CHAPTER 3

THE LONG MARCH TO REVOLUTION

(1927–1949)
INTRODUCTION

Jiang Jieshi's Nationalist government succeeded in bringing a sense of unity back to China. The Northern Expeditions ended the regional in-fighting of the warlord era and urban areas were modernised. Relations with Western powers improved markedly. Jiang's regime, however, faced great difficulties. Many regional commanderies, rather than being overthrown, were co-opted into Nationalist rule. In rural areas, poverty, corruption and unequal land distribution continued to fester, largely ignored by the government. Forced to retreat by Jiang's brutal repression, the CCP meanwhile found a home among the peasants. Thriving communities like the Jiangxi (Chiang-hsi or Kiangsi) province became models of socialist reform. However, the path to revolution was by no means straightforward. The Communists were bitterly divided. The meddling of the Russian Comintern caused tension and uncertainty. Jiang, determined to extinguish the Communists, continued a series of campaigns against their strongholds. The Communists, in fear of their lives, embarked upon the Long March – a harrowing experience that few survived. But those that did survive emerged from the northern base at Yenan (Yenan) to form a credible revolutionary movement under the restored leadership of Mao Zedong. The deciding factor in China's fortunes, though, was Japan's invasion and occupation in 1937. The resulting period of hardship, during which political movements decided the fate of the Chinese, was by no means straightforward. The Communists were bitterly divided. The Soviet Communist Party became models of socialist reform. However, the path to revolution was by no means straightforward. The Communists, in fear of their lives, embarked upon the Long March – a harrowing experience that few survived. But those that did survive emerged from the northern base at Yenan (Yenan) to form a credible revolutionary movement under the restored leadership of Mao Zedong. The deciding factor in China's fortunes, though, was Japan's invasion and occupation in 1937. The resulting period of hardship, during which political movements competed for control over their nationalist credentials, finally led to civil war.

COMMUNISTS IN CRISIS

Josef Stalin: 'To play with insurrections instead of organising a mass uprising of workers and peasants is a sure way of losing the revolution.'

After the breakdown of the United Front, the Communists had to find a scapegoat and it wasn’t going to be the Russians. Accused of ‘opportunism and betrayal,’ on 7 August 1927, Chen Duxiu resigned as CCP secretary-general and was replaced by Qu Qiubai (Ch'u Ch'iu-pai), a much younger man who had studied in Moscow. In the months after the Shaoshai Massacre, the CCP was used as a pawn in an ideological conflict between Josef Stalin and Leon Trotsky. Stalin, who had never been to China, had been taken to task by acid-tongued Trotsky for failing to devise effective policy for the Chinese Communists. Stalin quickly dispatched two new Comintern advisers, Ernst Neumann and Beso Lomindaze, both staunch Stalinists, to China. Through them, Stalin directed a number of uprisings against Nationalists in key urban centres.

THE NANCHANG UPRISING

The first uprising was launched on 1 August 1927, at Nanchang in Jiangxi province. A number of Nationalist Army divisions there were led by Communists, including up to thirty-thousand soldiers under the command of He Long (Ho Lung) and Ye Ting (Yeh Ting), a perfect opportunity for insurrection. The rebels seized control of the city and proclaimed a revolutionary government. The local people were indifferent. The Communists held out for four days before loyal Nationalist troops re-captured the city and forced the CCP survivors to flee south.

THE AUTUMN HARVEST UPRISING

A motley group of soldiers in Hunan were led by the former head of the GMD Peasant Department, Mao Zedong, with the aim of rousing a peasant uprising and taking the capital, Changsha. Mao had some experience as a rural revolutionary activist. He had been principal of the Farmers’ Movement Training Institute, which trained revolutionaries for work in the countryside, and in early 1927 had submitted a controversial assessment on the revolutionary potential of the rural working class: Report on an Investigation into the Peasant Movement in Hunan. (This contrasted with the traditional Marxist-Leninist focus on urban workers.) Mao’s Autumn Harvest Uprising of 7–13 September, however, was a disaster. His forces seized a few small towns but didn’t get anywhere near the capital. Guomindang troops inflicted severe casualties on the Communists. Mao was briefly captured but managed to escape. His ragged mob of 1000 survivors eventually found sanctuary at Jinggangshan (‘Well Ridge Mountain’) along the Hunan-Jiangxi border. He was later joined in January 1928 by Communist Zhu De, who brought 2000 more soldiers, veterans of the failed Nanchang uprising.

THE CANTON COMMUNE

On 11 December 1927, the Communists attempted another insurrection, this time at Guangzhou (Canton). A dispute between local GMD-backed warlords had created a politically unstable situation that the Communists sought to exploit. CCP troops seized control of the city and a Canton Soviet Council was proclaimed. A radical program of socialist measures was announced, including the redistribution of land, collective ownership of industry and reduced working hours for the city’s proletariat (workers). The Canton Commune lasted just two days. As in Nanchang, the workers of Guangzhou were not interested; some were even hostile to the revolutionaries. Unionists assisted in the campaign against the Communists. The Nationalists re-took the city with the aid of foreign gunboats. Brutal reprisals were dished out to suspected Communists and their sympathisers. Around 5700 people were killed. Trucks stacked high with bodies drove through the streets.

RECRIMINATIONS

By the late 1920s, the Chinese Communists were in disarray; they were fractured in organisation and uncertain of policy. Their active membership had fallen from 57,000 to 10,000. The Comintern had imposed policies on their Chinese comrades that, to succeed, required military strength and widespread popular support. The CCP had neither Stalin’s exhortation to ‘deepen the revolutionary tide’ and the resulting abortive uprisings only exposed Communist agents to further repression. Moscow remained impervious to its failures, instead blaming the Chinese. At a CCP Politburo meeting in November 1929, it was decided that...
the ‘general line’ of urban-directed insurrection was ‘entirely correct.’ Mao was criticised for taking ‘a purely military viewpoint’ – he had not effectively roused the revolutionary consciousness of the people. For his ‘military adventurism’ Mao lost his seat on the Politburo. Communication between party organs was so infrequent at this time that Mao didn’t actually learn of his demotion for some months. Mao, meanwhile, formed the view that peasants would be too scared to rise up against the established order unless they were offered protection from a powerful army.

The repression of Communists in China was so widespread that the Sixth Party Congress of the CCP had to be held in Moscow. At the Congress, held between 18 June and 20 July 1928, there was much discussion of who was to blame for the Communists’ dire position. The Congress condemned the ‘right opportunism’ of Chen Duxiu and the ‘left deviationism’ of Qu Qiubai. Qu was replaced by Xiang Zhongfa (Hsiang Chung-fa) as general-secretary while Li Lisan (Li Li-san) headed the party’s propaganda department. It was soon apparent that Li Lisan was the dominant figure. Li had a long history of urban revolutionary work. He held strong views on the importance of industrial workers and cities as the foundations of socialist revolution. According to Li, ‘The villages are the limbs of the ruling class. The cities are their brain and heart.’

FURTHER DEFEATS

Li’s theories were given a chance after Jiang Jieshi faced a number of defections by regional militarists in central China during 1929 and 1930. The situation had become so volatile that on 23 July 1930 the Comintern advised the CCP that ‘The new upsurge in the Chinese revolutionary movement has become an indisputable fact.’ The Great Depression gave further credence to the idea that the triumph of communism was near. Following Moscow’s assessment, Li Lisan ordered the Communist Red Armies to launch yet another round of campaigns against cities in the Yangzi River valley. General Peng Dehuai (Peng Te-huai) took Changsha, but his men were driven out after eight days. Mao and Zhu De tried but failed to capture Nanchang. Communist forces also made an unsuccessful attack on Wuhan. The military campaigns proved not only futile, they provoked Jiang Jieshi into organizing operations against Communist rural bases that he had previously ignored.

NEW LEADERSHIP

The failure of the ‘Li Lisan line’ led to Li’s dismissal from the CCP leadership. On 8 January 1931, the task of heading the Politburo was entrusted to a new group of Moscow-trained Chinese students headed by Wang Ming and Bo Gu (Bo Xu). They were informally known as the ‘Twenty-Eight Bolsheviks’ or ‘Returned Students’ Clique.’ The new leadership was young and inexperienced, a fact denoted by the veterans of the revolutionary movement. One Communist later recalled, ‘These fellows were just a group of young students who, needless to say, had done nothing for the revolution. While we were carrying out the revolution, they were taking milk at their mothers’ breasts.’ For the time being the CCP Central Committee, based in Shanghai, was far removed from the revolution that was taking shape in the remote mountains, led by Mao, Zhu and others. By 1931, Mao and Zhu were known as the ‘real power factors’ amongst their Party comrades.’ It was in the villages, not the cities, that the Communists were finally gaining strength.

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

In 1929, the Soviet leadership in Moscow gave the following warning to the Chinese Communists: ‘To play with insurrections instead of organising a mass uprising of workers and peasants is a sure way of losing the revolution.’ Discuss the significance of this warning with reference to the events involving the CCP between 1927 and 1931.

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

Summarise the difficulties faced by the Chinese Communist Party between 1927 and 1931. Use evidence to support your response.

MAO’S LABORATORY: THE JIANGXI SOVIET

Mao Zedong: ‘Without a people’s army the people have nothing’

Around a dozen rural bases were established by the Communists following the failed insurrections of 1927–30. The one organised by Mao Zedong in Jiangxi was arguably the most significant. Mao’s immediate concern following the Autumn Harvest Uprising was survival: the southern Jiangxi mountains provided a remote and defensible base from which to regroup. As Brantly Womack argues, ‘Necessity was the mother of the CCP’s reinvention.’ Before Jinggangshan Mao was a relatively minor figure in revolutionary circles. The chance to act more independently allowed Mao to confirm the validity of his revolutionary strategies. When he arrived at Jinggangshan Mao recruited into his army a band of impoverished local bandits. Later joined by units under Zhu De and Peng Dehuai, the Communists’ First Workers’ and Peasants’ Army was far from a formidable fighting force in its early days. Although Mao and Zhu could muster 10,000 troops, their men often went hungry and were terribly under-equipped; some were armed with only spears. For the moment this was not a concern. Mao often said that in war it is people who count more than weapons. Of his new vagabond recruits Mao said, ‘They are all human beings.’ Mao had a vision for his motley crew – it was to become an improved Red Army. By January 1929, difficulties in finding sufficient food combined with raids by Guomindang armies forced Mao and Zhu to abandon Jinggangshan and establish a new base deeper in the mountains. The small Jiangxi town of Ruijin was chosen as the new headquarters.

8 Philip North, Chinese Revolution, 105.
9 Brantly Womack, From Urban Radical to Rural Revolutionary’ in Crock, A Critical Introduction to Mao, 77.
10 Cited in Rose Terraill, Mao: A Biography (Sydney: Hale & Iremonger, 1989), 110.
THE FIRST ALL-CHINA CONGRESS

On 7 November 1931, the First All-China Congress of Soviets was convened at Ruijin. The Congress involved fierce policy debate between Mao and the Twenty-Eight Bolsheviks led by Wang and Bo. Whilst criticised for its ‘opportunistic pragmatism,’ Mao’s faction won out against the Comintern-backed Politburo. For the moment, Mao’s policies would be pursued.

THE CHINESE SOVIET REPUBLIC

At the congress, a Chinese Soviet Republic was proclaimed, with Mao appointed chairman of its executive committee. Mao spoke of the importance of the Jiangxi Soviet:

From now on there are two totally different states in the territory of China. One is the so-called Republic of China. The other is the Chinese Soviet Republic, the state of the broad masses of the exploited and oppressed workers, peasants, soldiers and toilers. Its banner is that of overthrowing imperialism, eliminating the landlord class, bringing down the Guomindang warlord government. And striving for genuine peace and unification of the whole country.11

The Chinese Soviet, unlike soviets in Russia, was a community rather than a worker’s council. A governmental structure, constitution, laws and policy were endorsed. While Mao was chairman of the Jiangxi Soviet, this did not mean he had taken leadership of the CCP. The Central Committee remained under the control of Wang, Bo and the other Twenty-Eight Bolsheviks, who returned to Shanghai after the congress. Mao stayed on, determined to pursue his revolutionary agenda and further his own ambitions. Delia Davin argues that Ruijin was ‘a social laboratory’ for the trying out of new ideas.12

MAO’S RED ARMY

Mao’s first and most important innovation was the attention he gave the Red Army. He famously declared, ‘political power grows out of the barrel of a gun.’ While Zhu served as commander-in-chief of operational matters, Mao was chief political commissar. His job was to instil in the army a sense of self-worth, discipline and direction. Mao set about reversing the Chinese aphorism that one ‘should not waste good iron making nails, nor good men as soldiers.’13 Political instruction was given together with military training. Mao used straightforward, easy to understand language and earthy symbolism that were readily grasped by his troops. With conscription frowned upon, the Red Army was a volunteer force. Captured warlord or Nationalist soldiers were offered the choice of returning home, for which they received some travel money; or, after a period of political training, they could join the Communists. Political commissars served alongside officers to spread party ideology amongst the troops. Officers were forbidden to beat common soldiers. Large meetings were held after each battle where soldiers could voice their concerns and offer criticism or praise to officers.

Red Army soldiers were subject to strict rules of discipline. Every Communist soldier serving in Soviet areas had to memorise and live by the following code of conduct devised by Mao and Zhu:

- The Three Main Rules of Discipline are as follows:
  - Obey all orders in all your actions.
  - Do not take a single needle or piece of thread from the masses.
  - Turn in everything captured.

- The Eight Points for Attention are as follows:
  - Speak politely.
  - Pay fairly for what you buy.
  - Return everything you borrow.
  - Pay for anything you damage.
  - Do not hit or swear at people.
  - Do not damage crops.
  - Do not take liberties with women.
  - Do not ill-treat captives.14

These rules were starkly different from those of other armies. Traditionally, soldiers pillaged, raped, killed and destroyed property — but not Communist soldiers. When not on active duty Red soldiers carried out chores such as cutting firewood for the surrounding communes and assisting with sowing crops.15 This won them respect. Red Army personnel were often the first point of contact between the party and the people: their political work and conduct were therefore paramount. They were to be a ‘people’s army.’ Power might come from a gun, but the ‘gun is useless if the trigger puller is not the missionary of an appealing cause.’16

GUERILLA TACTICS

The way the Red Army fought was also significant. From his reading of ancient Chinese military texts, as well as trial and error, Mao came to realise the tremendous advantages of guerrilla warfare (using a small, mobile and flexible force against an established army). Communist troops were instilled with Zhu and Mao’s general strategy:

- The enemy advances, we retreat;
- The enemy tires, we attack;
- The enemy camps, we harass;
- The enemy returns, we ambush.17

From 1930 onwards Jiang Jieshi made a number of ‘bandit extermination’ campaigns against the Communists at Jiangxi. Abandoning positional warfare, the Red Army successfully resisted and achieved a series of victories against forces of much greater strength. The key tactic was to lure Nationalist troops ‘in deep’ to Communist territory. With an intimate knowledge of the terrain, which allowed for concealment and quick retreat, the Red Army would strike against the enemy’s weakest points. They hit swiftly and hard against troops that they knew they could overwhelm. This demoralised and exhausted the invaders, ultimately leading to their withdrawal.

THE KEY ROLE OF PEASANTS

Successful guerrilla warfare relies on mobility and the support of the local populace. According to Mao, ‘The peasants are the sea; we are the fish. The sea is our habitat.’18 The Jiangxi peasants provided shelter, food, local knowledge and intelligence on enemy movements to the Red Army. Land reforms carried out under the protection of the Communist armed forces strengthened the ties between the masses and the party.19

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15 Rose Terrill, Mao, 123.
16 Rose Terrill, Mao, 118.
17 Cao in Guangda Milston, A Short History of China (North Melbourne: Cassell, 1958), 320.
between the Soviet government and the people, as did the disciplined conduct of Red soldiers. Mao’s land reforms were based on a pragmatic view of social relations in the villages. This was a point of dispute with the Twenty-Eight Bolsheviks. The young heads of the Politburo were ‘good at theory and bad at most other things,’ Terrill argues.21 Wang Ming and Bo Gu wanted land reform that would redistribute the holdings of ‘rich’ landowners to the ‘poor.’ Mao had followed such a policy at Jinggangshan, but he soon learnt that he had alienated a significant proportion of the local people, including those who were the most successful farmers. At Jiangxi, Mao implemented a more moderate, commonsense approach: the ‘rich’ shouldn’t excessively strip up the ‘water.’ Mao went to great lengths to ensure that the goodwill and grain production of middle-level peasants were maintained. The most exploitative and brutal of landlords were executed but land was redistributed to all members of the village, including ‘rich’ peasants, who were allowed to keep more than enough land to support their families. Exploitative rents were abolished and a fixed grain tax of fifteen to twenty per cent was set to ensure the government received adequate supplies of food. While at Jiangxi, Mao was criticised by the Politburo for ‘not killing and burning enough.’22

MAO LOSES INFLUENCE

A significant point of ideological dispute between Mao and the CCP Politburo was his insistence that peasants could be a revolutionary class. That Mao welcomed peasant recruits into the party was seen as a heretical departure from the ‘correct’ path of Marxist proletarian revolution. Even the successful guerrilla tactics of the Zhu–Mao Army were derided as ‘roving banditry.’ While he could, Mao ignored calls from the Politburo to change his ways. He showed a strong inclination to disobey orders when he thought they were irrelevant to his army and base.23 In the end, Mao’s obstinacy meant his political fortunes fluctuated at Jiangxi. On a number of occasions, Mao took ‘sick leave.’ Sometimes he was genuinely ill—such as when he had a particularly nasty case of malaria—but there were times when, as Bo put it, ‘diplomatic disorders’ and psycho-somatic depression took hold. On 12 October 1932, Mao was replaced by Zhou Enlai as general political commissar of the Red Army. According to Mao, ‘From 1931 until 1934 I had no voice at all at the Centre.’ In January 1933, the Central Committee moved from Shanghai to Ruijin, reducing Mao’s influence further. Bo launched a sweeping campaign to undermine Mao, once the Politburo took up residence in the mountains he had little input into broad policy and military matters. The chairman of the Soviet therefore turned his full attention to civil administration, making a detailed study of the economy and overseeing social policies.

SOCIAL CHANGE AT JIANGXI

Reforms instituted during the Jiangxi Soviet period included reading classes for soldiers and peasants and campaigns against foot binding, forced marriages and child slavery. Divorce and marriage rights were made equally available to women. Mao said that educating a man means educating an individual, whereas teaching a woman means educating a whole family.24 Opium farming was strongly discouraged (at least according to Communist rhetoric), for the cultivation of cereal crops was essential. ‘A People’s Bank’ with its own currency and a Red postal service were established. The Jiangxi Soviet came to govern three-million people in a region covering 30,000 square kilometres. Another three-million lived under the smaller soviets that fell under Jiangxi’s administration. The onslaught of Jiang’s determined anti-Communist campaigns, however, meant that the Jiangxi Soviet lasted only three years. The Soviet had nevertheless provided a framework for Mao and Zhu’s future revolutionary work.
Section A: Causes of the Revolution

Long March

Chapter 3: The Long March to Revolution (1927–1949)

The Nationalist unification of China was a major triumph and there was goodwill and hope directed at Jiang’s government. It was believed that a united country would be able to renew itself through economic modernisation and campaigns for moral virtue. Yet throughout the Nanjing Decade the Nationalist government was beset with problems and conflicts. Lucien Bianco argues that the ‘peace and order’ that were relative, just as the unification achieved in this decade was more apparent than real.29

Regional and Financial Pressures

Regionalism remained a potent force during Jiang’s reign. On several occasions in the 1930s, militarist governors broke away from Nanjing and ruled their domains independently. Bribery and force were commonplace as Jiang played his allies off against each other and authorised campaigns to subdue rebellious provinces. Jiang was strong enough to suppress any single breakaway region but not strong enough to impose order across the whole nation. The Nanjing government held direct control of only five provinces in the Yangzi region. The others were still governed, with varying degrees of cooperation, by provincial strongmen.30 In these areas the central government had no say in appointments or administration. Lack of strong centralisation also limited the government’s tax income as provincial leaders imposed and pocketed taxes more or less as they wished, leaving indirect taxes and customs revenue as the chief source of income for Nanjing. Jiang’s vision for national renewal was therefore limited by regional politics and financial constraints. Despite this, Jack Gray points out that the Nationalist record ‘should be judged … by what took place where its power was sufficient.’31 In such places Jiang had many achievements.

Modernisation Programs

The modernisation projects carried out under the Nationalists were significant. Visitors to Nanjing and Shanghai during the 1930s marvelled at the new streets, shops, electricity and trams, and became more efficient in its deliveries. A network of radio stations was set up and telegraph lines extended, greatly improving communications.

Transport and communications

Basic facilities were upgraded by the Nationalist government. Railways were expanded considerably and hundreds of new locomotives and freight wagons were imported. Modern signal systems were installed and well-laid-out stations built at major transport hubs. Thousands of kilometres of new roads and bridges were built, and ferry lines between cities on major rivers were introduced. Buses and trams became a common sight in Nanjing, Beijing (Beijing) and Shanghai. A Chinese airline was founded. The postal service established many more offices and became more efficient in its deliveries. A network of radio stations was set up and telegraph lines extended, greatly improving communications.

The Nationalist Decade

Jiang Jieshi: I am the Generalissimo; I do not err. China cannot do well without me.


Jiang Jieshi headed the government as chairman of the State Council. In March 1929, the Third Congress of the Guomindang announced that the party would monopolise power on behalf of the people for a period of ‘political tutelage’ in line with Sun Yat-sen’s program; the timeframe for its completion was left somewhat vague. Above the government, therefore, sat the Guomindang party apparatus, in which Jiang was a dominant figure, while further influence was exercised by the military. The latter provided bedrock support for Jiang; in 1931 he took the title Generalissimo as a mark of his political pre-eminence and military standing.

The killing did not end there. The purge spread throughout the Jiangxi Soviet as people denounced each other and Party investigators extracted ‘confessions.’ In the end, many thousands lost their lives.25 One man who remembered the killings told writer Sun Shuyun, ‘Madness! It was total madness. Nobody could understand what was going on. Red Army was killing Red Army! Communists were killing Communists! How could there be so many enemies anyway? If the men of the 20th Corps and the Jiangxi Committee had been bad people, why hadn’t they defected to Jiang Jieshi? Nobody dared to tell Mao that. They were too scared. They kept their mouths shut like a grasshopper on a cold day.’26 Sun Shuyun argues that the purge may have claimed up to 20 000 people over the course of the year. She states that the purge ‘demonstrates Mao’s capacity for brutality.’27

24 Short, Mao, 275–6.
25 Jiang Chang and Jen Holdway, Mao: The Unknown Story (London: Jonathan Cape, 2003), 100.
28 Stuart Schram, Mao Yan-xiang, 152–3.

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ii) Industry

Power plants were built and factories appeared in major ports. The cotton industry was a particular success. New hospitals were built, including one of international standard at Nanjing. Flood-control dykes were erected in some regions.

iii) Finance

T.V. Soong, Jiang’s finance minister, reformed the banking and currency sector. Trading centres in Shanghai boomed. Measurements and weights were standardised and an income tax system established.

iv) Chinese sovereignty

Under the Nationalists, many Western claims over China were dissolved. Customs and tariffs were handed back to the Chinese, and twenty of the thirty-three foreign concessions administered by European powers were given up. Chinese diplomats addressed and meaningfully participated in international bodies such as the League of Nations. China began to gain greater respect from other nations.

LIMITATIONS OF JIANG’S GOVERNMENT

Despite the achievements of the Nationalists, Jiang Jieshi faced many difficulties that led to unpopular decisions. The most pressing difficulty was finance, as the regime was perpetually short of funds.

i) Inflation

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35 Jonathan Fenby, Generalissimo, 193.

There was even a ‘happy tax’ to raise funds to promote goodwill on the day taxes were due! Some officials collected taxes well in excess of the amounts prescribed, or even several years in advance; in Sichuan province, taxes for 1971 had been collected by 1933. In other provinces, taxes eleven times higher than the official rate were collected between October 1931 and March 1933. These often went into the pockets of local officials rather than the coffers of the Nanjing government. R.H. Tawney, a British researcher who visited China during the Nationalist period, said the common Chinese farmer was like ‘a man standing permanently up to his neck in water so that even a ripple is sufficient to drown him.’36

iii) Corruption

Corruption and bureaucratic lethargy abounded in city and country areas. Jiang admitted,

I have observed that many of the staff members do not seem to know what they are supposed to do while others do not know how to work at all. That is why our organisation becomes worse and worse. I have often observed that many staff members just sit at their desks and gaze into space, others read newspapers and still others sleep.37

The Control Yuan received 69 500 reports between 1931 and 1937 detailing misdemeanours and poor efforts by GMD officials. From these reports, only 268 officials were found to be at fault and thirteen were sacked.38

SOCIAL CHANGE: THE NEW LIFE MOVEMENT

Jiang sought to combat corruption and improve the character of the Chinese people through a series of campaigns to improve behaviour. Launched on 19 February 1934, Jiang’s New Life movement was an attempt at national moral rejuvenation through discipline and traditional values. Jiang Jieshi was strongly

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iii) Corruption

Corruption and bureaucratic lethargy abounded in city and country areas. Jiang admitted,

I have observed that many of the staff members do not seem to know what they are supposed to do while others do not know how to work at all. That is why our organisation becomes worse and worse. I have often observed that many staff members just sit at their desks and gaze into space, others read newspapers and still others sleep.37

The Control Yuan received 69 500 reports between 1931 and 1937 detailing misdemeanours and poor efforts by GMD officials. From these reports, only 268 officials were found to be at fault and thirteen were sacked.38

SOCIAL CHANGE: THE NEW LIFE MOVEMENT

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Section A: Causes of the Revolution

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Jiang Jieshi told his officials to treat people like three-year-olds and to demand the respect that a child gives his or her father.

Influenced by Confucian thought, he hoped that the virtues of social decency (li), honesty (lian), right conduct (yi) and self-respect (gui) would be re-embraced by the Chinese. The social Puritanism of Meiling’s Christianity, to which Jiang was a convert, was also an influence. A joke from the time quipped, ‘There’s Methodism in this madness.’ While the Confucianism of Jiang’s approach might have seemed outdated, Rana Mitter sees the New Life movement as being driven by modernisation; it aimed to ‘create a citizenry that was self-aware, politically conscious, and committed to the nation.’ It was meant to give China a sense of moral purpose and an alternative to Communism. Soong Meiling described it as ‘a direct attempt to compete with the Chinese platform of economic and social reform, substituting a retreat to Confucianism for an advance to Marx.’

The New Life movement resulted in a series of campaigns to encourage more virtuous, austere behaviour. Ninety-six ‘rules’ detailed a wide range of ‘offences’ including: gambling, walking out into the middle of the road, urinating in public; spitting in public; having perm hair (those with naturally curly hair often got into trouble too); wearing tight or ‘revealing’ clothing (women); smoking; mixed bathing; men and women walking arm in arm in the street; using opium; and extravagant meals. There was also encouragement of personal hygiene and healthy living. People were encouraged to wash their hands regularly, kill pests such as flies and rats, and to get vaccinated against diseases. Jiang Jieshi declared, ‘If we are to have a new life … then we must start by not spitting heedlessly. If we are to restore the nation and gain revenge for our humiliations, then we need to talk about guns and cannon, but must first talk about washing our faces in cold water.’ Young thugs loyal to the Nationalist regime handed out beatings and intimidated those who fell foul of the ninety-six rules.

The New Life movement achieved very little other than intruding into people’s lives. It remained an urban movement and had little or no impact on the peasantry. Calls to live frugally made no sense to people who in many cases spent their lives in abject poverty. W.H. Donald, the Australian adviser to General Zhang Xueliang (Chang Hsueh-liang), told Jiang, ‘The rich man and the warlord could ride in more than one horse and in many another livery. The hypocrisy of the movement was also shown by the Nationalist leadership. Meiling was a heavy smoker in private, while other leading figures maintained very comfortable and flamboyant lifestyles. One of the greatest ironies was Shanghai’s Opium Suppression Bureau – its director was Big Ears Du Yueh-sheng, the Green Gang boss who helped to finance the government with profits from opium.

Jiang Jieshi addresses the Chinese people.

Jiang and Fascism

Frederick Wakeman describes Jiang’s ideology as ‘Confucian Fascism.’ By the mid-1930s, Jiang was indeed inspired by the regimes of Benito Mussolini and Adolf Hitler, which were based on authoritarian right-wing ideology. Jiang saw himself as the very embodiment of his nation and identified with Hitler and Mussolini’s ‘Great Leader’ principle. It fitted well with his Confucian notion of filial (son-like) devotion to an all-powerful leader. By 1935, Jiang was openly saying, ‘Can fascism save China? We answer: yes. Fascism is now what China most needs.’ The Generalissimo saw fascism as ‘a stimulant for a declining society,’ and that it ‘nevertheless presented an ugly face to the world.’ In describing life under Jiang’s rule, Australian historian C.P. Fitzgerald argues, ‘The Chinese people groaned under a regime Fascist in every quality except efficiency.’ By contrast, William Kirby questions the use of the fascist label, suggesting it may not be useful to compare Nationalist China with Nazi Germany.
Japanese civilian government, a group of military officers took matters into their own hands to achieve this end in 1931. On 18 September, a bomb went off on the tracks of the South Manchurian Railway near the city of Mukden (now Shenyang). The troops of the Japanese Guandong Army, which guarded nearby stretches of the line, responded to the so-called Manchurian Incident by occupying a number of cities including Mukden. On hearing of the apparent unauthorised invasion, the Japanese prime minister commented, ‘The cities have already moved, so what can be done?’ In the coming months, most of the officers involved received commendations or promotions.

By the end of the year, Japan controlled all of Manchuria. People in China were furious. Thousands of students took to the streets of Nanjing and Shanghai in protest. There was little Jiang could do – his armed forces were in no position to challenge Japan. He prevented Manchuria’s governor, former warlord Young Marshall Zhang Xueliang, from resisting the invasion. Jiang instead appealed to the League of Nations (predecessor to the United Nations), which sent the Lytton Commission to investigate the matter. On 18 February 1932, Japan declared Manchuria’s independence from China. A puppet state called Manchukuo (‘land of the Manchu’) was established with the deposed Qing emperor, Pu Yi, as its formal head of state. A proud Manchurian, Pu Yi was delighted to return to his homeland. He soon found he was nothing more than a convenient figurehead for the Japanese. When the Lytton Commission released its report, which criticised Japan’s actions, Japan simply left the League of Nations. Japanese military aggression in the north of China continued. In February 1933, the province of Rehol was annexed by Manchukuo, while in 1935 the provinces of Suiyuan, Chahar, Shanxi, and Hebei were designated the North China Autonomous Region under Japanese administration. Hebei, which included the major cities of Beijing and Tianjin, was under Japanese influence too by this time. There were pockets of Chinese resistance, such as in Shanghai, where the Nationalist Nineteenth Route Army fought valiantly to defend the city in 1932. For the most part, though, Jiang’s apparent unwillingness to confront Japan brought his government into disrepute, particularly when it became clear that appeasement did nothing to lessen the threat of all-out invasion.

In mid-1937 China found itself embroiled in major conflict with Japan – a prelude to what would become World War II. This would have profound effects on the whole body. The Communists are a disease of the soul: it affects the whole body. He believed the Japanese threat, while urgent, would be short-lived, whereas the destabilising influence of the Communists would plague the National government for a long time to come. National unity, therefore, must take precedence over foreign affairs, as external threats could not be addressed by a divided nation. Beginning in December 1930, a number of Bandit Extermination and Encirclement campaigns were launched against CCP strongholds in the countryside. Yet the Zhu–Mao Army at Jiangxi proved an elusive foe; mobile guerrilla warfare allowed the 30 000 men of the Red Army to repel better-equipped and much larger Nationalist forces on several occasions. The first campaign involved 100 000 Nationalist troops; the second, in March 1931, involved 200 000; and the third, in July the same year, engaged 300 000. After Bo Gu arrived at Ruijin and Zhou assumed the position of chief military commissar, a policy of holding Soviet territory through positional warfare was adopted. The aim was to ‘halt the enemy at the gates.’ Communist military commanders were being advised by Otto Braun, a German Comintern operative, who was also known as Li De (Li Te). Although he could not speak Chinese Braun held considerable influence. Policy at this time was largely determined by a ‘three man group’ of Bo, Zhou and Braun; their ‘halt the enemy at the gates’ approach proved effective in resisting Jiang’s fourth extermination campaign. The fifth campaign, which began in October 1933, would be very different.

Jiang, too, acquired a German adviser. General Hans von Seeckt was sent by the Nazi government to assist the Nationalist government (following an appeal for help from Jiang). General von Seeckt adopted new tactics. No longer were Nationalist troops sent into Communist territory on find-and-destroy missions. Von Seeckt ordered the construction of concrete blockhouses (small forts) linked by roads and barbed wire, which would encircle Soviet bases and offer cover while...
more blockhouses were built. Von Seeckt had devised a concrete and steel ‘noose’ that could be gradually tightened around the enemy. Over one-million men, including some of Jiang’s elite units, were brought in for the purpose. Two-hundred aircraft provided support and reconnaissance. The ring of forts deprived Communist-held territories of trade and made mobile warfare difficult. As the Nationalist forces advanced, Seeckt encouraged a scorched-earth policy, whereby farmland that could support the CCP and Red Army was destroyed. Famine subsequently unfolded in some mountain communities and many villages were devastated.55

COMMUNIST LOSSES

Thousands of Red soldiers were killed. At the battle of Guangchang on 11–16 April 1934, 4000 were killed and 20 000 wounded. It was the worst defeat inflicted on the Communists in many years. General Peng Dehuai, whose men bore the brunt of the assault, was furious. He yelled at Braun, ‘You dogmatists are tactical experts only on maps and paper. Your plan has produced heavy casualties. Do you feel no guilt in your conscience? Do you feel no pain in your heart?’56 The strategy was not altered, though, and the losses of men and land escalated. By September, sixty of the seventy Soviet-controlled counties had fallen. The Communist leadership had a stark choice: run or stay and die. It was decided that Ruijin would be abandoned. A soviet had been established 550 kilometres to the west in Hunan by He Long. Amidst great secrecy the Red forces decided that Ruijin would be abandoned. A soviet had been established 550 kilometres to the west in Hunan by He Long. Amidst great secrecy the Red forces

THE MARCH BEGINS

A small force was left behind to defend the Jiangxi Soviet while 80 000 soldiers and 20 000 CCP support staff prepared to leave. Only thirty-five women, all wives of leading Communists, were allowed to go. Only the party leaders knew of the immediate aim. Although they spoke of a ‘big house moving operation,’ common soldiers believed they were heading off on a march that might take a few weeks to complete. Instead, from 16 October 1934, the Communists embarked on an epic trek that would become known as the Long March. The first stage of the journey was relatively easy. Chang and Halliday argue that Jiang allowed the Reds to escape. This was allegedly done under pressure from Stalin – Jiang’s son was studying in Moscow – and had the added advantage of allowing troops to be deployed in regions where Nationalist control had previously been limited. There is significant evidence to dispute this view. The process of breaking out of the encirclement was aided by secret agreements with Yen Shuiyun, who ruled over Guangdong to the west of Jiangxi. Yen Shuiyun, who ruled over Guangdong to the west of Jiangxi. Yen

Communists had left Jiangxi for some weeks.58 He did not remain ignorant for long. The Communists were a nation on the move: their marching columns were up to eighty kilometres long, weighed down by tons of equipment including printing presses, sewing machines, typewriters, the entire Ruijin library, boxes of government files and an x-ray machine so heavy it required twenty men to carry it. One Red general said the columns were like an emperor’s sedan chair.59 Only three kilometres were covered on the first day of the march.

THE BATTLE OF XIANG RIVER

As the Communists moved into Guangxi province, Jiang offered an offensive to halt them at Xiang River. A pitched battle from 25 November to 3 December


almost brought the Long March to an end. The Communists made it through but suffered horrendous losses, especially amongst non-combatants. The river ran red with blood and bodies piled up on its banks. Many people deserted; only 30,000 were left to continue the journey.\(^6\) From this point on, it was long battle from beginning to end. Air attacks and artillery bombardment continued to inflict casualties. Red Army commanders were increasingly displeased after Xiang River. As they marched, Mao made overtures to a number of his leading comrades and fanned the flames of discontent. He made his concerns known to the rest of the leadership at a meeting in Tongdao on 12 December. Mao said the march had been hampered by too much equipment and a predictable route. ‘Head On, Straight On’ Li De (Braun) had allowed Jiang to set an ambush at Xiang River.\(^6\) Correctly guessing that the Red Army was heading toward He Long’s Hunan Soviet, Jiang had deployed a substantial force to block their way. At Mao’s urging, and with no clear direction, the Jiangxi exiles headed south-west into Guizhou province, where provincial troops were reputed to have little fighting spirit. The remaining heavy baggage was tossed aside as the marchers moved as quickly as possible to avoid being detected by Nationalists.

THE ZUNYI CONFERENCE

On 7 January 1935, the Reds captured the city of Zunyi. Twelve days rest was called while the party leadership held a meeting to take stock. The Zunyi Conference of 15–18 January proved a turning point. Mao, in a bid for leadership, poured scathing criticism on Bo Gu and Otto Braun for their handling of the Fifth Encirclement Campaign and the first stages of the march. Bo tried to blame the ‘objective conditions’ of Nationalist troop supremacy but received little support. The problem was tactics, not numbers, responded Mao.\(^6\) Mao was backed by two members of the Politburo, Luo Fu (Lo Fu) and Wang Jiaxiang (Wang Chia-hsiang). Braun later described Mao, Luo and Wang as the ‘Central Triad’ (three-wise men) of the faction which waged a submerged struggle to take over the Party and Army leadership.\(^6\) Generals Peng Dehuai, Zhu De and Liu Bocheng (Liu Po-ch’eng) added powerful voices to Mao’s ascendency. The Zunyi Conference was a critical juncture in party history. It is known in Chinese history texts as the Zunyi Conference. The following slogan was issued to the Red Army on 16 February 1935.

We must be prepared to walk on highways and also on small roads. We must be prepared to travel on a straight line or on a zig zag course. We must not damage property because we may come that way again.

Mao’s ascendency

The only formal changes made at Zunyi were putting Mao in the role of chief adviser to Zhou and promoting him to the Politburo Standing Committee.\(^6\) The Twenty-Eight Bolsheviks would no longer command the party. Out of contact with Moscow, Braun was similarly sidelined. Although his authority was far from absolute, Mao was in a powerful position; a military commission made up of Mao, Zhou and Wang took control of the march. Mao brought in a number of changes. Rank-and-file commissars doubled their efforts to keep up morale (spirits). The troops were given explanations of their movements while catchy slogans reinforced the tactics and rules of the Red Army.\(^6\) Mao coined the slogan ‘March North to Fight the Japanese’ to give an upbeat, patriotic spin to what had been (and still technically was) a forced retreat. Tactically, traditional strategies were abandoned and the Zhou–Mao Army assumed its old guerrilla ways and even its old name: the First Front Army. Some victories finally came their way. At the Battle of Loushan Pass,\(^6\) two GMD divisions were soundly defeated and 3000 prisoners captured. The next few months were by Mao’s own admission his proudest military achievement. Philip Short describes how ‘Mao engaged in a dazzling, pyrotechnic display of mobile warfare, criss-crossing Guizhou and Yunnan, that left pursuing armies bemused, confounded Chiang Kaishek’s [Jiang Jieshi’s] planners and perplexed even many of his own commanders.\(^6\) As they passed through towns and villages large meetings were held to explain the nature of the ‘people’s army’. Wounded or sick marchers who could no longer continue were left in the care of friendly villagers. They were given money and arms in the hope they might start up guerrilla bands once they recovered. The rules of discipline were reiterated again and again. The conduct of the Red soldiers as they moved through the southern provinces was an important propaganda initiative. Edgar Snow claimed that the Long March was ‘the biggest armed propaganda tour in history… millions of peasants have now seen the Red army and heard it speak, and are no longer afraid of it.\(^6\)

The Red Army was not kind to all, however. Young men were sometimes ‘recruited’ by force while landlords and merchants were violently deprived of their property.\(^6\) The Red Army was not kind to all, however. Young men were sometimes ‘recruited’ by force while landlords and merchants were violently deprived of their property, which was given out to the poor or taken as supplies for the march. On occasion, whole towns were sacked, left deserted and in ruin. More often, though, dire poverty spurred young people to join the Red Army; when asked why they wanted to join up, many replied, ‘I have nothing to eat.’\(^6\)

The following slogan was issued to the Red Army on 16 February 1935.

We must be prepared to walk on highways and also on small roads. We must be prepared to travel on a straight line or on a zig zag course. We must not damage property because we may come that way again.

The battle of Luding Bridge

General Liu Bocheng: ‘We’ve given plenty of blood and energy to get you, Luding Bridge, but we’ve got you! We’ve won out!’

A new destination was eventually decided upon. Mao’s First Front Army would make a huge loop through Yunnan that would ultimately lead it north. The plan was to head to Sichuan to meet up with the Fourth Front Army under Zhang Guotao (Chang Kuo-t’ao), whose force had established a new base after fleeing the E-Yu-Wan Soviet in 1932. As they crossed the Golden Sands River, the Reds encountered a new threat. They were in Lolo territory, home to the fierce Yi tribal
The attack began at four in the afternoon. The regimental commander and I directed it from the west end of the bridge. The buglers of the regiment gathered together to sound the charge, and we opened up with every weapon we had. The glare of the bugles, the firing and the shouts of the men reverberated through the valley. The 20 heroes, led by Commander Liao, crept across on the swaying bridge chains in the teeth of intense enemy fire. Each man carried a tommy-gun or a pistol, a broadband and 12 hand-grenades. Behind them came the men of the Third Company, each carrying a plank in addition to full battle gear. They fought and laid planks at the same time.

Just as the assault party reached the bridgehead on the opposite side, huge flames sprang into the sky outside the town’s west gate. The enemy was trying to throw a fire barrier across our path. The blaze, reddening the sky, licked fiercely around the end of the bridge.

The outcome of the attack hung by a hair... With the clarion call of the 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... Our gallant men fought until all their bullets and grenades were spent... The Third Company came charging to their rescue. Then regimental Commander Wang and I sped across the bridge with our reinforcements and entered the town... The enemy’s death ended in smoke, for though we followed the same route as Shi Takai (the Taiping general killed by the Qing), history did not repeat itself. Ours was a people’s army led by the Communist Party and Chairman Mao.

Four men fell to their deaths, but the bridge was captured. The main body of the First Front Army arrived and crossed a few days later. According to Ross Terrill, ‘Spirit somehow triumphed over matter that afternoon at the Dadu.’ The extraordinary feat of the twenty-two Heroes of Dadu, ‘the most critical single incident of the Long March,’ was first presented to Western readers in a similarly dramatic fashion by journalist Edgar Snow. Snow gave an influential, and somewhat idealised, account of the March:

Adventure, exploration, discovery, human courage and cowardice, ecstasy and triumph, suffering, sacrifice, and loyalty, and then through it all, like a flame, this undimmed ardour and undying hope and amazing revolutionary optimism of those thousands of youths who would not admit defeat either by man or nature or god or death – all this and more are wrapped up in a history of an Odyssey unequalled in modern times.

Fellow journalist Agnes Smedley backed up Snow’s account after an interview with Zhu De at Yan’an in 1937.

SOURCE ANALYSIS

Look carefully at Swiftly taking Luding Bridge and complete the tasks below.
1. Describe the time of the source. What atmosphere is created?
2. Identify the likely perspective of the creator of the source on the event depicted, based on the visual language used.
3. Using the source provided and your own knowledge, explain why the CCP considered the battle for Luding Bridge to be a turning point in the Long March.
4. Evaluate the significance for the Chinese Communist Party of the Long March. In your response, refer to the source provided and other views.

ACTIVITY

SOURCE ANALYSIS

1. Using the source provided and your own knowledge, describe the challenges faced by the Red Army in crossing the Luding Bridge.
2. Explain the importance of the Luding Bridge in the wider context of the Long March. In your response, refer to the source provided and your own knowledge.
3. Evaluate the significance of the Luding Bridge incident for the Chinese Communist Party. In your response, refer to the source provided and other views.
DEBATES OVER LUDING BRIDGE

Many accounts given by survivors of the Long March, as well as some by Western journalists such as Agnes Smedley and Edgar Snow, were strongly influenced by the official Communist Party line. From this perspective, Luding Bridge proved the indomitable revolutionary spirit of the Red Army Chairman Mao was right — with the correct attitude, any obstacle could be conquered.

What actually occurred at Luding Bridge has been a point of debate in recent years. The strongest doubters are Jung Chang and Jon Halliday:

This bridge is the centre of the Long March myth created by Mao, who led it to the journalist Edgar Snow in 1936. This is complete invention. There was no battle at the Dadu Bridge. Most probably the legend was constructed because of the site itself: the chain bridge over the roaring river looked a good place for heroic deeds. There were no Nationalist troops at the bridge when the Reds arrived on 25 May. The numerous Nationalist communications make no mention of any fighting on the bridge or in the town. Chiang [Jiang] had left the passage open for the Reds.80

Eye-witnesses, one of whom Chang and Halliday use to support their view, offer contradictory accounts that can be used to support different viewpoints. Sun Shuyun interviewed Blacksmith Zhu, who recalled that:

Only a squad was at the other end. It was a rainy day. Their weapons were old and could only fire a few metres. They were no match for the Red Army. When they saw the soldiers coming, they panicked and fled — their officers had long abandoned them. There weren’t really much of a battle. Still I take my hat off to the twenty-two soldiers who crawled on the chains. Those men were brave. They crossed very quickly.81

As he crossed the bridge, Mao’s bodyguard exclaimed, ‘Chairman, with one squad we could hold a bridge like that indestructibly.’82

The troops guarding the Luding Bridge were not disciplined Nationalist soldiers but provincial warlord men. Ed Jocelyn believes there was a fight at Luding but that it wasn’t as spectacular as the Communists later made it out to be. Philip Short agrees: ‘The reality was only slightly more prosaic [unexciting] than the myth which Snow created. The assault force did not “swing out … hand over hand”; they crept out crabwise along the chains at each side of the bridge, while a second group laid an improvised floor of planks and branches behind them.83

Harrison Salisbury cites an elderly Nationalist officer who later recalled that the men who defended the bridge had old guns and mouldy cartridges. As Blacksmith Zhu had told Sun Shuyun, their bullets could barely cover the width of the river.84

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CROSSING THE SNOWY MOUNTAINS AND high grasslands

According to Jonathan Spence, ‘The Long March, later presented as a great achievement in Communist history, was a nightmare of death and pain while it was in progress.’85 Nowhere was this more evident than in the obstacles confronting the Communists after they left Luding Bridge.

Wearing cotton clothes and straw sandals, the Red Army soldiers dragged themselves across the Great Snowy Mountains. Mao told his bodyguard, ‘The snow has confiscated my feet!’ Men slipped down deep, icy cliffs and died from exposure. Those who stopped for a rest at the Jiajin summit often did not wake up.

Before they crossed the Great Snowy Mountains, Communist soldiers were taught the following song:

The Jiajin Mountain is very high, We must pay attention, Wrap your feet and rub them well, Don’t take a rest at the top.

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HISTORICAL INTERPRETATIONS

DRAWING ON THE ACCOUNTS OF THE BATTLE AT LUDING BRIDGE IN THIS CHAPTER, CREATE A TABLE LIKE THE ONE BELOW AND FILL IT IN.

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<th>WRITER/HISTORIAN</th>
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With the class, discuss which interpretation(s) you find most convincing and why. Again, making their way into Sichuan, the 10,000 survivors met up with advance units of the Fourth Front Army led by Zhang Guotao. There was much rejoicing at the Red reunion but political rivalry soon emerged between Zhang and Mao. Zhang was a founding member of the CCP and had 40,000 men under his command. He was not ready to let Mao assume leadership of the party. The two men disagreed on where the march should proceed to next. Mao wanted to head north-east and join with a small soviet led by Gao Gang (Kao Kang) in Shannxi; Zhang favoured western Sichuan. For two weeks the armies rested at the town of Maogai while a decision was made. In the end, the two forces split: Zhang went west while Mao’s forces made their way north. The worst part of the Long March lay before them.

Marching in two columns, the First Front Army entered the High Grasslands in August 1935. It was a horrific experience. The grasslands were one big, deadly swamp; deep, black muck pits swallowed men and horses. Food became critically scarce. The southerners found it difficult to digest the wheat grain and developed stomach problems. There was nowhere dry to rest and no clean water: dysentery and diarrhoea resulted when people were forced to drink from the swamp. After a few days some were so hungry they ate weeds and grew even sicker. Others boiled leather belts and shoes to eat. Some even picked through the faeces of those who had marched ahead in the hope of finding undigested grain.86 Untold numbers lost their lives — the exact number of casualties is difficult to determine. One woman told of a particularly harrowing experience: ‘I walked and something squeaked under my foot. I parted the dense weeds and my foot was in a dead man’s face. I still dream of it.’87 Another recalled, ‘Some people got stuck in the mire and just couldn’t be saved and so we trod on their shoulders.’88 On the edges...
of the swamp, Tibetan tribes further hampered the marchers. A final battle was fought at Laziou (Latzu) Pass on 16 September against provincial GMD troops. The Red Army was victorious and its tribulations almost over.

**SOURCE ANALYSIS**

**ACTIVITY**

Look carefully at Chairman Mao and the First Army Crossing the Great Snowy Mountains and complete the tasks below.

1. Describe how the source conveys a sense of importance about Mao and the Long March.
2. Using the source provided and your own knowledge, outline how the Long March might be considered a ‘positive’ experience for the CCP.
3. Explain the importance of Mao’s role in the Long March. In your response, refer to the source provided and your own knowledge.
4. Evaluate the significance of the Long March in terms of CCP ideology. In your response, refer to the source provided and other views.

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**THE END OF THE LONG MARCH**

On 19 October 1935, the First Front Army straggled into the small Shaanxi town of Wuqi Zhen, then the base of Gao Gang’s soviet. The end of the Long March was officially proclaimed on 22 October. Of the original 100 000 marchers, only 7000–8000 survived. But survive they did – Jiang Jieshi failed to exterminate the Communist army. Tactically the Long March was a retreat but psychologically it imbued the Communists with a strong sense of purpose. Organisationally it brought Mao to the forefront of leadership.86 Edgar Snow famously wrote, ‘… the experience ultimately contributed enormously to the perception of himself as a man of destiny who would lead his followers to the completion of their revolutionary mission … for Mao was the prophet who had led the survivors through the wilderness.’87

The remnants of Communist bands soon arrived from other abandoned soviets and bolstered troop numbers to 30 000. The Fourth Front Army failed in its bid to establish a base in Sichuan, and Zhang Guotao’s remaining 2000 men made their way to Shaanxi. Zhang’s political career never recovered. Yan’an would be the capital from which Mao would clarify his revolutionary program, rebuild the Red Army and ultimately conquer China. Maurice Meisner describes Mao after the Long March as a latter-day revolutionary Moses, the experience ultimately contributing enormously to the perception of himself as a man of destiny who would lead his followers to the completion of their revolutionary mission … for Mao was the prophet who had led the survivors through the wilderness.”

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**ACCOUNTS OF THE LONG MARCH**

The Long March is the foundation narrative of the People’s Republic of China (PRC), which was established in 1949. But like many legends the march is shrouded in controversy. Jung Chang and Jon Halliday claim it is ‘one of the biggest myths of the twentieth century’.88 Not all historians agree. Although there has certainly been, and continues to be, a good deal of Communist ‘spin’ attached to the tale, Ed Jocelyn sees the Long March as a ‘true story exploited for propaganda purposes’.89 What the Communists, particularly ordinary soldiers, achieved through the Long March was an extraordinary feat of survival and endurance; it had profound consequences on the party leadership. Its deeper meaning – the moral of the story – was similarly important.

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86 Craig Dower, People’s China: A Brief History (Oxford University Press, 1994), 45.
87 Edgar Snow, Red Star Over China, 207.
88 ‘It takes into account the effort involved in travel, such as going uphill or crossing difficult terrain.
89 Maurice Meisner, Mao’s China, 35.
90 Jung Chang and Jon Halliday, Mao: The Unknown Story, 134.
In his study of Russia’s October Revolution, Frederick C. Conroy examines how revolutionary foundation narratives are a means of constructing cultural identity. The question isn’t one of myth versus reality, but an appreciation of “a story told in the telling.” 92 Seen in this light, Luding Bridge and the Long March are parts of a story that the Chinese Communists and others identified with and sought to popularise. In their telling of the heroic exploits of the Long March the CCP were saying something about who they thought they were and what they believed in.

### ACTIVITY

**CAUSES OF REVOLUTION**

Write a paragraph on one or more of the topics below. Use evidence to support your response.

1. Discuss the extent to which the Long March was a long-term cause of the Chinese Revolution.
2. Explain the consequences of the Long March for Jiang and the Nationalists.
3. Discuss the significance of the Long March as a foundation narrative for the Chinese Communist Party.

**DOCUMENT**

**MAO ZEDONG ON THE LONG MARCH, DECEMBER 1935**

We say that the Long March is the first of its kind ever recorded in history ... we encountered untold difficulties and great obstacles on the way, but by keeping our two feet going, we swept across a distance of more than twenty thousand li through the length and breadth of eleven provinces. Well, has there ever been in history a long march like ours? No, never. The Long March is ... a man. It proclaims to the world that the Red Army is an army of heroes, and that the imperialists and their jackals, Jiang Jieshi and his like, are perfect nonentities. The Long March is also an agitation corps. It declares to approximately two hundred million people of eleven provinces that only the road of the Red Army leads to their liberation ... The Long March is also a seeding machine, it has sown seeds in eleven provinces which will sprout, grow leaves, blossom into flowers, bear fruit and yield a crop in the future. To sum up, the Long March ended with victory for us and defeat for the enemy. 93

**SOURCE ANALYSIS**

Read Mao Zedong’s comments on the Long March and complete the tasks below.

1. Analyse Mao’s claims that the Long March was a great achievement for the CCP. What evidence does he offer to support this view?
2. Describe two challenges the Red Army overcame during the Long March, according to the source.
3. Using the source provided and your own knowledge, explain how the Long March served as a ‘seeding machine.’
4. Evaluate the extent to which the source provides an accurate assessment of the Long March. What alternative views exist?

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**THE YAN’AN WAY**

Mao Zedong: We Communists are like seeds and the people are like the soil. Wherever we go, we must unite with the people, take root and blossom among them.

In the midst of war with Japan, Jiang’s Nationalist government floundered. Mao’s Communist government meanwhile flourished. From its base at Yan’an the Shaan-Gan-Ning Soviet extended its influence by successful guerrilla campaigns and won the support of the local peasantry. Yan’an was a poor area with no industry or major buildings (people lived in caves cut out of rock). Most inhabitants were illiterate and some were the ‘jewel plait of the Qing era. Yet in this rural backwater Mao and his comrades built a thriving community. The experience of the Long March and the Yan’an years would reinforce many of the ideals that became fundamental to the Chinese Communists. A revolutionary tradition, dubbed the ‘Yan’an Way,’ 94 was forged during this era. Mao established himself as a revolutionary theorist and consolidated his grip on the party leadership.

**LAND AND TAX REFORMS**

Land reform was a significant element in winning over the peasantry. From 1935 to 1937, surplus land was taken from landlords and redistributed to those in need. Poor peasants’ associations, under the protection of Red Army troops, carried out the land reform. Cadres (officials or activists) of the CCP gave advice where necessary but it was emphasised that the people themselves must jianshen, ‘turn over,’ the established order. Mao envisaged the fusion of the Communist revolution with an agrarian (agricultural) revolution. 95 Most landlords were left with enough land to support their families. Once the Second United Front came into being, the Communists moderated their land reform policies. To foster support for the anti-Japanese campaign amongst all social classes, including the wealthy, land was no longer taken outright. Only surplus land left by landlords who had fled the area was redistributed. Interest on loans and mortgages, however, was reduced from eighteen to 1.5 per cent and rents to no more than twenty-five per cent of the harvest. Landlords who invested in local industry or who had a son in the Red Army were given tax bonuses. All peasants were encouraged to form cooperatives to sell their produce.
SOCIAL CHANGE

In Yan’an, as at Jiangxi, women’s associations were set up to support women with abusive husbands or those too poor to feed their children. Evening schools were established for children and adults. Other basic but clever innovations were employed. For example, soldiers marched with Chinese characters stitched onto their packs so that those behind could memorise them, while ploughing peasants learned characters from signs placed at the end of each furrow. The literacy rate in Yan’an was raised from one per cent in 1936 to fifty per cent by 1943. The local University of Anti-Japanese Resistance attracted left-wing students and intellectuals from across China. Many were growing disillusioned with the Nationalist regime and were attracted to the CCP on account of its ordered government, anti-Japanese sentiment and apparent integrity.

ECONOMIC CHANGE

Building a solid economy in remote Shaanxi was no easy task. Mao popularised the notion that hardship and adversity caused one to become self-sufficient and therefore more confident. Morale at Yan’an was high. Foreign journalists like Edgar Snow and Agnes Smedley were struck by the enthusiasm and drive amongst the Communist officials and the discipline of Red Army soldiers. Soldiers not on patrol or training helped peasants to till the land, harvest grain and construct irrigation channels. Land was set aside for Red soldiers serving at the front and was worked either by their family or cooperatively by volunteers from the local peasants’ association. Everyone was involved in growing food and making useful things: matches, wire, tools, batteries, soap, leather goods, clothing and many other items were produced. Most army units managed to produce forty per cent of their own food. Mao even grew his own tobacco. Although it was kept a secret from visiting Western journalists, opium was grown and sold to Japanese-occupied territories to raise funds. Opium trade provided the greatest source of income for the Yan’an government. It was noted in records as ‘soap,’ ‘foreign trade’ and ‘special product.’

MAO’S RECTIFICATION CAMPAIGN

The 1940s were Mao’s most creative and productive years in formulating his core ideologies. He spent up to fourteen hours a day reviewing policies and making a systematic study of Marxism. He produced an abundance of seminal revolutionary works in this period. On 1 February 1942, Mao formally launched his zhengfeng or Rectification Campaign. The campaign aimed to teach Chinese Communists Mao’s own revolutionary ideas and to eliminate the influence of his political opponents. The movement emerged from an educational drive in 1939. There was concern that the numerous new party members did not have a sound grasp of Communist ideology or, as Mao put it, ‘the correct style of work.’ Unity and discipline needed tightening. Mao stressed the need for ‘correct revolutionary consciousness’ from which would come correct revolutionary action. Views and actions, not simply socio-economic class, were the key factors in determining whether one was a ‘revolutionary proletarian.’ By late 1941, this was shaping up as a purge. When Wang Ming of the Returned Students’ Clique had come to Yan’an from Moscow in 1937, Mao had been determined to prove himself as a theorist in his own right and to head off any leadership rivalry. Mao might have also felt threatened by the influx of intellectuals into the Soviet. Mao complained, with some exaggeration, that following Wang Ming’s arrival ‘my authority did not extend beyond my cave.’

The Rectification Campaign followed a set routine. Mao, or one of his allies such as Liu Shaoqi (Liu Shao-ch’i), would give a lecture to a mass gathering. Afterwards the audience

SOURCE ANALYSIS

Look carefully at the photograph of Mao speaking with peasants and complete the tasks below.

1. Describe the relationship between the CCP and the peasantry. In your response, refer to the source and your own knowledge.

2. Using the source provided and your own knowledge, explain how Mao adapted Marxist revolutionary ideas to suit Chinese conditions.

3. Analyse the significance of Mao Zedong in shaping the CCP’s approach during the Yan’an period. In your response, refer to the source provided and other views.

Mao speaking with peasants in Yan’an, 1939.

Mao Zedong and Zhu De.
Mao married his fourth wife, Jiang Qing, at Yan’an. Her third wife, He Zizhen, was physically weak and mentally fragile after the ordeal of the Long March. Jiang was an attractive and ambitious young woman who had been an actress. The Central Committee reluctantly agreed to the marriage on condition that Jiang had no involvement in politics; her resentment at this had extraordinary consequences later during the Cultural Revolution.

When explaining policies, ideology and their foundations, Mao pointed out the importance of ideas being grounded in practical application and adjusted to fit current experience. Mao believed that theory and practice went hand-in-hand.

Mao giving a lecture during the Rectification period (Zhengfeng).
Section A: Causes of the revolution

China Rising: The Revolutionary Experience

Chapter 3: The Long March to Revolution (1927–1949)

The Yan’an period saw a considerable increase in Communist Party membership, from 40,000 in 1937 to 800,000 in 1940; there were more than a million members by 1945. At the end of the Civil War in 1949, the Communists had four-and-a-half-million cadres. The Red Army showed similar growth: 92,000 in 1937, 300,000 in 1940, 860,000 in 1945 and four-million troops in 1949. The vast majority of support came from the peasantry – Mao’s chosen vanguard class of the revolution – but intellectuals were increasingly attracted. Mao’s 1940 work *On New Democracy* outlined a broad policy that embraced all social classes in the united front against Japan. This encouraged educated Chinese and rallied patriots to their cause. The fusion of Communism with nationalism was an ingenious program.

Mao’s ideology, fully titled Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought, became part of the collective consciousness of the CCP at Yan’an. It provided a cohesive vision and unity of purpose: By 1944, when the Rectification campaign had drawn to a close, the leadership cult and political dominance of Chairman Mao had been well and truly established. Recalling his time in Yan’an, Sidney Rittenberg highlighted his impressions of Zhou Enlai and the charismatic qualities of Mao: “When I was with Zhou, I felt I was sitting next to a real friend, in a camarade. With Mao, I felt I was sitting next to history. With Zhou I felt warmth, with Mao, awe.”

Mao’s ideology was embodied in an official document titled “On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People.” The text outlined a broad policy that embraced all social classes in the united front against Japan. This encouraged educated Chinese and rallied patriots to their cause. The fusion of Communism with nationalism was an ingenious program.

**THE SECOND UNITED FRONT**

**Mao Zedong:** Chiang [Jiang] is stubborn, but fundamentally he is a gangster.

Zhang’s Truce with the Red Army

When the Japanese overran Manchuria in 1931, Nationalist troops under the command of Young Marshal Zhang Xueliang fell back to China. Jiang Jisheng had them garrisoned at the Shaanxi city of Xi’an (Sian). In 1935, Jiang sent orders to Zhang to commence a Sixth Extermination Campaign, this time against the Yan’an Soviet. General Zhang was not pleased with this assignment. He and his men had little interest in fighting Communists – they wanted to resist the Japanese occupiers of their homeland. In the coming months Zhang’s troops made only half-hearted skirmishes along the Yan’an Soviet border. Even some fake battles would be held to keep up the appearance of hostilities. At the Seventh Communist Congress of August 1935, a resolution was passed urging all Communist parties to seek alliances with other leftist groups in resisting anti-Soviet Fascist forces. In the Asian context this meant Japan. The CCP duly made contact with a number of popular resistance groups and Mao made overtures to General Zhang. Communist agitators secretly worked amongst the Manchurian troops, feeding them slogans such as “Immediate war with Japan; stop fighting the Communists” and “Chinese must not fight Chinese.” When they did exchange fire, Red Army soldiers treated Zhang’s wounded and released any officers they captured, having first discussed their hopes for a united anti-Japanese front. By January 1936, Zhang had negotiated a truce with the CCP. Trade between Yan’an and Xian was allowed, while liaison officers aided communication between the two armies. As the year went on a number of declarations were issued by Yan’an urging the Guomindang to drop the civil war and join in a united front. These were to no avail.

The Xi’an Incident

Jiang’s extermination campaign was getting nowhere. On 3 December 1936 the Generalissimo flew into Xi’an to impose order upon his disobedient northern troops and discipline his Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Bandit Extermination (Zhang Xueliang). Zhang was ordered to resume the anti-Communist offensive or be transferred elsewhere. Zhang resolved, however, to change the course of Nationalist policy by forcing a united front upon Jiang. (Ironically, Jiang had already decided to begin resisting Japanese militarism now that the CCP, in his opinion, had been virtually eliminated.) At dawn on 12 December a division of General Zhang’s troops attacked the luxurious temple where Jiang Jishen was staying. Jiang fled and hid in a cave in the nearby hills; he was soon found and placed under arrest. He was beside himself with rage. Jiang reminded the arresting soldiers that he was their commander-in-chief. He was given a polite bow and told, “You are also our comrade.”

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Communist leaders discussed what they should do next. Some proposed a public trial of Jiang, followed by imprisonment or execution; others saw merit in a gesture of generosity towards the Nationalists. Zhou Enlai recalled, “We didn’t sleep for a week trying to decide.” Much to Mao’s disgust, Stalin intervened. The leader of the Soviet Union declared that Jiang’s arrest was “another Japanese plot.” The Chinese Communists were told to “try to solve the incident peacefully.” Without the CCP’s knowledge Stalin had been finalising a treaty agreement with Nationalist China and favoured Jiang as the recognised leader of the nation.

The Nationalist government at Nanjing was meanwhile in a panic. Leading generals were urging air strikes on Xi’an. Soong Meiling and her adviser, W.H. Donald, who had worked closely with the Young Marshall in the past, hoped for a peaceful outcome and flew to Xi’an. Other GMD figures including Dai Li and TV Soong joined them. Talks with Soong, Jiang and Zhou were polite and fruitful. In the end, Jiang was released on the condition that he ended his anti-Communist campaigns and agreed to negotiate terms for a Second United Front. The Generalissimo flew back to Nanjing on 25 December and was welcomed as a patriotic hero. The public expected a new anti-Japanese agreement to emerge soon afterwards. The Communists, too, were seen to have put the interests of the nation before the ambitions of the party. The loser in the affair was Zhang Xueliang. The Young

**Did you know?**


**KEY IDEAS**

Write an extended response on one or more of the following topics. Use evidence to support your response.

**Topics:**

- Explain the key elements of Mao Zedong Thought.
- What was revolutionary about the Yan’an Way and the Yan’an Soviet?
- Explain the extent to which Rectification was consistent with the Yan’an Way and Mao Zedong Thought.

**Did you know?**

Jiang fled from his pursuers at Xi’an in such a rush that he left behind his false teeth and shoes. He was arrested in his nightshirt.

**Did you know?**

W.H. Donald was an Australian adviser to the Nationalists known in international circles as ‘Donald of China.’ He could not speak Chinese and would not eat the local food: ‘Never touch the stuff!’ It ruins my stomach.’ He could not speak Chinese and would not eat the local food: ‘Never touch the stuff!’ It ruins my stomach.” A British journalist described Donald as ‘a red-faced, serious man described as “Donald of China.”

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Marshall returned to Nanking as a sign of goodwill. He was arrested, tried and sentenced to ten years’ imprisonment. This was later extended to an indefinite sentence of house arrest at Jiang’s pleasure.

JAPAN ESCALATES INVASION

It took nine months of formal negotiations to arrange the Second United Front. The agreement was hurried along after Japan launched a full-scale invasion on 7 July 1937. Mao declared that the Red Army, under the command of Zhu De and Peng Dehuai, would head towards Japanese positions on 20 August with or without an agreement with the Nationalists. When the Japanese attacked Shanghai on 13 August, Jiang told one of his assistants to ‘Go and tell Zhou Enlai . . . They need not wait any more.’ On 22 July the Second United Front was formally declared. The Yan’an Soviet was made an ‘autonomous region’ of the Nationalist Republic while the Red Army was redesignated the Eighth Route Army of the Nationalist Armed Forces. Communist generals remained in command but overall strategy was directed by the Guomindang High Command. A second Communist army was approved shortly after. The New Fourth Army was based below the Yangzi River and made up of Jiangxi guerrillas and recent recruits.

THE SECOND SINO-JAPANESE WAR

Jiang Jieshi: ‘All we can do now is to resist to the bitter end.’

On 7 July 1937, a skirmish broke out between Japanese and Chinese troops at the Marco Polo Bridge on the outskirts of Beijing (Beijing). The Japanese claimed that while on military exercise Chinese troops had fired on their men and that a Japanese soldier was missing, presumed captured or killed. Japan demanded the withdrawal of Chinese forces from the area and an apology. Much to their surprise they got neither. The Chinese stood their ground – Jiang sent reinforcements to Beijing. Japan used the Marco Polo Bridge incident as a pretext for launching a full-scale invasion. Troops from Manchukuo moved in to pound the Chinese. Beiping fell on 28 July and Tianjin on 30 July. The Chinese withdrew south as invading forces advanced in strength, sweeping into the Yangzi region and making landings on the coast. The Japanese threw all they had into the offensive. Aircraft were used to great effect. Prince Takamatsu, brother of the Japanese emperor, explained, ‘We’re really going to smash China so that it will be ten years before it can stand straight again.’

A second front opened at Shanghai on 12 August. Jiang sent in his best units to defend the city and said it must be held at all costs. Though a fine gesture of patriotic resolve, the order left his commanders with little room to manoeuvre and, ultimately, led to the deaths of some of the Nationalists’ best soldiers. The civilian population meanwhile suffered terribly from bomb attacks. One of the best-known photographs of the period was taken in the aftermath of one such raid: a lone baby sits screaming on an empty street with smoke and wreckage strewn in the background. On 15 August, the Nanking government declared a War of Self-Defence. Well aware that his army could not match Japan blow for blow, Jiang and his generals planned to draw the invaders into a long war of attrition. There was little point in trying to defeat such a superior foe. Nationalist China would ‘trade space for time’ and, eventually, outlast the enemy.

SOURCE ANALYSIS

Look carefully at the GMD anti-Japanese propaganda poster and complete the tasks below.

1. Identify details of the source that symbolise Nationalist resistance against the Japanese.
2. Outline how the source suggests that Nationalist China was well-prepared for a conflict with Japan.
3. Using the source provided and your own knowledge, explain the effectiveness of Jiang Jieshi’s government in resisting Japanese aggression.
4. Evaluate the significance of Japanese military aggression for Nationalist China. In your response, refer to the source provided and other views.

THE CHINESE RETREAT

The Chinese armed forces fought bravely during the first two months of the war; however, in the face of a large, well-equipped and disciplined Japanese army, retreat was only a matter of time. Retreat soon turned into rout; Shanghai was lost in November 1937 and Nanking on 13 December. There had been little preparation for a strategic withdrawal in the event of invasion. Wounded soldiers


117 It took nine months of formal negotiations to arrange the Second United Front.

118 Nationalist China would ‘trade space for time’ and, eventually, outlast the enemy.
Section A: Causes of the revolution

In December 1938, Wang Jingwei defected to the Japanese. In 1940 he was appointed head of the collaborationist Nationalist government at Nanjing.

In 1938, Japanese newspapers reported that the last line of Chinese defence at Wuhan were 5000 orang-utans who had been specially trained to throw grenades and operate machine guns.

JAPANESE ATROCITIES AT NANJING

In an incident often called the Rape of Nanking (Nanjing), the Japanese Imperial Army killed, according to some estimates, 300,000 civilians in Nanjing. People were reportedly set alight, buried alive, beheaded and machine-gunned. Iris Chang described the episode as ‘the Forgotten Holocaust of World War II’.123 It is estimated that thousands of Chinese women and girls were raped. Significantly, recent scholarship suggests that the atrocities may have been overstated.124 Nevertheless, throughout their occupation the Japanese inflicted many horrors on the Chinese people. Some Japanese soldiers sent photographs of their exploits at Nanjing to be developed in Shanghai. These images were leaked to the press and shocked the world. Many showed prisoners being used as live targets in bayonet practice.125

Having delivered a considerable blow at Nanjing the Japanese made overtures for a peace settlement, assuming that Jiang would come to terms. The Generalissimo, a staunch patriot, was fixed on a policy of no surrender. He declared, ‘Wherever I go the Government and the centre of resistance. I am the State.’123 The Nationalist government first re-established itself at Wuhan where it resolved to make a stand as it prepared for a transfer to Chongqing, which could be more easily defended.

In December 1938, Japanese blockades. The invasion had nonetheless deprived the Nationalists of their powerbase in central and coastal China. The main centres of industry and railway lines. It was a humanitarian tragedy; bombers and fighter planes attacked civilian and military targets alike.

Chinese prisoners are used as live targets in a bayonet drill by their Japanese captors during the Rape of Nanjing.

119 Cited in Jonathan Fenby, Modern China, 280.
121 James Leibold, ‘Picking At the Wound’
123 Cited in Jonathan Fenby, Modern China, 286.

lay without proper treatment while they waited for transport; an American Red Cross volunteer said their moans sounded like ‘the wind in a pine forest’.124 Hundreds of thousands of refugees created further chaos as they congested roads and railway lines. It was a humanitarian tragedy; bombers and fighter planes attacked civilian and military targets alike.

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THE INFLATIONARY SPIRAL, 1937–48

Notes issued (millions of Chinese $) | Price index (cost of living)
--- | ---
1937 | 2,060 | 100
1938 | 2,740 | 176
1939 | 4,770 | 323
1940 | 8,460 | 724
1941 | 15,810 | 1,980
1942 | 35,100 | 6,620
1943 | 75,600 | 22,800
1944 | 189,500 | 75,500
1945 | 1,031,900 | 249,100
1946 | 3,726,100 | 627,210
1947 | 33,188,500 | 10,340,000
1948 | 374,762,200 | 287,700,000


125 Edward Moel, Modern China, 86–7.
127 Tony Buzbee, The Long Revolution, 201.

Nanjing, Jiang ordered the dykes (flood walls) of the Yellow River to be blown up on 7 June. ‘China’s Sorrow’ lived up to its name: crops in three provinces were ruined, eleven cities and 4000 villages were flooded, three- to five-million people were left homeless and became refugees, and an estimated 500 000 people drowned. The flooding kept the Japanese advance bogged down for three months, but ‘Chiang’s [Jiang’s] government had committed one of the grossest acts of violence against its own people.’124 The loss of life was a terrible price to pay for a strategic advantage that only delayed the inevitable. After a desperate two-month battle, fought with great courage by the Chinese, Wuhan was lost on 25 December 1938.

JIANG’S NEW CAPITAL AT CHONGQING

The Nationalist government moved to Chongqing in the Sichuan mountains on 20 November 1937. People from across the nation came to the new capital of ‘Free China,’ around 2000 businesses relocated there to escape the Japanese. Dai Li and Big Ears Du worked at smuggling goods into Nationalist territory through Japanese blockaded. The invasion had nonetheless deprived the Nationalists of their powerbase in central and coastal China. The main centres of industry and the rail network were lost.124 The government suffered from reduced income from customs tariffs (from sixty-seven per cent to 6.3 per cent) and income tax. To meet its costs the Nationalist government began printing more banknotes.125 This was a solution in the short term but led to serious consequences later; hyper-inflation wiped out wealth, alienating the upper classes, and affected the livelihoods of ordinary people. Literally cartloads of paper money were needed to buy basic goods. Prices rose on average 237 per cent between 1942 and 1944. Costs increased spectacularly by another 251 per cent from January to August 1945.127 The wartime inflation destroyed the economy.128

1949: sheet of paper
1947: piece of coal
1945: eggs
1943: hen
1941: sack of flour
1939: pig
1937: own

Purchasing Power of 100 Chinese Dollars


125 Edward Moel, Modern China, 86–7.
127 Tony Buzbee, The Long Revolution, 201.

125 Edward Moel, Modern China, 86–7.
127 Tony Buzbee, The Long Revolution, 201.
CHAPTER 3: THE LONG MARCH TO REVOLUTION (1927–1949)

Jiang’s Military Blunders

The Generalissimo’s chief American adviser was General Joseph Stilwell. He knew China well, was respectful of its customs and spoke Mandarin fluently. He was known as ‘Vasoo Joe’ for his sour manner. Stilwell was a man who spoke his mind — the reports he sent his superiors on the Guomindang leadership were far from positive. Nationalist generals seemed blatantly to ignore Stilwell’s advice. Stilwell found the misuse of military supplies and stockpiling for expected anti-Communist campaigns particularly distasteful. He also disagreed with the policy of pursuing a stalemate; he described the Nationalist war effort after 1938 as ‘practically zero.’ He had written, ‘I have to lie awake at night, thinking what foolish things they may do.’ Jiang knew his commanding officers were incompetent. He once said, ‘I have wasted and betrayed by stupid leadership.’

Jiang’s government was greatly sullied by its conduct of the war. Jiang had hoped that eventual victory would come with help from the League of Nations. During one interview Jiang shouted, ‘We are fighting the battle of the world. Intervene for Christ’s sake!’ Hitler had withdrawn his military advisers after forging closer links with Japan. The United States entered World War II, following the bombing of Pearl Harbor in December 1941, the Nationalists finally received much-needed supplies, advice and equipment. These were first brought in from Burma but after the road was cut by a Japanese offensive an airlift program was established. The route into Free China was known as the ‘hump.’ Considered one of ‘Big Four’ powers of the free world and a valued ally by America’s President Roosevelt, Jiang’s government was given generous US Lend-Lease aid that did not have to be repaid as long as it was used in the anti-fascist war against Japan and Germany. It was soon apparent that Jiang was stockpiling much of the equipment for future campaigns against the Communists. He likewise held back his best troops.

Foreign Relations in World War II

In the initial phase of the Japanese invasion, from 1937 to 1939, substantial territory was lost. After this the Sino-Japanese War settled into a stalemate, with victory on neither side. According to Jiang, he was ‘saving the nation by the winding path’ by extending and wearing down the enemy. It was true that China’s resistance kept one-million Imperial Japanese troops in the field when they could have been deployed elsewhere. Jiang had hoped that eventual victory would come with help from the League of Nations. During one interview Jiang shouted, ‘We are fighting the battle of the world. Intervene for Christ’s sake!’ Hitler had withdrawn his military advisers after forging closer links with Japan. After the United States entered World War II, following the bombing of Pearl Harbor in December 1941, the Nationalists finally received much-needed supplies, advice and equipment. These were first brought in from Burma but after the road was cut by a Japanese offensive an airlift program was established. The route into Free China was known as the ‘hump.’ Considered one of ‘Big Four’ powers of the free world and a valued ally by America’s President Roosevelt, Jiang’s government was given generous US Lend-Lease aid that did not have to be repaid as long as it was used in the anti-fascist war against Japan and Germany. It was soon apparent that Jiang was stockpiling much of the equipment for future campaigns against the Communists. He likewise held back his best troops.

Corruption and Mismanagement

The reputation of the Nationalist government was greatly sullied by its conduct during the 1940s. This was not just for economic reasons; the war also made the government’s other failings more apparent. Chaos and negligence were noted often in observations of the time. Corruption amongst government and army officers was rife. Up to thirty per cent of aid from foreign governments was misused, ending up on the black market. When criticism was voiced by students or intellectuals, the secret police made it known that speaking up was dangerous for one’s health. Dai Li, Jiang’s self-proclaimed ‘claws and teeth,’ kept up his campaign against subversive (rebellious) groups and individuals at Chongqing. Restrictions on the press and free speech also grew tighter during the war. The peasants in areas under Nationalist jurisdiction suffered under a heavy tax burden that sometimes took between seventy and ninety per cent of their crops.

A small number of American fighter pilots worked as mercenaries for Jiang Jieshi during World War II. Known as the Flying Tigers, they proved very effective. For every enemy plane shot down Jiang promised his Tigers a $500 bonus.

weak to the people.” Stilwell claimed the Chinese could not ‘get the idea of the offensive into their heads.’ He also found the treatment of conscripted (forced) troops appalling — officers beat their men and didn’t give them enough supplies. The wounded were inadequately cared for. In late 1937, Chinese journalist Du Zhongyuan wrote, ‘what was saddest was when our side withdrew; a lot of our seriously wounded brothers had nobody to look after them. Some were crawling by the roadside, others shot themselves.” Conscripts were pressed-ganged into service, then roped together naked so they could not escape. Up to half of those rounded up for service died from hunger, thirst, exposure or disease before they even reached the military training camps. Deaths from mistreatment or disease totalled 1.5 million. The draftees were most often very poor and therefore unhealthy to begin with. The Chinese could pay to avoid service. Soldiers’ pay was delivered in lump sums to divisional commanders for distribution. Many kept the names of men on their rosters that had died or deserted in order to pocket the remaining pay. A division of 10,000 might have only had 5000–7000 men in actual service.” Stilwell reported, ‘The Chinese soldier is excellent material, wasted and betrayed by stupid leadership.”

Jiang knew his commanding officers were incompetent. He once said, ‘I have to lie awake at night, thinking what foolish things they may do.’ Jiang made matters worse by constantly interfering in the chain of command and issuing orders based on poor intelligence. According to Stilwell, ‘Chiang Kai-shek [Jiang Jieshi] is directly responsible for much of the confusion that normally exists in his command.” Relations between Stilwell and Jiang became increasingly strained. In 1944 Stilwell passed on an order to Jiang from President Roosevelt, directing him to grant Stilwell operational command of Chinese forces. Jiang responded by demanding that Stilwell be recalled to America on account of irreconcilable differences between the two men. On 29 October Stilwell was replaced by General Wedemeyer. Wedemeyer was more to Jiang’s liking but did not secure any change in the Nationalist war effort.

When General Stilwell believed he would be placed in charge of Nationalist troops in 1944 he wrote the following poem:

I’ve waited long for vengeance
At last I’ve had my chance,
I’ve eaten the Peanut [Jiang] in the eye
And kicked him in the pants.
I know I’ve still to suffer,
And run a weary race,
But oh! The blessed pleasure!
I’ve wrecked the Peanut’s face.

133 cited in Theodore H. White and Anthony Jacoby, Thunder, 155.
136 cited in Anthony Jacoby, Thunder, 155.
137 cited in Anthony Jacoby, Thunder, 155.
138 cited in Anthony Jacoby, Thunder, 155.
139 cited in Anthony Jacoby, Thunder, 155.
GMD-CCP FIGHTING RESUMES

In late 1940, the Communist New Fourth Army was ordered by the Nationalist high command to move north of the Yangzi. A deadline for the completion of this order was set at 31 December. By 4 January 1941, the bulk of the Fourth Army troops had moved out of the disputed area, but members of the high command, support staff, nurses, political commissars and a small protection force of 5000 soldiers remained in camp. Without warning, Nationalist troops launched a devastating attack, and all but the commanders, nurses and female cadres were massacred. The surviving high-ranking officers were imprisoned and the women raped. Hearing this news, Mao sent a cabled message to Chongqing: 'Those who play with fire ought to be careful ... the whole people of the whole country will throw you into the gutter.' The Second United Front thereby came to an end. Jiang ordered a blockade of Yan’an and denied foreign military aid to the Communists.

For the most part, the war with Japan advantaged the CCP: the Nationalists bore the brunt of Japanese invasion while the Communists were largely left alone. There was no strategic reason for the invaders to take the remote, dusty regions of Shaanxi. Sichuan, Gan-su, Yunnan and Guizhou likewise remained free except for the occasional bombing raid or retaliatory attack. The Communists nevertheless took every opportunity to be seen as patriots in the war of national defence; they kept up guerrilla campaigns against the Japanese, disrupted supply and communication lines, picked off stray soldiers, pulled up railway tracks and disarmed isolated battalions.

In late 1940, the Communist Eighth Route Army made an ill-fated venture into large-scale warfare with its Hundred Regiments Offensive. The army lost 22,000 men while the Japanese lost only 4000. The enemy responded with blood-chilling ferocity. Against regions where Communist guerrillas were thought to be operating, General Okamura ordered a 'three alls campaign': burn all, kill all, destroy all. Such devastation only inflamed resentment towards the Japanese and drove poor and embittered peasants into the arms of the Communists. After the losses of the Hundred Regiments the CCP concentrated on guerrilla fighting and expanding Communist territory and influence. Mao told his comrades, 'Our fixed policy should be seventy percent expansion, twenty percent dealing with the Guomindang, and ten percent resisting Japan.' The keys to expansion were land reform, which resulted after the collapse of the Second United Front, and patriotic appeal. Edwin Moise argues, ‘The Party was functioning very much as a nationalist organisation, indeed it was struggling for nationalist goals more vigorously and more competently than the Guomindang.’

THE DIXIE MISSION

In July 1944, the US sent a number of diplomats and military officers to Yan'an on an inspection tour – the so-called ‘Dixie Mission’. The nickname came from a comparison between rebel CCP territory and the ‘Dixie’ states (southern rebels) in the American Civil War. Joe Stilwell, in particular, wanted an evaluation of the Communists as a force in the war against Japan. A settlement between the Guomindang and Communists was the chief aim of the mission. Headed by Colonel David Barrett, the Dixie Mission was impressed with the organisation, discipline and morale at Yan’an. The mission also produced damning reports comparing the Communists and Nationalists: ‘the Communists are in China to stay. And China’s destiny is not Chiang’s [Jiang’s] but theirs.’ The Guomindang needed to carry out significant reform and improve its governance if it hoped to prove this assessment wrong.

In November a personal emissary from President Roosevelt came to Yan’an – General Patrick Hurley. Hurley, from Oklahoma, was loud, vain and cowboy-like. As he got out of the plane in Yan’an he gave a rousing Native American war cry – ‘yahoo!’ It was said that he could ‘strut sitting down.’ Mao thought he was a ‘clown.’ Hurley’s grasp of Chinese politics left a lot to be desired. He believed there was little difference between the basic principles of the main parties and therefore no major obstacle to their reaching agreement. Believing many US State Department agents were pro-Communist, Hurley was determined to support Jiang. The General nevertheless drafted a five-point agreement with Mao for Nationalist–Communist cooperation. When Hurley took the plan to Jiang, the Generalissimo refused to sign and demanded a number of amendments. Hurley’s representatives came back to Yan’an to renegotiate but Mao was furious:

‘General Hurley agreed that the terms were eminently fair ... The Generalissimo has refused these terms ... If the United States wishes to continue to prop up the rotten shell that is Chiang Kai-shek [Jiang Jieshi], that is her privilege ... We are not like [Jiang Jieshi]. No nation needs to prop us up. We can stand erect and walk on our own feet.’

In another outburst, Mao yelled, ‘Back him as long as you want. But remember one thing. China is whose China? It sure as hell is not [Jiang Jieshi’s]; it belongs to the Chinese people. The day is coming when you will not be able to prop him up any longer.’ No agreement was forthcoming.

JAPAN SURRENDERS

Jiang expected the US to launch an assault on China in a bid to secure air bases for an attack on Japan. This never eventuated. On 6 August 1945, the US

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

In pairs, discuss and take notes on the following:

- Jiang’s weaknesses as a political and military leader.
- The significance of Japan to Chinese revolutionary politics.
- Reasons for the collapse of the Second United Front.
dropped an atomic bomb on the Japanese city of Hiroshima. On 9 August, a second bomb was dropped on Nagasaki. The bombs brought the Pacific War to a sudden close – far sooner than most expected. Japan signed an unconditional surrender on 14 August. The war had taken the lives of three-million Chinese soldiers and eighteen-million civilians. Ninety-five-million refugees were created and untold damage was done to Chinese cities and towns. The country desperately needed to recover. Jiang's GMD seemed well placed to return to national government. His armies were three times bigger than those of the Communists and were equipped with American weapons and vehicles. Although the CCP controlled more territory, the US preferred the Guomindang to handle the surrender of Japanese forces. The US also airlifted Nationalist forces into major cities in central China while American Marines secured the coastal ports until Jiang's men arrived. The fate of the nation, however, was still to be decided.

THE CHINESE CIVIL WAR

Mao Zedong: 'China is whose China? It sure as hell is not [Jiang Jieshi]s.'

From August to October 1945, General Hurley tried to broker a peace agreement with the Communists and Nationalists. Mao and Zhou flew to Chongqing for talks. The negotiations made little headway, while a race for territory and Japanese arms was underway in the background, particularly in the north. On 8 August the Soviet Union had sent troops to Manchuria and had begun disarming the Japanese. The CCP had likewise moved rapidly into the region and, with the cooperation of their Communist allies, had also accepted the surrender of Japanese forces, thereby gaining much-valued armaments.149 This went against an agreement made between the major powers at Yalta in early 1945 and greatly alarmed Jiang Jieshi. He asked the Russians to remain in Manchuria until such time that he could send in troops. Nationalist forces were subsequently airlifted by the Americans into major Manchurian cities. The Communists, under General Lin Biao (Lin Piao), fell back to the countryside. A master of guerrilla warfare, Lin said it was no cause for alarm. His men would consolidate their support in rural areas, surround the cities and 'sit them to death'.150

In late 1945, US President Harry Truman sent General George Marshall to China as his special ambassador. Marshall brought the Nationalists and Communists together for further talks. He hoped to avoid civil war through the formation of a coalition government. A ceasefire was signed on 10 January 1946. This only gave the Communists breathing space to strengthen their hold in the Manchurian countryside. By May the two sides were again at war.

LAND AND MEN

From their position of strength, both in numbers and equipment, the Nationalists appeared to make many military gains in the first phase of the civil war. They charged through northern China and Manchuria, taking major cities and railways. Even Yan'an was lost in March 1947. Mao, apparently unmoved, explained, 'We will give [Jiang] Yan'an. He will give us China.'151 Kept towns for their own sake, even revolutionary landmarks such as Yan'an, was seen as unwise. According to Mao, 'It is after all only caves. Empty cities don't matter. The aim is to destroy the enemy's army.'152 The Red Army retreated from its positions in an orderly manner, reverted to guerrilla tactics and focused on wearing down Nationalist forces. A song (reminded Communist troops of their objectives): 'Keep men, lose land, land can be taken again; Keep land, lose men, land and men both lost.'

It appeared that keeping land and losing men was the Nationalists' speciality. Jiang's army was soon overstretched. Troops were unsure of their fighting prowess after long periods of sitting around in towns and cities, however, those that ventured into the countryside faced the terrifying prospect of an army that refused to fight openly but struck when least expected. Mao used himself as hair to lure Nationalist forces into pursuit and ambush. Speaking of the Nationalist commander who took Yan'an, Mao said, '[Hu Zongnan] came in like a fist. We forced him to open like a hand; now we are cutting off the fingers one by one.'154

On 1 May 1946, the Communist forces were officially renamed the People's Liberation Army (PLA). It was a fitting title. The difference between the Nationalist and Communist troops was striking. Lucien Bianco argues that almost 'every major area of the Nationalist military weakness was an area of Red Army strength.'155 The Reds were highly mobile whereas the Nationalists were stuck in towns. The bravery and discipline of Communist soldiers led Helen Snow (wife of Edgar) to describe them as 'Prince Valiants in straw sandals.' Many small victories in the guerrilla campaign reinforced Communist confidence. 'Conscription, a tragedy in the government controlled areas,' Bianco relates, 'was an honour in Liberated Areas.'156

PEASANTS

Peasants joined the Communist cause largely because of land reform, which became more radical and violent during the civil war. In 1947, the new Land Law took away all rights of landlords, empowering peasant associations to redistribute land. In fury, many peasants struck out at landlords – symbols of the old order – and joined the ‘people’s war’ against Jiang.157 Rural people supplied the PLA with food, shelter, intelligence and recruits. Jiang’s predicament was well illustrated when Manchurian peasants removed railway tracks and left Nationalist troops in charge of empty stations.

149 Jonathan Spence, Mao Zedong, 103–4.
151 Edgar Snow, Red Star Over China, 208.
152 Cited in Ross Terrill, Mao, 206.
153 Cited in Ross Terrill, Mao, 208.
154 Cited in Ross Terrill, Mao, 208.
157 Jean Chesneaux, Peasant Revolt in China, 147–8.
THE NATIONALISTS SURRENDER

In many ways the Nationalists had already lost the fight even before the war had begun. The morale of Jiang’s troops was low after a long period of half-hearted resistance to the Japanese. Nationalist troops were dejected by the “Three Don’t Cares: 1. Don’t care to fight; 2. Don’t care about the people; 3. Don’t care about myself.”¹⁵⁸ According to journalist Jack Belden, throughout the Japanese war and the civil war that followed, this army was continuously beaten because it had no soul.¹⁵⁹ Corruption had not only reduced the quality of military personnel, it affected the whole government system. The Nationalists seemed hopelessly incapable of dealing with crippling inflation. Middle class Chinese who had supported the government for many years began to desert it.

In April and May 1947, the People’s Liberation Army under Lin Biao and Liu Bocheng launched a series of spectacular offensives. Their forces were strengthened with arms abandoned by retreating Nationalists. After the civil war, Mao liked to quip that Jiang Jieshi was his ‘supply officer.’ By 1948, guerrilla fighting was no longer required. The PLA surrounded cities and towns that could no longer be reinforced or provisioned. Nationalist troops surrendered en masse. Entire divisions gave themselves up. After one battle, 327,000 prisoners were taken. Many chose to join the Communists; those that didn’t were allowed to go home, their travel costs paid. On 31 January 1949, the triumphant troops of the PLA marched into Beiping. Many rode on American-made tanks and jeeps captured from the Nationalists. Residents in many cities were surprised to find that PLA troops insisted on paying for goods and treated civilians well. On 21 January Jiang resigned as president and fled to Taiwan. He left his vice-president, Li Zongren (Li Tsung-jen), to negotiate peace talks with the Communists. When Li refused to accept the terms of unconditional surrender, the Communist offensive resumed, sweeping south of the Yangzi. Nanjing, again the Nationalist capital after World War II, was captured on 23 April. In the following months, PLA forces took control of all but China’s most remote regions. On 1 October 1949, Mao Zedong addressed a jubilant crowd in Tiananmen Square in Beijing, proclaiming the foundation of the People’s Republic of China.

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING
Individually or in a pair, draw up a comparative table like the one below and fill it in.

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<th>OBJECTIVES</th>
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¹⁵⁸ Jack Belden, China Shakes the World, 335.
¹⁵⁹ Jack Belden, China Shakes the World, 338.
CONCLUSION

The Communists won and the Nationalists lost the Chinese Civil War. This was more than a military affair; it was a fundamental conflict between the support bases, social and economic policies, leadership and vision of the two parties. In a 1944 report, General Stilwell wrote, ‘I judge the Guomindang and Communist Party by what I saw: GMD – Corruption, neglect, chaos, economy, taxes, words and deeds. Hoarding, black market, trading with the enemy, Communist program [aimed to] reduce taxes, rents, interests. Raise production and standard of living. Participate in government. Practice what they preach.’

Other people made similar observations towards the end of the civil war. In 1948, Major General David Barr wrote to Washington, ‘...the military debacle in my opinion can all be attributed to the world’s worst leadership and many other morale-destroying factors that led to a complete loss of will to fight. There is complete ineptness of high military leaders, widespread corruption and dishonesty throughout the armed forces.’

Perhaps the most telling indictment of Jiang Jieshi’s regime was that the CCP, in its own way, followed more faithfully Sun Yixian’s ‘Three Principles of Nationalism,’ democracy and ‘people’s livelihood’ than the Nationalists ever did. Jiang had done his best to bring unity to the Middle Kingdom. His Northern Expedition brought about a modern government. His rule was, however, mired by a lack of national unity, embezzlement and a determination to destroy the Communists. In the end, even his most forceful Bandit Extermination campaign – that which led to the Long March – was turned into an advantage by the CCP.

More than anything, Nationalist China was doomed by the Sino-Japanese War. A horrible experience for many Chinese, it was a blessing in disguise for the Communists, bringing them back from the brink of disaster. From this conflict they emerged triumphant, even when, in 1945, Jiang appeared to have the upper hand. The Communist victory of October 1949 marked the beginning of a dramatic new era – the People’s Republic of China. For Mao, it was merely the beginning of the Communist revolution: ‘We have just taken the first step on our Long March. It is the beginning, not the end. To build a new socialist state will involve a hard struggle, too.’

160 Cited in Michael Lynch, China, From Empire to People’s Republic 58.

CHAPTER REVIEW

SOURCE ANALYSIS

Select three primary sources from this chapter that offer contrasting perspectives on the actions or beliefs of the Chinese Communist Party and/or its key people between 1927 and 1949. Then complete the tasks below.

1. Summarise what each source communicates about the Chinese Communists.
2. Compare and contrast the perspectives offered in your three chosen sources.
3. According to the sources, what were the key challenges and successes of the Chinese Communists between 1922 and 1949? In your answer, refer to two or more historical interpretations.

KEY IDEAS

Write a sentence explaining each of the following aspects of Mao’s revolutionary program:
- Peasant-based revolution
- Correct revolutionary consciousness
- The Red Army
- Guerrilla warfare
- The Yan’an Way
- Continuous revolution

KEY EVENTS

Working in pairs, write and perform a three-minute dialogue (conversation) about the period 1927–49 in China. Your dialogue will feature figures of the day discussing an important event or period. Choose one of the following dialogues:
- Mao Zedong and Zhu De (Yan’an period)
- General Joe Stilwell and Jiang Jieshi (c. 1944)
- Jiang Jieshi and Soong Meiling (c. 1950, after Xian Incident, December 1936)
- Mao Zedong and Otto Braun (Zunyi Conference, January 1935)
- Two peasant farmers, one living under Communist rule, the other under GMD rule
- A Long March veteran PLA soldier and a Nationalist Army conscript (c. 1948).

CONSTRUCTING AN ARGUMENT

Write an essay of 600–800 words on one of the topics below. Your essay should include an introduction, paragraphs supported by evidence from primary sources and historical interpretations, a conclusion and a bibliography.

Topics:
- Without a People’s Army the people have nothing. How did Mao and the CCP make use of the Red Army to mobilise the peasantry into revolutionary action?
- ‘The Communists are in China to stay. And China’s destiny is not [Jiang Jieshi’s] but theirs.’ What were the reasons for the success of the CCP and failure of the GMD by 1949?
- ‘All we can do now is resist to the bitter end.’ To what extent did the Second Sino-Japanese War cause the downfall of Nationalist China?
- ‘We Communists are like seeds and the people are like the soil.’ How did the revolutionary practices established during the Yan’an Soviet era lay the foundation for the Communist victory of 1949?
- ‘To sum up, the Long March ended with victory for us and defeat for the enemy.’ Why was the Long March a significant experience for the Chinese Communist Party?
- ‘The Chinese people groaned under a regime fascist in every quality except efficiency.’ What were the successes and limitations of the Nationalist Decade?
FURTHER READING


A short biography that gives recognition to the complexities and contradictions of Mao's character. A good read for students.


In 2002, these two British journalists based in China set off to retrace the Long March. Their experiences and their retelling of this iconic event make this book a great read.


A thorough and engaging biography of Soong Mei-ling. Useful for its insights into Jiang Jieshi's public and private life.


A thorough and balanced biography, drawing on recently obtained documents from Soviet archives.


A lively account of the Long March by an American journalist. Salisbury gathered interviews with participants in the March and travelled part of the route himself.


Sun's account of the Long March, which is based on many new interviews with survivors, gives great insight into this important period in CCP history.


Snow's classic account of the early years of the Chinese Communist movement was based on interviews he conducted during the Yan'an era.


An updated edition of this classic biography by an Australian historian. Terrill employs wit and lively anecdotes to relate the story of the Chairman's life.