese more vigorously was a difficult task. After 1945, he advocated airlifting GMD troops to northern China to beat the CCP. However, he also argued for a united China.

**Wu Han (1909–1969)** – Born in Zhejiang, he paid for his own education at Qinghua University. A member of the China Democratic League, he worked closely with the CCP, especially in Yunnan during the Japanese occupation. After 1949, he became a deputy mayor of Beijing. His play, *Hai Rui Dismissed from Office*, was soon branded a 'poisonous weed' and he did not survive the GPCR.

**Yang Chengwu (Yang Ch'eng-wu) (1914–2004)** – Born in Fujian, he trained under Lin Biao from 1932 to 1938. He led a regiment in the Long March. He commanded well in the Anti-Japanese and civil wars. After 1949, he set up the Air Defence Command and Party organisation. He was chief of staff for the PLA in 1959. In 1967, Lin Biao removed him from command.

**Yang Kaihui (Yang K'ai-hui) (1901–1930)** – Born in Hunan, she was the well-educated daughter of one of Mao's teachers. She married Mao in 1920 and bore him three sons. In 1930, she was arrested by the local warlord following a CCP attack and, refusing to repudiate her beliefs, she was executed in Changsha.

**Yao Wenyuan (Yao Wen-yuan) (1931–2005)** – Born in Zhejiang, he came to work for the Shanghai Party Committee and became a member of the Central Cultural Revolution Small Group. He was appointed to the Politburo in 1969. As a member of the Gang of Four, he was arrested in 1976 and sentenced to 20 years in prison. He was released in 1996, and later died of diabetes – the last of the Gang of Four.

**Ye Jianying (Ye Chien-ying) (1897–1986)** – Born in Guangdong, he graduated from the Yunnan Military Academy and joined the CCP in 1924. He commanded a division in the Northern Expedition. He, Zhou Enlai and Braun planned the Jiangxi breakout that was to be the Long March. He became a liaison with the GMD, even convincing 16 GMD regional commanders to join the Reds. A member of the Politburo, he was influential in the protection of Deng Xiaoping, the arrest of the Gang of Four and Deng's restoration. He was one of China's 10 great marshals.

**Ye Ting (Yeh T'ing) (1896–1946)** – A Huangpu graduate and leader of a division in the Northern Expedition, after assisting failed CCP uprisings in Nanchang and Guangzhou, he retired for a decade. In 1937, Jiang Jieshi asked him to round up survivors of the Long March rearguard to form the New Fourth Route Army to fight the Japanese. In 1941, the GMD ambushed them, and Ye was injured and arrested. He was released in 1946, but his plane crashed en route to Yan'an.



**Yuan Shikai (Yuen Shih-kai) (1859–1916)** – Born in Henan, he pursued a military career. He joined the Qing military and became commander of the New Army in 1895. He may have betrayed Guangxu to Cixi after the 1898 reforms. He used his army against the Boxers. Later he became Viceroy of Zhili. In 1911, he used his Beiyang army to attack the revolutionaries, but then later sided with them. He talked Dr Sun into letting him be the president of the new republic in 1912. He then turned against the new GMD. In 1916, he failed to have himself regarded as the next emperor, and he died soon after.

**Zhang Chunqiao (Chang Ch'un-ch'iao) (1917–2005)** – Born in Shandong, he joined the CCP in 1938 and was very active in the Shanghai branch of the Party. He was deputy head of the Central Cultural Revolution Small Group in 1966, member of the Politburo in 1969 and its Standing Committee in 1973. He became vice-premier in 1975 and was arrested as a member of the Gang of Four in 1976.

**Zhang Guotao (Chang Kuo-t'ao) (1897–1979)** – Born in Jiangxi to a rich landlord family, at Beijing University, he met Li Dazhao and Chen Duxiu. He joined the CCP and entered the Central Committee. After participating in the Nanchang uprising, he went to the Soviet Union, where he remained until 1931. Upon his return, he was a chief commissar in central border areas. In 1932, he set up a Shaanxi-Sichuan Soviet and then was forced by the GMD to western Sichuan. When his army met Mao's, they were split up: Mao went to Yan'an and Zhang, with Zhu De, headed west. A year later he entered the Shaanxi Soviet. After criticism, he left and joined the GMD. In 1949, he settled in Hong Kong.



**Zhang Xueliang (Chang Hsueh-liang) (1901–2001)** – The son of a Manchurian warlord (Zhang Zuolin), he became a general in the GMD after being expelled from Manchuria in 1931. In 1936, he kidnapped Jiang Jieshi in the Xi'an Incident and after Jiang's release remained under house arrest, even in Taiwan, until 1990. He then moved to Hawaii, where he is buried.



**Zhou Enlai (Chou En-lai) (1898–1976)** – Born in Jiangsu, he studied in a mission school and then in Japan. He was caught up in the May Fourth Movement. In 1920, he went to France, where he set up a branch of the CCP in 1922. He only just survived the 1927 Shanghai Massacre. He was one of the '28 Bolsheviks' who deposed Mao in Jiangxi. At Zunyi, he backed Mao. He was a moderate who tried to limit the effects of Mao's outrageous decisions and policies. For example, he pushed for the return of Deng Xiaoping in 1973 and friendship with the United States. The Gang of Four continued to target him. When he died of cancer in 1976, people defied the government to mourn him.



**Zhu De (Chu Te) (1886–1976)** – Born in Hunan to a poor family, he joined the 1911 Revolution and later became a warlord general. He cured himself of opium dependency. In Germany, he met Zhou Enlai and joined the CCP. After the Nanchang uprising, he joined Mao at Jinggangshan Soviet. He became head of the Red Army and was military leader of the Long March. After 1949, his role was more ceremonial than military. He was criticised during the GPCR, but continued to remain an elder statesmen until his death, just months before Mao died.



*Appendix 1:* **AFTERMATH: THE DENG ERA,  
1981–1997**  
邓小平时代

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*It does not matter whether a cat is black or white, so long as it catches mice.*

– DENG XIAOPING

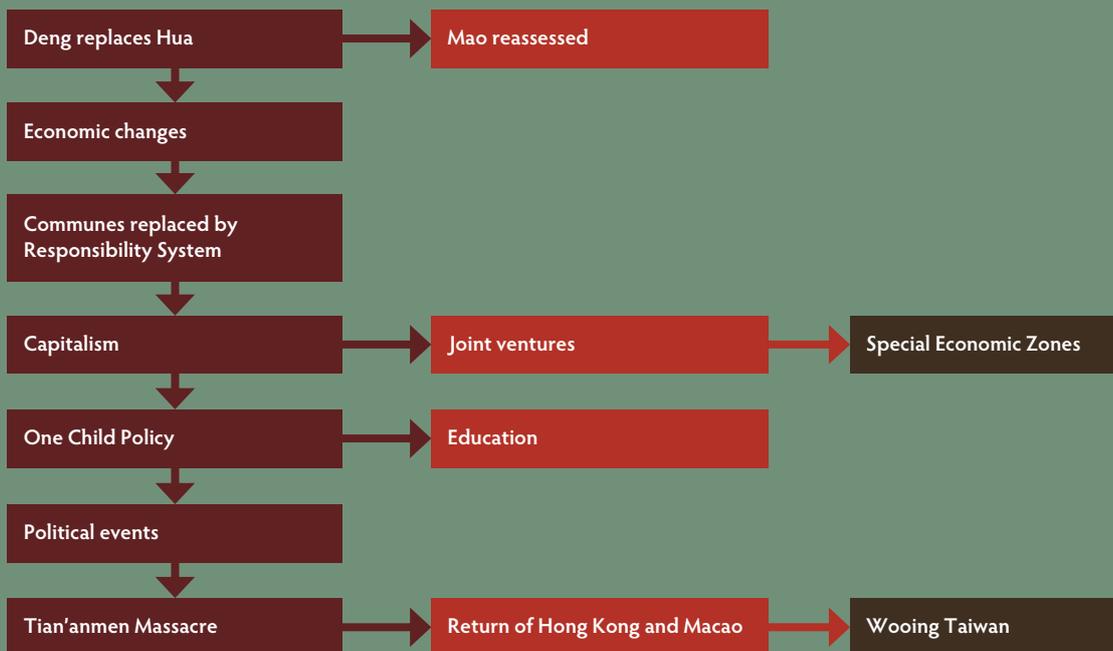
# Overview

Hua Guofeng was a political lightweight, and he was soon moved aside to allow Deng Xiaoping to reshape China. Deng then began to build the Chinese economy along the lines he had employed with Liu Shaoqi in the early 1960s. Such a radical shift required a reassessment of Mao Zedong as well as a dismantling of the commune system. His policies required an attempt to remove from power those Party members whose political appointments were due to the Cultural Revolution. While the political structure – especially the dominance of the CCP – remained largely unchallenged, the economic changes created the economic superpower that is China today.

## Key issues

- How did Deng replace Hua?
- How was Mao reassessed?
- What were Deng’s economic reforms?
- What happened to education?
- What was the One Child Policy?
- What was the Tian’anmen Square Massacre?

## Flow of chapter



◀ Source A.0 A photo of the Shenzhen skyline. Deng Xiaoping set up Shenzhen as a Special Economic Zone, leading to significant capitalist-like expansion.



## How did Deng replace Hua?

### Two Whatevers

Hua Guofeng's policy that whatever Mao had decided must be carried on and whatever Mao had said must be upheld

Hua Guofeng, plucked from obscurity, did not wish to remain obscure. Knowing that his position as leader of China was due to Mao's selection, he took full advantage of that connection. Posters often depicted Mao saying to Hua, 'With you in charge, I am at ease'. His policy was based on the **Two Whatevers**: whatever Mao had decided must be carried on and whatever Mao had said must be upheld. Yet this alliance to the memory of Mao and the use of songs and posters to tie him to the cult figure of Mao were not enough. China was looking for a change. In particular, the military leaders and Mao's economist, Chen Yun, backed Deng Xiaoping as the man China needed.

Quickly rehabilitated yet again, Deng became Vice-Premier, Chief of Staff to the PLA and a member of the Politburo in 1977. In any assembly of politicians and international visitors, it was Deng who held the floor. The use of the Democracy Wall and the *dazibao* to undermine Mao, and by association Hua, allowed a gentle progression by Deng until Hua was eased out of power in a bloodless coup.

▼ Source A.1 Hua Guofeng



▼ Source A.2 Rapid growth in the Pudong area of Shanghai was due to Deng's policies



## How was Mao reassessed?

Mao had devastated China in his efforts to regain power. His Great Leap Forward had brought death to tens of millions of Chinese. His cult of personality and his Red Guards had also resulted in the deaths of millions. Yet the party that now ruled China, unelected, was his party. To completely dismantle the image of Mao would be to undermine the CCP. Deng, who had personally suffered during the GPCR, had little love for Mao but realised that he had to balance preserving the image of Mao while dismantling it enough to allow his non-Maoist policies to succeed. The reassessment of Mao took the form of reaffirming his great leadership of the Party but admitting he had made mistakes in his later years.

Posters of Mao now often included other Party members as well. Great Helmsman and Red Sun images disappeared. Many public statues of Mao were quietly dismantled overnight without explanation. Newspapers began to feature reassessments such as the following one.

### ANALYSIS ACTIVITY 16.1



#### Tribute to Mao on his 90th birthday (1983)

Hu Yaobang, General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party Central Committee, describes the late Chairman Mao Zedong as 'China's greatest and most outstanding figure' of the past century.

*Like many other great figures in past history, Comrade Mao Zedong also made mistakes. The serious mistakes he made in his later years put our Party in a very difficult situation for a time, Hu noted ...*

*Confronted with the question of how to appraise this prestigious and great leader who had just passed away, some people in the Party, in particular in certain leading positions, attempted to follow the wrong policies Mao Zedong had adopted in his later years. Some worried that open exposure of his mistakes would throw the Party into confusion and cause a crisis of confidence. Some went to the other extreme, wanting to throw out all the great contributions made by Mao Zedong along with his errors in his later years, and this would lead the Party astray ...*

*Comrade Mao Zedong's monumental contributions in hacking a path through difficulties over past decades will always be a source of admiration and encouragement for us and inspire us in our courageous advance to accomplish the cause he left unfinished, Hu concluded.*

**Source A.3** 'Xinhua Report', *China Daily*, 26 December 1983.

- 1 Explain how this report reduces, but does not destroy Mao's legacy.
- 2 Identify who you think Hu Yaobang is referring when he says 'following the wrong policies'.
- 3 Describe how Mao's name and title are downgraded as this article progresses.

## What were Deng's economic reforms?

The urgent need was to build on the improvements in agriculture and to relieve those areas that were still poor. Then Deng believed industry would follow. To do this meant dismantling aspects of socialism. To justify this approach, for which he and Liu Shaoqi had previously been punished, Deng brought back the saying, 'It does not matter whether a cat is black or white, so long as it catches mice.' To develop his 'socialism with Chinese characteristics' (capitalism), Deng needed to throw away the 'iron rice bowl'. Under the collective system in agriculture and industry, the lazy worker would still collect a wage and had no fear of being sacked. People needed an incentive to work harder and directly benefit from their own labour.

## Agriculture and the Responsibility System

**Responsibility System** Deng's policy of giving peasants the economic benefits of their labours

While keeping the communes and state ownership of land, the **Responsibility System** was introduced. As a trial, Deng sent a trusted official Wan Li into the poorest parts of the poorest province Anhui where begging to survive was still rife.

The peasants were allocated land on a family basis. They then grew their crops and sold a predetermined percentage to the state, but the remainder could be sold on the open market for greater profit. The household plot could be used for personal growing of vegetables or raising small animals.

The system worked, and by 1982 it was widespread and officially approved by the Party. Some peasants became comparatively rich and were able to afford a tractor or a truck to transport their goods to market. The first class to benefit from the new economy was the peasant class, whose newfound wealth was the envy of many city dwellers.

► Source A.4 1980s poster promoting the Four Modernisations



▼ Source A.5 1980s poster extolling national honour



## Industry and commerce

Under the ‘iron rice bowl’ policy, service in department stores was often poor, with shop assistants taking time to file their nails between serving a long line of customers wanting to purchase items. State-run enterprises were told to make a profit and, if necessary, fire staff who did not work. People were encouraged to set up shops to supply competition and a better variety of goods and services to customers.

Factories were encouraged to modernise production to use some profits, after taxes, for reinvestment. Trade fairs were set up to allow companies to import quality equipment from overseas. Overseas companies were encouraged to invest in China in **joint ventures**, where the Chinese company went into a 50/50 partnership with the international company. This not only brought more profit (due to overseas access to markets) but also resulted in better quality products and quality control for the domestic market. Japan was very quick to take advantage of the cheap labour market that joint ventures supplied.

Deng set up **Special Economic Zones** in the south-east with investment capital so they could conduct business along more capitalist lines. These areas were highly prized by employees, who received significantly better wages and conditions than their counterparts elsewhere in China. One such zone was Shenzhen, set up across the border from Hong Kong in anticipation of Hong Kong’s return to mainland control.

The major negative of this system was that the Chinese were no longer guaranteed employment. While some could increasingly make their own choices and advance themselves, others found themselves unemployed (without a social security or dole system) and listed as ‘job-awaiting youths’.

### joint ventures

Chinese companies working with overseas investments on a 50/50 partnership basis

### Special Economic Zones

Under Deng, these were special areas of China run along capitalist lines

### FOCUS QUESTIONS

- 1 How did Deng’s policies boost agriculture?
- 2 How was the industrial sector encouraged?

▼ Source A.6 1980s department store with Seiko advertisement featuring the characters ‘Socialism is good’ on top





## What happened to education?

In a reverse of the 'better Red than expert' philosophy, China needed experts to run industry. Deng's policy of the Four Modernisations (agriculture, industry, science and technology, and defence) required high-quality education. Exams became the key means of entry to good schools. The government recognised certain schools and universities as 'key' schools, which meant that they received the best funding and staffing. Competition to enter these institutions through exams was keen. While political education and military training continued in the universities, the emphasis was on academic achievement.

**Young Pioneers** a program that was a cross between Scouts and Young Communists, where youngsters with red scarves lived up to a sense of duty and expectations

The government encouraged students to study at overseas universities so that they could bring back their acquired skills. Teachers, or 'foreign experts', were brought in from overseas to improve the quality of English and, to a lesser extent, Japanese. These were the languages needed for the new technologies. Those who had studied Russian needed to switch languages in order to improve their opportunities to travel overseas.

In the schools, the **Young Pioneers** movement was revived (having been killed off by the Red Guards). This was a combination of a scouting-like movement and traineeship for Party membership. The Young Pioneers were easily recognised by the red scarves around their necks.

## What was the One Child Policy?

The government soon recognised that economic growth and prosperity depended on being able to feed and therefore control the population of China. Mao had always seen a large population as an asset, but the demographers pointed out the difficulty of sustaining a rapidly increasing population of over one billion people.

**One Child Policy** Under Deng, with some exceptions, families were to have only one child

So the **One Child Policy** was born. This involved a three-pronged attack. A propaganda campaign extolling the advantages of one child (healthier and better cared for) was launched, mainly through posters. Economic penalties for a second child, including a withdrawal of free education and medical treatment, were introduced. The work unit (*danwei*), especially its clinic, was responsible for meeting a quota of birth control. Both birth control and late marriages were strongly encouraged.

### HISTORY THROUGH OBJECTS



▲ Source A.7 1980s One Child poster painted on a wall extolling the virtues of having only one child: 'I am an only child', photographed by the author.

This policy had unfortunate consequences. An unpopular image of this policy is of women having their pregnancies forcibly terminated to prevent the second child. While many educated city dwellers were content to have only one child – even a female – this was often not the case in the rural areas. The peasants still saw a boy as means of looking after them in their retirement and praying for their spirits after their deaths. As a girl traditionally became part of her husband's family, girls were often considered a liability. Sadly, the illegal practices of infanticide and abandonment of females are still practised in rural areas.

▼ **Source A.8** Fujian poster urging the population of the province not to exceed 32 million



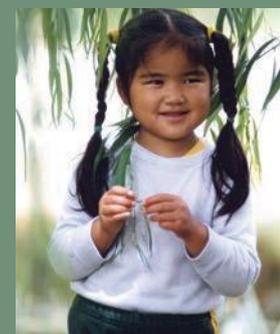
### AMAZING BUT TRUE ...

#### The story of Pan Xiaoyan

When Pan Xiaoyan was conceived, her mother – who lived in a rural county in Fujian province – faced a problem. As she already had a daughter, a second daughter would be an economic liability. She wanted a son. Secretly, she went to stay with her brother in Fuzhou until the birth. If a son was born, she would proudly bring him back with her. She gave birth to a girl – Pan Xiaoyan (Little and Gorgeous).

Pan's uncle helped his sister locate a childless couple in the city who paid the usual sum of money for the girl. They informed the government that they had found the child abandoned in the long-distance bus station and would raise her as their own. Her name became Huang Ying (Oriole). Two incidents changed this arrangement. First, the foster father was stabbed in the head when he came to the rescue of a neighbour attacked by youths. Second, his wife became pregnant. They were too poor to raise two children, so they offered Huang Ying back to the biological parents, who declined. They then offered her to the government as an orphan.

At this time, the Fujian government had promised to find a girl for an Australian couple teaching in that city. Huang Ying became Hannah and was the first child from the PRC to be adopted by Australians. She is now a legal special counsel and a mother of two.



▲ **Source A.9** Pan Xiaoyan



## The Tian'anmen Square Massacre

During the time of Mao's rule, the people of China were taught that the proletariat of Western countries lived in Dickensian poverty as portrayed in *The Little Match Girl*, which featured in so many textbooks. They had been told that people in China were better off. After China opened up to the world, and they were able to watch Western films and television, as well as observe international exchanges, the people of China quickly realised what lies they had been told.

There was a growing activism among students and intellectuals, who had three main concerns. They wanted democracy rather than Party dictatorship. The students at one art school built an image of the 'Goddess of Democracy', which they brought to the location of the movement's focus – Tian'anmen Square. The 70th anniversary of the May Fourth protests fell on 4 May 1989, and this spurred them on. The second grievance was corruption by Party officials around the country, who abused their unchallenged positions. This was – and still is – a legitimate concern. The third issue was the death in April of Hu Yaobang, who had been removed from the position of Secretary-General because he was made a scapegoat for those who were critical of Deng's policies. Hu was replaced by a younger man Zhao Ziyang. The students saw Hu as a progressive in favour of reform and democracy and chose to remember him at Tian'anmen Square – much as Zhou Enlai had been remembered years earlier. Factory workers, artists and other sectors lent their support to the students.

Two key leaders of the movement were an astrophysicist, Fang Lizhi, and a poster writer, Wei Jingsheng, who was imprisoned for his criticisms. Other students took up the call for reform. In May, Tian'anmen Square became the stage for students to camp and protest. Some held hunger strikes. Attempts were made to move the students out with the PLA, but the soldiers did not want to use force against their comrades. To add to Deng's embarrassment, the leader of the Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev, paid a visit and witnessed this protest against the government. Zhao Ziyang visited the students and was visibly moved by the state of the hunger strikers. He was soon removed by the hardliners.



▲ Source A.10 The famous one-man protest following the Tian'anmen Massacre

Then, on 4 June, the government brought in outside troops, the 27th Army, who had no connection or sympathy with the students. The crackdown was brutal and bloody. After clearing Tian'anmen Square, they entered the universities to arrest protesters. The numbers killed are unknown, as the government hid the figures and disposed of bodies from what was euphemistically called the 'Tian'anmen Incident'. At least 500 and maybe thousands of people died.

Thousands were arrested around the country and some were executed. Even today, many citizens of China are unaware of what occurred. One result was the rise of political hardliners such as Li Peng and the fall of moderates such as Zhao Ziyang.

### AMAZING BUT TRUE ...

Following the Tian'anmen crackdown, students at one university began to throw bottles from their dormitory windows in protest. The Chinese for 'little bottle' is 'xiao ping', which is a pun on Deng's name, Xiaoping (Little Peace). This is another example of the Chinese ability to use allegory to protest against restrictive regimes.

## Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan

In 1997, Britain's lease on Hong Kong ran out. Margaret Thatcher, the British Prime Minister, tried to renegotiate the situation but Deng Xiaoping played 'hardball' with the 'Iron Maiden'. What Deng did offer was 'one country, two systems', which was a promise of 50 years during which Hong Kong was to be left basically undisturbed. Deng did not want investors to flee Hong Kong and take the glitter out of this valuable acquisition. This promise has been kept, and the people in Hong Kong still have freedoms that are denied to their mainland counterparts. They do not have democracy, but as a Crown colony of Britain they never had it before. Currently, the people of Hong Kong are showing their displeasure with greater interference from Beijing. Macao rejoined the motherland shortly afterwards.

Taiwan is no closer to joining the mainland, but tensions have eased. Bombardments have stopped. Flights now occur between the two entities. Taiwan can only compete in the Olympics as 'Chinese Taipei' (the capital). It is only when a non-Guomindang party takes control and talks about Taiwan being separate that the sabre-rattling returns. China is using posters, cultural links with South Fujian and literature ('Falling leaves return to their roots') to woo Taiwan back to the motherland. It is largely due to Jiang Jieshi's insistence that there was only one China that he, too, is being rehabilitated on the mainland.



▲ Source A.11 1980s peace poster inviting Taiwan back to the motherland

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### HISTORY THROUGH OBJECTS

At a Lushan restaurant, one can dine on replicas of Jiang Jieshi's personal plates with the stylised character for 'Jiang' in the centre. Nothing else so vividly expresses the Chinese government's willingness to rehabilitate the notorious Generalissimo, albeit for political purposes.



◀ Source A.12 Jiang Jieshi's plates at the Lushan restaurant

### THE STORY SO FAR

Even though it has been more than two decades since his death, China is still Deng's China – politically conservative and dominated by the CCP, but an economic superpower. Many citizens are content to chase Deng's dictum, 'To be rich is glorious', rather than seek political reforms. It is possible that, as the second generation of Communists passes away, political reform will follow the economic miracle.



Appendix 2:

## **HISTORICAL INTERPRETATIONS**

史学评论

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## A definition of historical interpretations

In SACs and the VCE exam, you are required to discuss the various historical interpretations of the revolution. Historical interpretations relate to the study of the study of history. This is also known as **historiography**, which looks at the methods used by historians to determine what occurred in history and how it should be regarded. As both records and recorders are not perfect, 'problems of history' arise and debates over historical interpretations will surface. This may be resolved by new evidence or may continue indefinitely.

**historiography**  
the study of the interpretation and writing of the past by historians

Students should not let this put them off wading into the debate as long as they offer history-based reasons for their opinion. If the professionals cannot always agree, then the amateurs may as well join in the argument.

## What factors may shape historical interpretations?

Five factors that may influence or even skew a historian's approach to an aspect of history can be summarised by using the acronym **BATCH**. This stands for bias, access to information, time, culture and honesty.

- **Bias.** Bias means a tendency to go to one side. A left-wing historian is not likely to see political events in the same light as a right-wing one. An economic historian will tend to see the economic causes and results more than a social historian will. Sometimes a viewpoint will be given by someone too close to the subject, such as a son writing his father's biography.
- **Access to information.** Once archives are opened, the secrets hidden in vaults for decades or even longer may shed new light on a person or event. The opening of the files on Russia's Lenin, for instance, showed a more blood-guilty ruler than had previously been thought. The memoirs of Mao's former personal physician were a shocking revelation of Mao's personal life. Historians and newspapers eagerly await the memoirs of retired politicians so they can gain greater insight into them.
- **Time.** The time of writing is important. In the 1960s, a range of Marxist historians tried to define the exact role played by class differences in determining events. At that time, when socialism/communism was threatening to engulf the world, it seemed justifiable to see class as a factor in all events. With the almost worldwide collapse of socialist governments, the Marxist historians have either abandoned or greatly modified their perspectives. Time also allows for a greater detachment from events.
- **Culture.** The cultural background will also affect a historian's viewpoint. While someone brought up in a Western democratic society is likely to be critical of the current Chinese political setup, many Chinese whose history is that of millennia of imperial rule, famine and wars may be satisfied with a one-party government so long as it provides a period of peace and growth.
- **Honesty – or sometimes a lack of it.** Sometimes, in their desire to be published and/or make profits, some 'historians' will pursue a controversial thesis, turning a blind eye to evidence that runs counter to this view. This is the sin of omission – leaving out those points that do not support the contention. Sometimes facts will be skewed or unreliable evidence presented as reliable.

These points should be kept in mind when deciding whether you find a particular historian trustworthy and believable.

◀ **Source A.13** Still from a 1973 documentary film Report from China, showing an English class in a Beijing Middle School.



*Appendix 3:*

**CHINA FILMOGRAPHY**

中国电影

## Late Qing dynasty

*The Good Earth* (1937) (B&W). Starring Paul Muni and Luise Rainer. Based on Pearl Buck's novel. Very good film on the plight of the poor peasants, despite European actors passed off as Chinese.

*Fearless* (2006). Starring Jet Li. The story of famous *wushu* fighter HuoYuanjia, with much anti-foreign propaganda.

*55 Days at Peking* (1963). Starring Charlton Heston, David Niven and Ava Gardner. Hollywoodish and corny. Pro-foreigner film set during the Boxer siege of the foreign legations in Beijing in 1900. Uses a mock-up of the Temple of Heaven as the Forbidden City. However, gives a good picture of the situation and how the Boxers looked. Note Robert Helpmann's role as Prince Tuan.

*The Keys of the Kingdom* (1944). Starring Gregory Peck, Thomas Mitchell and Edmund Gwenn. Peck is Father Francis Chisholm, a Scot who joins the priesthood after personal tragedies and is sent to inland China, where he contends with the local Mandarin, 'rice' (insincere) Christians, an aloof nun and murderous warlord troops. It has a complex moral stance that reflects its production at the tail end of World War II.

## Warlord era/emergent Guomindang, 1915–1937

*Inn of the 6th Happiness* (1958). Starring Ingrid Bergman and the dying Robert Donat. The story of untrained missionary Gladys Aylward in northern China. A good look at the GMD relationship with the former Qing officials and a great scene on foot-binding.

*The Sand Pebbles* (1966). Starring Steve McQueen, Richard Crenna and Candice Bergen. An American gunboat patrolling the Yangzi River has to avoid conflict with emerging GMD and other anti-foreign groups. Early in the film there is a good discussion on the role of foreign powers in China. Great river scenes.

*Raise the Red Lantern* (1991). A slow but beautiful film about a distantly viewed old man and his several wives. Seen as an allegory of China's gerontocracy (society governed by older people).

*The Painted Veil* (2006). Romantic and beautifully photographed look at divided China, with a great scene between the GMD translator/minder and a jumped-up warlord.

*Ju Dou* (1989). Starring Gong Li, directed by Zhang Yimou. A young woman is betrothed to an old man who mistreats her until she bears him a son. She manages this by embarking on an affair that ends tragically. Another allegory for rule by a gerontocracy.

*Shanghai Triad* (1995). Starring Gong Li, directed by Zhang Yimou. A 1930s gangster film. Tragic, but creates a good picture of the times and triads in Shanghai.

*The Joy Luck Club* (1993) (MA 15+). Four Chinese mothers deal with their daughters' problems in the United States while flashbacks reveal their greater problems in 1930s China. A thematic mix of feudal practices, seduction, family conflict and war with Japan.

◀ Source A.14 A still from the 1987 film *The Last Emperor*



## Anti-Japanese War era, 1937–1945

*Ip Man* (also *Yip Man*) (2008). Starring Donny Yen. Ip Man is a martial arts teacher who takes on other schools and then Japanese opponents. Unlike *Fearless*, this is anti-Japanese in tone. Ip Man was the patriarch of Wing Chun *wushu* and the teacher of Bruce Lee.

*The Pavilion of Women* (2001). Starring Willem Dafoe. Based on the Pearl Buck novel. A fictional story, set in 1938, of a priest who has an affair with a long-suffering wife of a debauched husband, whose son falls in love with his father's second wife arranged by the first. They run off to join the CCP. The Japanese attacks produce the priest's ultimate sacrifice.

*Flying Tigers* (1942). Starring John Wayne. The story of American mercenaries flying inferior planes for China against the Japanese – the famous 'Flying Tigers'.

*Back to 1942* (2012). Stars Adrian Brody, Tim Robbins, Zhang Guoli and Xu Fan. This is the story of an American journalist trying to learn the truth about the Japanese invasion and also a story of a Chinese man trying to take his family south to safety.

*Shanghai* (2010). Starring John Cusack, Gong Li, Chow Yun-fat and Ken Watanabe. Set in Shanghai in 1941, a week before Japan's attack on Pearl Harbour. A US secret agent must investigate a friend's murder against a backdrop of Japanese hostility, local gangs and international politics.

*Red Sorghum* (1987). Directed by Zhang Yimou. From the Chinese novel. Launched Gong Li's career. A romance during the Japanese invasion. Shows the Japanese as cruel. Brutal in parts.

*Empire of the Sun* (1987). Directed by Steven Spielberg. Based on J. G. Ballard's semi-autobiographical novel. A pampered boy in the Foreign Concession of Shanghai learns to survive without his parents when Japan attacks the Allied quarters in 1941.

*Yellow Earth* (1984). Directed by Chen Kaige, cinematography by Zhang Yimou. A pioneer of Chinese New Wave cinema. Set in 1939 during the Second United Front. A CCP soldier comes to a remote Shanxi town to gather folk songs. His influence on a young girl creates conflict between the old ideas and the new, with tragic consequences for the girl.

*Bethune: The Making of a Hero* (1990). Starring Donald Sutherland. A French/Canadian/Chinese production. True story of a Canadian socialist who fights fascism in Spain and is a surgeon for the Eighth Route Army fighting the Japanese. The best moment is his 'self-criticism' in good Maoist style.

*The Children of Huang Shi* (2008). Starring Jonathan Rhys Meyers, Chow Yun-fat and Radha Mitchell Starts with the 'Rape of Nanjing' and then tells the true story of George Hogg, who saves abandoned children from the Japanese.

## Early Communist era, 1949–1965

*The Founding of a Republic* (2009). Starring Jet Li and many other Chinese actors (subtitled). The film covers the negotiations and wrangling between the time of the Japanese surrender in 1945 and the establishment of the PRC. It is detailed and, for a Chinese film, rather even-handed in its treatment of the various parties and key figures of the time.

*The Blue Kite* (1993). Directed by Tian Zhuangzhuang. A child's view of the tumultuous 1950s and 1960s. Not liked by Chinese authorities at the time. A woman challenges social mores by living with her lover and her returned, disabled husband.

## Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, 1966–1976

*The Red Violin* (1998). Multi-storied film about a cursed violin with the only relevant section in China during the GPCR, where the family tries to protect the violin from destruction as a decadent Western instrument.

*Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress* (2002). Light-hearted look at the GPCR when two sophisticated city lads are 'sent down' to the countryside. After initial tensions, they blend in. Then a romantic triangle develops.

### Epic films that span eras

*The Last Emperor* (1987). Starring John Lone, Joan Chen and Peter O'Toole; directed by Bernardo Bertolucci. Story of the last emperor, Puyi, from his enthronement in 1903 to just after his death. Starts when the Soviets hand him over to the Communists in 1950s and then follows his life from there with flashbacks to his years as emperor and playboy, and as puppet emperor for Japan in Manzhouguo (Manchukuo). Actually filmed in the Forbidden City. A MUST for those interested in the Chinese revolutions.

*Farewell My Concubine* (1993). Starring Leslie Cheung, Gong Li and Zhang Fengyi; directed by Chen Kaige. A long but sumptuous story spanning 52 years, which begins in a Qing school for Beijing Opera, where the weaker of two boys must take the female roles and becomes too fond of his protector. Covers the warlord era and the years beyond the GPCR.

*To Live* (1994). Starring Ge You and Gong Li; directed by Zhang Yimou. Covers the 1940s, civil war, the Great Leap Forward, the Cultural Revolution and the beginning of the Deng era. A mix of tragedy and comedy but, above all, the power of the human spirit. Some great humour and some very black humour. Very watchable and great history.

### Miscellaneous

Look out for these, and many others, on TV – especially on SBS

- *The Last Eunuch* (1988)
- *Old Well* (1986)
- *China Sky* (1945)
- *The Last Empress* (1987)

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## Glossary



**100 Days of Reform** refers to the short-lived period whereby Guangxu tried to strengthen China through political reform and modernisation

**B52** a large American bomber; Lin Biao's code for Mao

**baihua** plain speech advocated by the New Culture Movement

**barefoot doctors** those sent to serve the countryside with basic medical training

**Beiping** to help people accept the new capital of Nanjing ('southern capital') Jiang changed Beijing ('northern capital') to Beiping ('northern peace')

**blacks** those whom Mao considered as enemies of the revolution

**Bolshevik** a reference to Lenin's Russian Communist Party which took power in 1917 Russia

**'Bombard the Headquarters'** Mao's call to attack his own party and leaders generally

**Boxers** anti-Western Chinese who employed martial arts (see Yihetuan)

**Buddhism** a religion imported to China from India

**cadre** a leading CCP-appointed official

**capitalist** a term for one who lives on investments (bourgeoisie); a negative word in Marxist terminology

**capitalist roader** a derogatory term accusing one of moving away from communism

**'Catch the Stars and Moon'** Great Leap Forward slogan encouraging record grain harvests

**CCP** Chinese Communist Party

**Chairman** a Chinese political position more powerful than the name suggests. Comparable to a president

**civil war** an internal war for control of the country

**class struggle** the Marxist belief that history consists of struggles between different classes of people

**Cohong** a group in Guangzhou that had the monopoly on trade with foreigners

**collectives** large-scale cooperatives

**Comintern** an abbreviation for 'Communist international', a Soviet Union body given the task of promoting global communism

**communes** large-scale collectives where private ownership of land disappears

**communism** the belief that by eliminating class divisions and then government a utopia will result.

**concubine** a woman who officially cohabits with an important man; often a legal arrangement

**Confucianism** the system of belief taught by Kong Fuzi

**cooperatives** a voluntary sharing of resources and labour by a few families

**counter-revolutionary** a derogatory term for any Communist who did not agree with you

**Daoism** (The Way) a Chinese religion based on the harmony of Yin and Yang

**Daqing** a model work unit – oilfield

**Dazhai** a model commune

**dazibao** Big Character Posters designed to criticise a supposed enemy

**deify** to worship someone as if they were a god

**dissident** someone who challenges established institutions like governments

**Dragon Throne** reference to the emperor who was considered semi-divine

**'The East is Red'** (Dong fang hong) popular GPCR song

**egalitarian** the political view expressing equality for all citizens

**emperor** one who rules over more than one nation

**Empress Dowager** mother of the emperor; often used to refer to Cixi

- Encirclement Campaigns** Jiang's efforts to surround and eliminate communist soviets
- examination system** the imperial examination system for selecting officials based on Confucianism
- extraterritoriality** Western nations' insistence that their citizens not be subject to Chinese justice
- factional** referring to defined groups within an organisation with different agendas
- fanshen** a reversal of the previous order – peasants now persecuted landlords
- fascist** the general term for extreme right-wing beliefs such as Nazism, which oppose communism, support capitalism and use death and torture as means to an end
- fengshui** Chinese belief in the balance of the elements of nature
- First United Front** the cooperation between the GMD and CCP, 1922–1927
- Forbidden City** the imperial palace in Beijing
- foreign concessions** areas set aside for foreigners in major cities of China
- Four Modernisations** agriculture, industry, science and technology, and defence
- Four Olds** old ideas, customs, culture and habits
- Four Pests (Sihai) Campaign** rats, sparrows, flies and mosquitoes; later, bedbugs replaced sparrows
- Gang of Four** Cultural Revolution group of Jiang Qing, Zhang Chunqiao, Yao Wenyuan and Wang Hongwen
- Generalissimo** supreme general – a title given to Jiang Jieshi
- 'Good News Reporting Stations'** tally rooms for reporting harvest figures during the Great Leap Forward
- Great Helmsman** a reference to Mao steering the ship of state
- Great Leap Forward** Mao's ambitious but flawed second Five-Year Plan to speed up production
- Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (GPCR)** Mao's return to supremacy, 1966–1976
- Green Gang** the powerful Shanghai criminal unit led by Big-Eared Du (Du Yuesheng); used by Jiang in 1927 to purge the Communists
- Guandong Army** the name of the jingoistic Japanese army unit based in Manchuria
- guanxi** 'influence' or 'connections'; using connections for self-promotion
- Guomindang (GMD)** National People's Party founded by Sun Yixian
- Han** the major Chinese ethnic group
- historiography** the study of the interpretation and writing of the past by historians
- houmen** 'back door'; bypassing official channels
- Huangpu Military Academy** (Whampoa) a military academy set up by Sun with Soviet backing
- Hundred Flowers** Mao's 1957 invitation for critics to speak out
- imperial** to do with the emperor or ruling other countries
- iron rice bowl** guaranteed employment and wages (the rice bowl cannot be broken)
- jet-planing** the painful practice of holding the victim's arms up behind their back
- joint ventures** Chinese companies working with overseas investments on a 50/50 partnership basis
- left** in the CCP, a label for one with extreme ideas
- Lei Feng** a model PLA soldier who died saving others
- 'liberation'** the capture of an area by the CCP
- link-ups** Red Guards travelling to Beijing to see Mao
- Long March** the CCP journey from Jiangxi to Shaanxi while being attacked by the GMD
- luan** 'chaos': a reference to the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (GPCR)
- Lushan** a Jiangxi mountain resort famous as the location for Peng Dehuai's dismissal
- Lysenkoism** A radical and untested (and disastrous) theory for increasing production
- Mandate of Heaven** heavenly support for a ruler so long as heaven–earth harmony is maintained
- Manzu** (Manchu) the northern ethnic group that ruled during the Qing dynasty
- Manzuguo** (Manchuguo) literally Manzu or Manchu Country; an attempt by the Japanese to pass off this colony of Japan as an independent ally
- Mao Zedong** also known as Chairman Mao; the leader of the Chinese Communists from 1935 onwards and leader of the People's Republic of China until his death in 1976
- Marxist** one who follows Marx's theories on communism
- Mass Line** Mao's theory that the CCP listens to the masses before making policy
- May Fourth Movement** an upswelling of anger following Shandong being handed to Japan in 1919
- mutual aid teams** an early form of cooperative for peasants
- New Model Army** the Qing army led by Yuan Shikai, based on modern, Western lines
- Northern Expedition** the 1926–1928 campaign led by Jiang to subdue warlords and unite China
- One Child Policy** under Deng, with some exceptions, families were to have only one child

**patriot** one who is willing to defend their country

**paper tiger** Mao's put-down for nations with nuclear power

**permanent revolution** Mao's take on the Marxist-Trotskyite term applied to the Great Leap and GPCR where the proletariat continually seek their own outcomes – an ongoing task where fervour not conceit is required

**ping-pong diplomacy** opening up to the United States using table tennis

**PLA** People's Liberation Army – the new name for the Red Army

**Politburo** a key decision-making body of the CCP and PRC

**PRC** People's Republic of China

**Project 571** Lin Biao's code to overthrow Mao

**proletariat** a Marxist term for the urban workers

**propaganda** doctrines, arguments or ideas spread intentionally through a population to advance a cause or belief or damage an alternative cause

**provisional** acting or temporary

**puppet emperor** a ruler with no power of his own; a figurehead

**Qing** the 'pure' dynasty of the Manzu conquerors (1644–1912)

**Quotations of Chairman Mao** *The Little Red Book*, put together by Lin Biao

**'Rape of Nanjing'** the capture of Nanjing by Japanese soldiers and subsequent brutality

**Rebel Red Guards** an alternative to Red Guards, comprising those with a lesser background

**Red Army** communist army under Peng Dehuai prior to the Jiangxi Soviets where it was led by Zhu De

**The Red Detachment of Women** one of a handful of approved GPCR productions

**Red Guards** Mao's 'Little Generals', whose devotion brought him back to power

**regent** someone who guides an under-age ruler

**regime** a period of rulership

**rehabilitation** welcoming back to the Party by reform or exoneration

**republic** country without a hereditary ruler

**Responsibility System** Deng's policy of giving peasants the economic benefits of their labours

**Revive China Society** a movement by Chinese officials and intellectuals to reform China

**rightist** a label for those considered more conservative (not wanting change) than Marxists

**Ruijin Soviet** Soviets were sometimes known by the name of the province and sometimes by the name of the main city. Therefore it was easier to call the Shaan–Gan–Ning Soviet the Yan'an Soviet. The second Jiangxi Soviet is also the Ruijin Soviet, which helps to distinguish it from the earlier Jiangxi Soviet with the alternative name: Jinggangshan Soviet.

**San Fan** the Three Antis (graft, waste, bureaucracy)

**San Min Zhuyi** (Three People's Principles) advocated nationalism, democracy and people's livelihood

**Second United Front** cooperation between the GMD and CCP following the Xi'an Incident

**self-criticism** Mao's policy of having people 'confess' their political sins, thereby suppressing dissension

**'Sending Satellites to Heaven'** Great Leap Forward term for record harvests (largely falsified)

**sent down** (*shangshan xiexiang*) Mao's despatch of Red Guards to the countryside

**Socialist Education Movement** Mao's attempt to counter Liu and Deng's policies

**soviet** (Russian for 'council'); in China, a rural area ruled by the CCP

**'speak bitterness'** the policy of peasants criticising former landlords after Liberation

**Special Economic Zones** under Deng, these were special areas of China run along capitalist lines

**spheres of influence** parts of China where a foreign power had a monopoly on trade

**splinter group** members of a body, usually political, who break away from the main group to form a new, smaller unit

**struggle sessions** the parading of victims before crowds seeking confessions and humiliation

**Summer Palace** the emperor's summer retreat in Beijing

**tael** a Chinese 'ounce' of silver, although the exact weight varied throughout the country

**Taiping** the anti-Qing rebels led by Hong Xiuquan

**Tongmenghui** a revolutionary alliance formed by Dr Sun; forerunner to the Guomindang (GMD) also known as the Nationalist Party

**Treaty of Versailles** the 1919 peace treaty that followed World War I, which handed Shandong province to Japan

**treaty ports** trading ports opened to Western nations after the Opium Wars

**Twenty-one Demands** Japanese demands for land and control accepted by Yuan Shikai

**Two Whatever's** Hua Guofeng's policy that whatever Mao had decided must be carried on and whatever Mao had said must be upheld

**wan shou wu jiang** (live forever) wishes for Mao during the GPCR

**wan sui** (10 000 years) wishing long life (to emperors, Mao or the Party)

**warlord** someone with military command under the Qing, who established personal control by force over a part of China following the collapse of a central government

**Wu Fan** the Five Antis (bribery, tax evasion, theft from the state, cheating on government contracts, industrial espionage)

**Wuhan** the 'triple city' of Wuchang, Hankou and Hanyang on the Yangzi River

**Yan'an** the capital of the Shaan–Gan–Ning Soviet Border Area

**Yan'an Way** the idea that life in the soviet was: harmonious; welcoming for women; where the soldiers and peasants both tilled the land; and where the leadership educated, listened to, and wisely guided, the people

**Yihequan** original name of Yihetuan (Righteous and Harmonious Fists)

**Yihetuan** correct name for the Boxers (Righteous and Harmonious Society)

**Young Pioneers** a program that was a cross between Scouts and Young Communists, where youngsters with red scarves lived up to a sense of duty and expectations

**zhengfeng** (rectification) Mao's means of removing dissent in Yan'an and afterwards

**Zhongnanhai** the compound on the south-west corner of the Forbidden City where Mao and most of the leaders of China lived

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