

OXFORD IB DIPLOMA PROGRAMME



AUTHORITARIAN STATES

COURSE COMPANION

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Contents

Your guide to Paper 2	2
1 Egypt – Nasser	7
1.1 The emergence of Nasser’s Egypt, 1914–1952	9
1.2 Nasser’s consolidation of power, 1952–1954	19
1.3 Nasser’s policies, 1952–1970	28
Exam-style questions	54
Skills section: Answering exam questions	55
2 Cuba – Castro	57
2.1 Castro’s rise to power 1959	59
2.2 Castro’s consolidation and maintenance of power, 1959–1962	80
2.3 Castro’s domestic policies	93
Exam-style questions	107
Skills section: Constructing the essay	108
3 China – Mao	110
3.1 Mao’s rise to power 1949	112
3.2 Mao’s consolidation of power, 1949–1976	127
3.3 Mao’s economic and social policies	148
Exam-style questions	160
Skills section: Evaluation	161
4 Germany – Hitler	163
4.1 The emergence of the authoritarian state in Germany, 1919–1934	164
4.2 Hitler’s consolidation of power, 1934–1935	183
4.3 The aims and results of Nazi policies	210
Exam-style questions	228
Skills section: Evaluating sources	229
Further reading	231
Revision template: Comparing leaders of different authoritarian states	233
Index	234

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3 CHINA – MAO

The global context

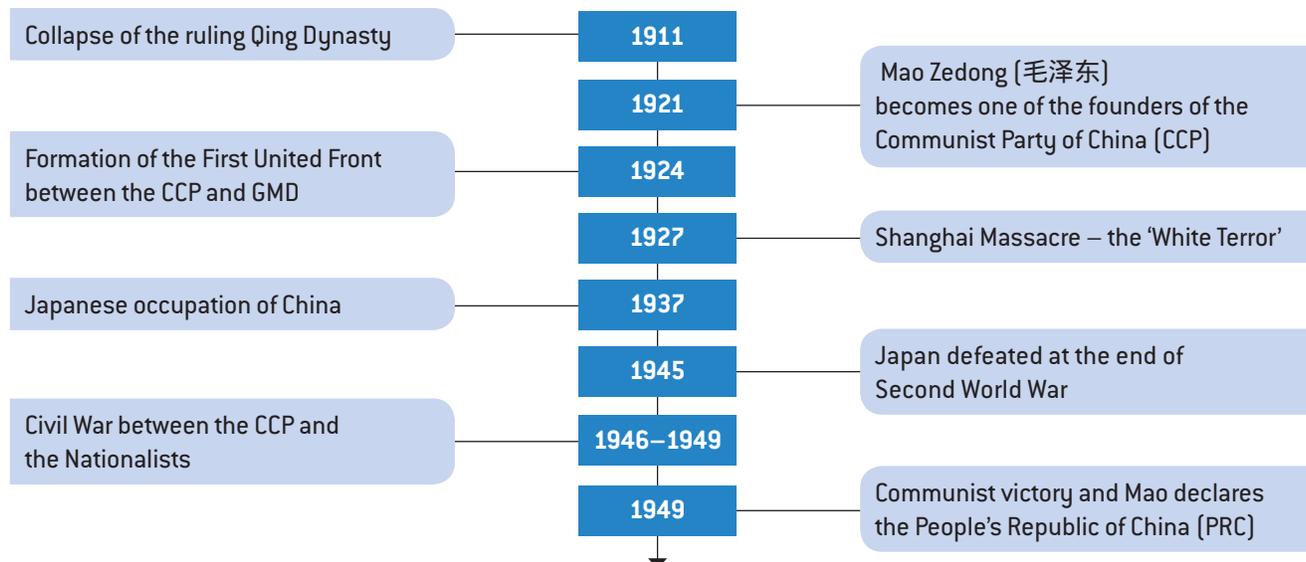
For more than two thousand years, until the 19th century, China avoided contact with other nations and was largely isolated from the outside world. By tradition, the Chinese believed that China was the Middle Kingdom at the centre of the earth. This instilled in them a sense of confidence in their independence and culture, but by the 1840s this was beginning to change with the encroachment of foreign nations. These external powers had a thirst for resources and influence in China and their successful incursions would expose weaknesses in China's traditional political system.

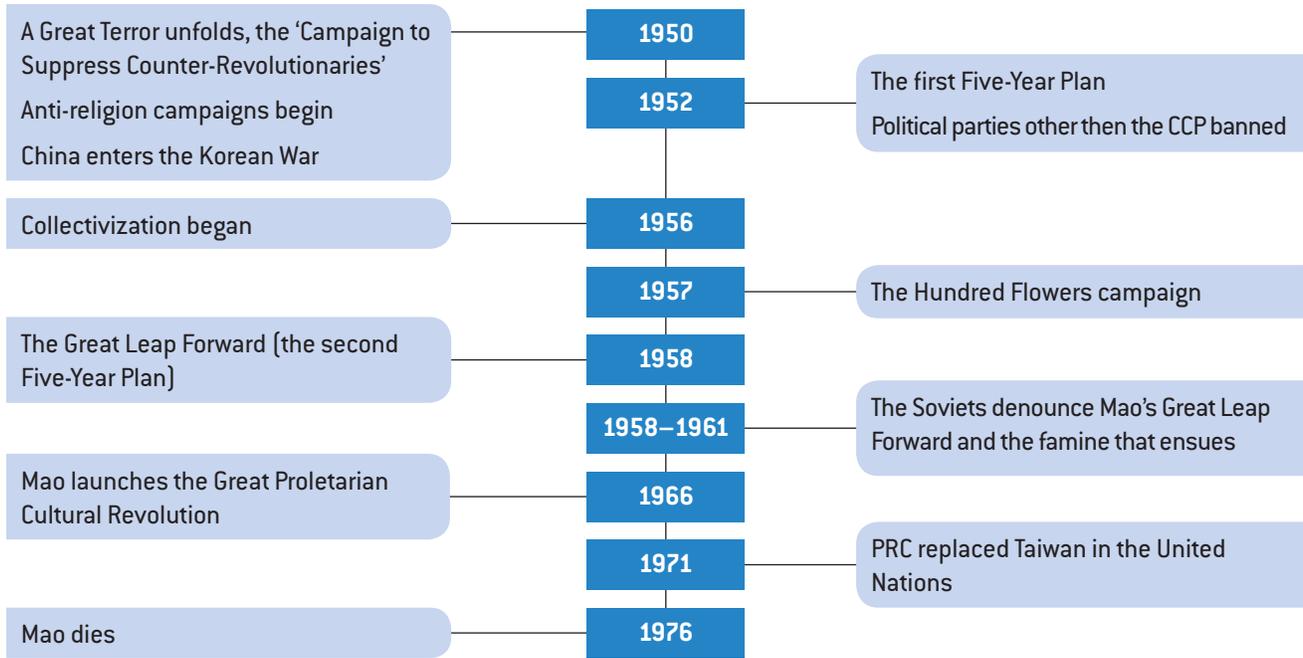
Starting with the Opium Wars (1839–1842), in which the British defeated Chinese forces, China was forced to open up to the West. Great Britain, France, Germany, and Russia were militarily and industrially advanced powers and they wanted to set up commercial bases for trade and for their Christian missionaries to have the right to operate in China. In addition, Japan was

emerging as the dominant power in Asia, as a result of the Meiji restoration of 1868. Japan had defeated China in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894–1895, seizing Taiwan and Korea from China. Japan would play a considerable role in the struggles for power in China during the 1930s and 1940s.

These incursions culminated in a series of “unequal treaties”, which allowed foreign merchants control of China's import and export trade. Shanghai had large foreign-controlled districts. Russia claimed Manchuria in 1900; France had seized Indo-China by the 1890s. In 1898, the USA announced its “open door policy” with regard to foreign spheres of influence in China. This would mean that the USA could trade freely within China's borders. The German acquisition of railroad building and mining rights in Shandong soon followed. By 1900 more than 50 Chinese “treaty ports” were in foreign possession.

Timeline





▲ Henri Meyer for Le Petit Journal, 16 January, 1898

3.1 Mao's rise to power 1949

Conceptual understanding

Key questions

- What were the political, military, economic and social conditions that helped Mao come to power?
- How important was Mao's leadership in the victory of the Chinese Communist Party in 1949?

Key concepts

- Causes
- Perspectives

The establishment of the People's Republic, 1949

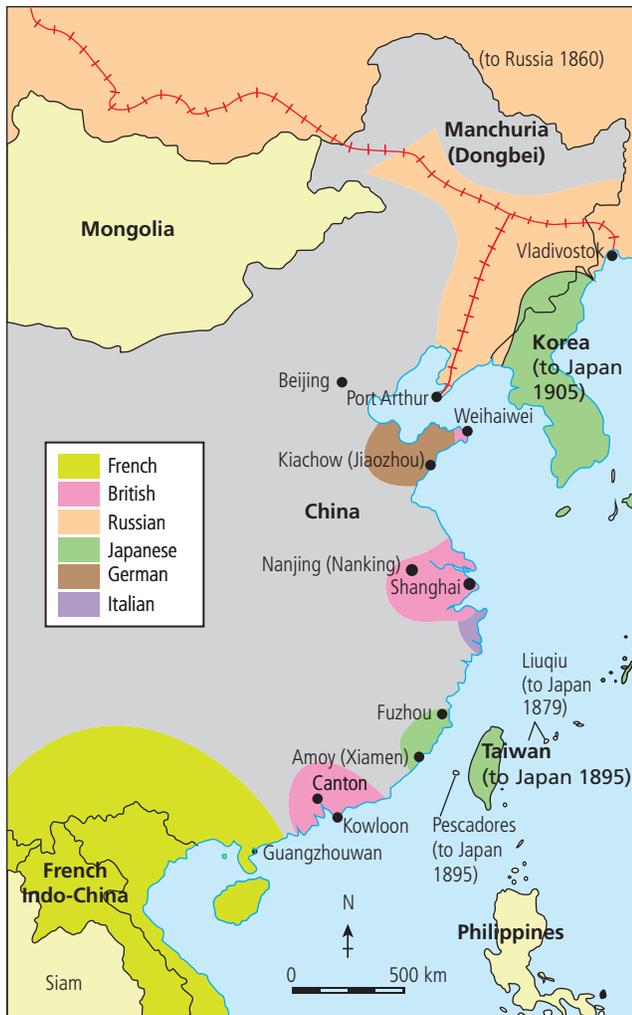
On 1 October 1949 Mao Zedong, Chairman of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), stood on a balcony of the old imperial palace in Beijing (formerly known as Peking) to proclaim the formal establishment of the People's Republic of China (PRC). This moment marked the victory of the Chinese communists over their enemies after two decades of civil war. China was braced for a dramatic break with the past.

Mao was leader of the People's Republic of China until his death in 1976. During that time, he established a single-party state by authoritarian means. His policies transformed the political, economic, and social structure of China. Millions of lives were lost a result of this upheaval, as well as those who were victims of his purges during the climax of the Cultural Revolution of 1966–1976.

Few major figures of the 20th century have been as controversial as Mao. In the early decades of his rule, he was known in China and neighbouring countries as a talented guerrilla leader and visionary. Many people in China today still display a portrait of Mao in pride of place in their home. They view Mao as the liberator of China who restored national pride. By contrast, in the West, Mao is often regarded as a despot who used his own brand of communism (Maoism) to establish totalitarian rule. The extent to which you consider Mao a liberator or oppressor of China is worthy of debate once you have investigated his story.



▲ Mao Zedong, founder of the People's Republic of China



▲ The areas of China controlled by foreign powers during the 19th century

Conditions in China before 1911

Until the 19th century, China was a very conservative nation. The emperor was the supreme ruler at the top of a strict hierarchy in which everyone knew their place. His right to rule derived from the “mandate of heaven”, which permitted him to put down any opposition or threats to his power. For more than two millennia, Confucian values were at the heart of Chinese society. Based on the philosophy of the “great sage” Confucius, these values were a way of building harmony and making people accept the social order without complaint. China was a feudal country, with the majority of the population, the peasant class, at the bottom, and power and wealth in the hands of the landlords, the ruling clans, and the aristocracy.

The increasing presence of foreign imperialists in China during the 19th century provoked the people’s resentment against the ruling Qing (Manchu) dynasty. A series of large-scale rebellions erupted and the imperial rulers, based in Beijing, struggled to keep control of the country. The most serious rebellions were the Taiping Rebellion (1850–1864) and the Boxer Rebellion (1898–1900). During the latter, the Boxers murdered missionaries and Christian converts. The foreign powers eventually crushed the Boxers by sending a 50 000-strong international relief force.

The Chinese language

There are two commonly used systems for transcribing Mandarin into Western text: the older Wade-Giles system and the more recent Pinyin. Pinyin provides a more simplified version of how words should be pronounced and is used throughout this chapter. Thus it will be Mao Zedong not Mao Tse-tung, and Guomindang, not Kuomintang. However, Chiang Kai-shek is the exception and is most commonly known by the Wade-Giles term, and not by Jiang Jieshi as it appears in Pinyin.

Meiji Restoration

In Japan the Meiji Restoration of 1868 marked the accession of a new emperor, Meiji, and the beginning of Japanese modernization. Enormous changes were made to Japan’s system of government and armed forces and the country embarked on a programme of industrialization. Many educated Chinese saw Japan as a model that China should emulate.

Class discussion

A key aim of the rebellions of the late 19th century was to achieve “a revolution against the world to join the world”. What do you think this meant? Does this phrase have any resonance today?

The Dowager Empress Cixi (慈禧太后) 1835–1908

Cixi, who effectively controlled the Chinese government for 47 years, from 1861 until her death, was a conservative, resistant to reform and western ideas. Although Cixi did eventually follow the blueprint of the “Hundred Days of Reform”, many historians suggest that she did too little too late to save the empire from collapse. Before her death she named the infant Puyi – who would become the last emperor of China – as her successor.

TOK discussion

Orthodox biographers blame Empress Cixi for weakening the empire. They focus on her role in encouraging the failed Boxer Rebellion, her role in halting reform and her anti-western ideas. However, Jung Chang, in her book *Empress Dowager Cixi: The Concubine Who Launched Modern China* (2013), claims that Cixi was in fact a modernizer who did eventually implement reforms and loved learning about foreign ways. Had she lived a little longer, Chang argues, China might have become a stable constitutional monarchy.

Why do you think historians have such different perspectives of Cixi?

Sun Yatsen (孙逸仙 or 孙中山) 1866–1925

Sun Yatsen came from a peasant background but he was educated in the West and was a Christian. In 1894 he founded the first anti-imperial organization and campaigned for a republic. He became the first leader of the republic after the revolution of 1911, but resigned in March 1912 to avoid civil war. In August 1912, the nationalist Guomindang (GMD) Party was formed, with Sun as its leader.

They imposed a fine of \$330 million on China, which fuelled the national sense of bitterness against foreign subjugation.

Pressure mounted on the ruling emperor, Guang Xu (光绪帝), to act. His advisers persuaded him that the solution lay in reform and modernization. What followed was the implementation of a “Hundred Days of Reform”, a series of initiatives to modernize the bureaucracy, the armed forces, and the transport system. However, the powerful Dowager Empress Cixi (慈禧太后), who became de facto ruler in 1861 after a ruthless coup, halted this reforming phase.

The poverty of the masses was another cause of growing unrest in China. Peasants made up almost 80 per cent of the population, but arable land covered only 10 per cent of the country and recurring natural disasters such as flooding made it hard for peasants to survive. According to estimates, China’s population rose from 120 million in 1712 to 440 million by 1900. Famine became more frequent and hunger was exacerbated by the custom of dividing land among all the sons of a family. Landlords and prosperous peasants constituted only 10 per cent of the rural population but they owned 70 per cent of the land. Peasants were often plagued with debt because they had to pay 50 to 80 per cent of their crop as rent for their land. Peasants also had to endure the hardships imposed by the Chinese armies that periodically ravaged and plundered the land. The urban population was small and there were few industrial centres, except to the east, and most of them were foreign-owned.

The spread of revolutionary ideas

Bitterness against foreign interference and the weakness of the Qing dynasty sowed the seeds for revolutionary ideas to spread. In 1911, peasants, townspeople and students began a revolutionary uprising in central China. Sun Yatsen (孙逸仙, later 孙中山) was the leader of the young revolutionaries. His revolutionary league, founded in 1905, was built on three principles: nationalism, democracy, and improving the people’s livelihoods through socialism.

The 1911 Revolution and the creation of the republic

In the army units of the south, revolutionary conspiracy spread, which culminated in the toppling of the Qing rulers, China’s last imperial dynasty, in October 1911. Sun Yatsen was abroad at the time, but returned to China in December. The Revolutionary Alliance in Nanjing appointed him president, but the revolutionaries were not strong enough to wrest full control away from the imperial government without military support. What sealed the fate of the Qing dynasty was the decision of the most powerful imperial general, Yuan Shikai (袁世凯), to broker a deal with the rebels. Yuan promised to support the revolution on condition that he, rather than Sun Yatsen, took over as president. Sun Yatsen had little choice but to agree. On February 1912, following the abdication of the infant emperor, Puyi (溥仪), the Republic of China formally came into being.



President Yuan Shikai

Yuan Shikai's commitment to the revolutionary cause was soon to be tested. In 1913 he called parliamentary elections. When the Revolutionary Alliance, now called the Guomindang (National People's Party, GMD or 国民党), won the elections, Yuan Shikai exposed his reactionary credentials by banning the GMD. In 1914, he shut down parliament and proceeded to rule China as if he were emperor. To make matters worse, he proved no more able than the Qing to stand up to foreign aggression. In 1915, he submitted to most of the "Twenty-one Demands" imposed on China by Japan. These demands included the transfer of some German privileges in Shandong to Japan and the granting of rights to Japan to exploit mineral resources in southern Manchuria.

Yuan Shikai died in 1916, leaving China weak and divided.

The warlord period, 1916–1927

After the death of Yuan Shikai, there was no effective central government in China until 1927. There was a government in Beijing, which foreign powers recognized, but its authority did not extend over much of China. Power was in the hands of powerful regional generals, or warlords. War between rival warlords made conditions very tough for the peasants. They had to pay high taxes and their land was looted and pillaged by invading armies. Anarchy and division within China made it easier for outsiders to interfere. The Chinese empire was weakened by the loss of Tibet, Xinjiang, and Outer Mongolia.

Later, Mao wrote:

During my student days in Hunan, the city was overrun by the forces of rival warlords – not once but half a dozen times. Twice the school was occupied by troops and all the funds confiscated. The brutal punishments inflicted on the peasants included such things as gouging out eyes, ripping out tongues, disembowelling and decapitation, slashing with knives and grinding with sand, burning with kerosene and branding with red-hot irons.

Sun Yatsen and the GMD remained in a shaky position, having attempted to set up a government in Guangzhou in southern China. Sun planned to launch a northern military expedition to reunify China but he depended on the support of local warlords. In 1922, Sun fled to Shanghai.

The May Fourth Movement, 1919

The end of the First World War increased Chinese humiliation. China had provided the Allies with 95 000 labourers to help with the war effort against Germany in 1916. Most of them were peasants from remote villages and it is estimated that as many as 20 000 may have died on European soil. This support was given with the expectation that Shandong would be returned to China after the defeat of Germany.

ATL Communication skills

Discuss why you think Sun Yatsen's Three Principles – nationalism, democracy and the people's livelihood – were popular. Which groups of people would find these ideas appealing?

ATL Communication skills

Mao grew up with four main influences on his thinking: Japan, the ruling elites, the western powers and the warlords. Reflecting on the story so far, discuss the part played by each of them in shaping his ideas.

Comintern

Communist International, the body set up in 1919 in Moscow to spread communism worldwide.

Marxist

A believer in the theories of Karl Marx (1818–1883). Marx explained history as the continuous conflict between the exploiters and the exploited; the elites in power could only be removed through working class revolution, of which the final stage would result in an equal society or communist utopia.

However, the Treaty of Versailles, signed in 1919, gave Japan the German concessions in China. This prompted student protests in Beijing on 4 May 1919, followed by nationwide demonstrations. Thousands of students denounced the Twenty-one Demands. The protesters felt that China had been betrayed by the western powers and were furious at Japanese expansionism.

The emergence of Mao and the CCP

The May Fourth Movement paved the way for the emergence of the Chinese Community Party (CCP, also known as the CPC) in 1921. Formed in Shanghai, the party was led by Chen Duxiu (陈独秀) and Li Dazhao (李大钊). It originally numbered 12 delegates, representing 57 members. The Russian **Comintern** had encouraged the formation of the CCP and had sent agents to China. One of the founding delegates was Mao Zedong, an assistant librarian at Beijing University. He had been involved in the 4 May demonstrations and was a **Marxist** convert, having read a Chinese translation of Karl Marx's *Communist Manifesto*.

Neither the GMD nor the CCP was in a strong enough position to achieve power in China in the early to mid 1920s. Large areas of China were still under warlord control, but Sun Yatsen was determined and he returned from exile to Guangzhou with two alliances in mind that would strengthen the Nationalist cause. Firstly, the Christian warlord Feng Yuxiang (冯玉祥) now had control of Beijing. He was broadly supportive of GMD policies and had the military strength to reinvigorate the fortunes of the GMD. In addition, the CCP was a disciplined political party, and those on the left of the GMD were sympathetic to some of the CCP's ideas. A merger of the parties had the potential to broaden the national appeal of the GMD.

The First United Front

With Russian Comintern support, the CCP was encouraged to form an alliance with the GMD. Although there were ideological differences between the two parties, they were united in their determination to defeat the warlords; it was evident that a communist revolution could not be achieved unless the warlords were defeated and foreign interference was crushed. In 1924 the GMD and the CCP formed the First United Front. The CCP formed a bloc within the GMD and was very much the inferior partner, accepting GMD control and discipline.

The formation of the United Front had a remarkable effect on CCP membership: its numbers rose from 57 members in 1921 to 58 000 by 1927. The GMD also saw increased support and was further strengthened by the establishment of the Whampoa military academy in 1924. Under the command of Chiang Kai-shek (蒋介石), the academy provided a military force to support the political aims of the GMD. After the death of Sun Yatsen in 1925, and after a brief power



struggle, Chiang Kaishek became leader of the United Front. This was a significant step. Chiang Kaishek was on the right of the GMD and suspicious of the CCP. His rival Wang Jingwei (汪精卫) leaned much more to the left and, had he become leader, may have been more intent on preserving the United Front.

The decision was made to put into place Sun Yatsen's plans to unite China in a military campaign against the warlords. The Northern Expedition, numbering approximately 100 000 men, left Guangzhou in May 1926 with three targets in mind: Fujian, Jiangxi, and Nanjing.

Meanwhile, Mao was becoming more active within the GMD and CCP in Shanghai. He returned to Hunan in 1926 to organize peasant associations to support the United Front campaigns against the warlords. Mao was less concerned about national CCP issues and among the peasants of Hunan was seen as their leader against the warlords and the landlords. This would play a significant part in Mao's rise to the leadership of the CCP.

Chiang Kaishek (蒋介石) 1887–1975



▲ Chiang Kaishek, nationalist leader

Chiang Kaishek trained in the military and was an early nationalist supporter. He joined the uprising to overthrow the imperial government in 1911. After the death of Sun Yatsen, Chiang became leader of the GMD. The First United Front was formed with the CCP in 1924, but Chiang turned on the communists in 1927 and went on to establish a government in Nanjing. Chiang reluctantly joined the Second United Front in 1937 to resist the Japanese invasions. After the defeat of Japan, civil war between the GMD and CCP resumed. The GMD were defeated in 1949 and Chiang was forced to retreat to Taiwan.

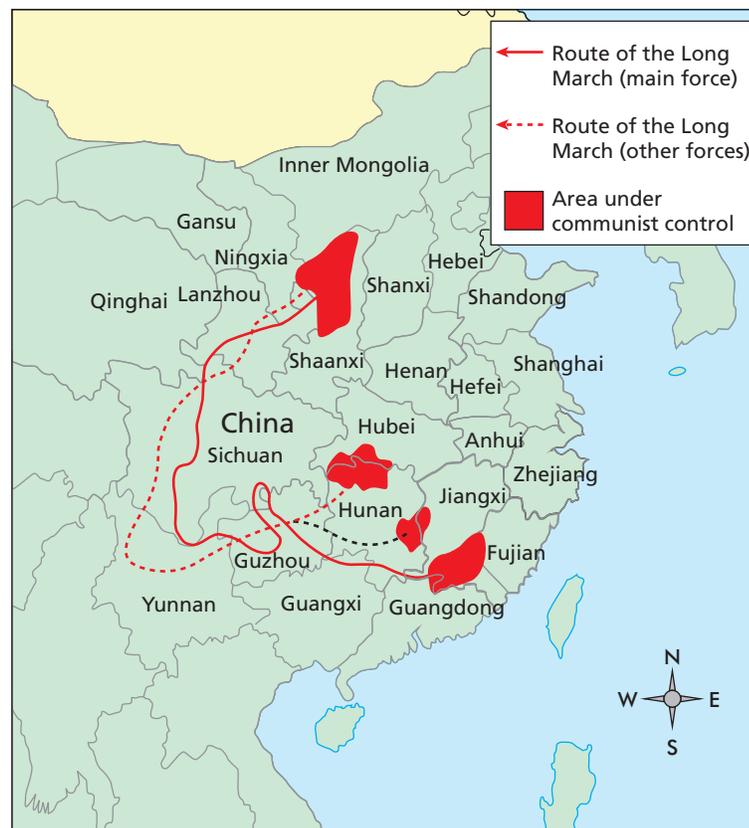
The Northern Expedition, 1926–1928

The Northern Expedition, led by Chiang Kaishek, made rapid advances against the warlords and within months GMD/CCP forces were poised to take Nanjing and Shanghai. Chiang could hardly claim full military success against the warlords, since he had brokered deals with several of them on condition that they support the GMD. Yet, with this success, tensions within the alliance began to emerge. Communist activism in the countryside and the cities had played a significant part in the success of the Northern Expedition, but Chiang increasingly saw this as a threat. He was concerned that the fomenting of strikes could undermine his middle-class support. He also had to contend with a renewed power struggle within the GMD as Wang Jingwei launched a bid for leadership.

The White Terror, 1927

Chiang Kaishek wanted to reassert his authority and the supremacy of the GMD by turning on the communist bloc of the United Front. In the spring of 1927, with the support of landlords, warlords, secret societies, criminal organizations, and Western groups still in China, he used military force to “purge” communist organizations in Shanghai. This was followed by violent confrontations in Wuhan and Hunan, where union members, communists and peasant associations came under attack and thousands were killed. These events became known as the “White Terror”. As the United Front collapsed, Wang Jingwei renounced his claim to GMD leadership and gave his support to Chiang. The Manchurian warlord Zhang Zoulin (张作霖) seized control of Beijing and joined forces with the GMD.

Chiang then established a nationalist government in Nanjing, marking the beginning of the Nanjing decade (1928–1937) in which China was torn apart by civil war. The survival of the CCP hung in the balance, and its fate would partly be decided by the decisions and actions of Mao Zedong.



▲ The provinces of China, and the route of the Long March of the Red Army to Yanan, 1934–1935

The Jiangxi Soviet, 1927–1934

Mao survived the White Terror and retreated with CCP forces to the mountains of Jiangxi province in the southeast of the country. Here he established his base as the Jiangxi Soviet territory, which had a population of a million, and this was where the **Red Army** developed a strong guerrilla force to resist the extermination campaigns of the GMD. Mao was dedicated to achieving a peasant revolution, an aim that

Red Army

This was the original name of Mao's communist troops, later to be known as the People's Liberation Army (PLA).



contradicted the position of the Comintern and the pro-Moscow factions in the CCP, which believed that the urban workforce should lead the revolution. Mao frequently defied orders from Moscow that instructed the CCP to base its activities in the towns rather than the rural areas.

Mao's position on the direction a future communist revolution should take became clearer with his 1928 "Land Law": land was taken from the landlords and distributed among the peasants. Mao advocated moderate land reform, although a more extreme policy was implemented after 1931, when land was confiscated from richer peasants.

The Futian Incident, 1930

It was also during the Jiangxi period that Mao applied a calculated brutality against his rivals. In the "Futian Incident" of 1930, some 4000 Red Army troops were tortured and executed on Mao's orders. Mao regarded them as rebels who were plotting against him, and it is likely that he suspected they supported other potential leaders in the party. Mao's authoritarian methods against opposition would be a key trait in his rise to the forefront of the party and would also be very evident in the way he would rule China.

Source skills

The Futian Incident

It was the first large-scale purge in the Party, and took place well before Stalin's Great Purge. This critical episode – in many ways the formative moment of Maoism – is still covered up to this day. Mao's personal responsibility and motives, and his extreme brutality, remain a taboo.

Jung Chang and Jon Halliday. 2005. *Mao, The Unknown Story*. Jonathan Cape. p. 100.

Do not kill the important leaders too quickly, but squeeze out of them the maximum information; then from the clues they give you can go on to unearth others.

Mao Zedong, quoted from a secret document found in the party archives.

Question

With reference to their nature, origin and purpose, assess the value and limitations of the following extracts in explaining Mao's rise to the leadership of the CCP.

The Long March, 1934–1935

The GMD was the official government of China but it was weakened by the Japanese invasion of Manchuria in 1931. Chiang Kaishek was determined to crush the communists and he persisted in his extermination campaigns rather than resisting the Japanese.

In 1934, GMD forces encircled the Jiangxi Soviet. Chiang hoped to starve the CCP into defeat and capitalize on his change in military tactics. The "blockhouse" strategy meant building defensive fortifications to consolidate the position of his armies as they hunted down the CCP. This resulted in heavy defeats for the communists and led to Comintern adviser Li De (李德) who was, in fact, German – real name Otto Braun, persuading the Revolutionary Military Council to abandon guerrilla methods. Mao was relegated from the leadership but the GMD encroached even further.

ATL Self-management skills

Construct a visual summary or spider diagram to show the importance of Mao's leadership in the CCP victory of 1949. Consider ideology, persuasion, coercion, violence and propaganda.

TOK discussion

Chinese, Western and Soviet historiography have conflicting narratives of the events at the Zunyi Conference, so it is difficult to get an accurate record of what happened. Archives detailing the events were not opened until 1985 and the details of who attended and how the new leadership was elected are still in dispute.

Discuss how the events and outcomes of the Zunyi Conference are likely to have been portrayed in China, the USSR, and also in the West. How can we decide which version of events is most valid?

The CCP faced annihilation and was forced to retreat. About 100 000 CCP troops fled from the besieged Jiangxi Soviet and headed for Yanan, Shaanxi, in the northwest of the country. This was the Long March: an epic journey of nearly 11 000 kilometres (7000 miles). The March took more than a year, and would provide the CCP with an inspiring legend to draw on and use for propaganda purposes. One famous episode was the crossing of the threadbare Luding Bridge, when 22 soldiers swung across the Dadu River gorge while under fire. In reality the Long March and its results were much bleaker than the legend: only 20 000 of the troops survived. However, the March would play an essential part in communist folklore and there is little doubt that once again, the CCP had shown resilience against the odds.

There is evidence that Mao was not the initial leader of the Long March, or even selected to take part in it. It has been suggested that at the Zunyi Conference held in January 1935, Mao Zedong made a crucial comeback to the party leadership by arguing that the CCP should return to guerrilla methods. Supported by Zhou Enlai (周恩来), Mao outmanoeuvred his opponents, such as Otto Braun and the Comintern members, and took military control of the First Front Army. This change in leadership and strategy was a disappointment to the Soviets, who argued that there was not a fair vote. Although this change was significant, Mao's rise to the leadership of the CCP was by no means a foregone conclusion.

ATL Thinking and communication skills

Examine the propaganda poster below, which shows the Red Army crossing the Dadu River during the Long March.

Discuss how this event has been depicted and the ways in which this may contrast to the realities of the Long March. [Alternatively, you could search online for an alternative Long March propaganda poster, download it and annotate the key elements of the image.]



▲ A propaganda poster showing the Red Army crossing the Luding Bridge over the Dadu River in 1935

TOK discussion

Discuss how propaganda influences the way we perceive historical knowledge.



Yanan, 1935–1945

After the surviving marchers settled in Yanan, Mao began to impose his personal authority on the CCP. With a combination of political and military skill – as well as violent repression – Mao would overcome three challenges:

- potential leadership bids from his opponents and attempts by the Comintern to dominate the party
- the need to rebuild the CCP support base, win popular support and increase military recruits
- the ideological struggle within the party.

The methods that Mao used to overcome these challenges would be a template for CCP success against the Japanese (1937–1945) and against the GMD in the Civil War of 1946–1949. These methods allowed Mao to consolidate his position within the party and emerge as the undisputed leader of China.

Mao won over the peasants with land redistribution and rent controls, as well as campaigns to wipe out corruption and improve literacy. His appeal went beyond the peasant class, however: he also reached out to the “national bourgeoisie”, the “petite bourgeoisie”, and industrial workers. Peasants participated in “revolutionary committees”, and by the 1940s Mao had advocated the tactics of the **mass line**, whereby the CCP developed a close relationship with the people. CCP cadres were to live among the peasants and learn from them and help them. This converted many to the cause of Mao.

mass line

CCP policy aimed at increasing and cultivating contacts with the broad mass of the people and showing the leadership role of the party.

The “Six Principles of the Red Army” were:

- 1 Put back all doors when leaving a house.
- 2 Rice-stalk mattresses must all be bundled up and returned.
- 3 Be polite. Help people when you can.
- 4 Give back everything you borrow, even if it is only a needle.
- 5 Pay for all things broken, even if only a chopstick.
- 6 Don't help yourself or search for things when people are not in their house.

As Japanese incursions into China increased, Mao's nationalist stance against the oppression of the invaders also won popular support. CCP membership rose from 40 000 in 1937 to 1.2 million by 1945.

Mao wrote a number of political and philosophical works in Yanan, which put his own stamp of authority on the party. A series of “rectification campaigns” in 1942 led to the removal of potential opposition. Anyone suspected of being disloyal to the ideas and beliefs of Mao was forced to confess their “crimes” and was publicly stripped of their possessions or posts. Strict censorship rules cut Yanan off from outside contact, while enemies of Mao were denounced. “Self-criticism” sessions were held, at which everyone was encouraged to air their doubts and secrets. Not to speak invited suspicion, but to

self-criticize for too long could result in demotion and punishment. A leadership cult began to emerge in 1943, and Mao adopted the titles Chairman of the Communist Central Committee and Chairman of the Politburo. CCP ideology was officially referred to as “Mao Zedong thought”.

Mao's ideology

Mao Zedong thought was based on a “sinified” version of Marxism. In the first half of the 20th century China had undergone very limited industrialization compared with Russia. While Karl Marx had written off the peasantry as incapable of revolutionary consciousness and the Russian Communist Party affirmed Marx's emphasis on the industrial proletariat as the principal revolutionary class, Mao argued that the peasant masses in China *were* capable of overthrowing feudalism and going on to create a socialist society. From the 1920s, Mao's belief in this two-stage revolution also went against Marxism, which advocated a one-stage revolution of the proletariat class.

During the 1930s, the “28 Bolsheviks” and the Comintern met Mao's ideas with scorn, but Mao won the argument by interpreting Marxism and applying it to China's situation. In 1940, Mao published *On New Democracy*, in which he defined the Chinese communist revolution not as a class movement but as a national one. This united the urban and rural masses against Japanese incursions. The brutality of the rectification campaigns, in which more than a thousand party members were imprisoned and tortured to extract confessions, became broadly acceptable, partly through fear and also through Mao's potent ideological arguments. In 1942 he wrote, “Some comrades see only the interests of the part and not the whole. They do not understand the Party's system of democratic centralism; they do not understand that the Party's interests are above personal and sectional interests.”

The Japanese occupation, 1931–1945

“The Japanese are a disease of the skin, but the communists are a disease of the heart”, said Chiang Kaishek in 1941. After invading Manchuria in 1931, the Japanese consolidated their control of the province by installing as puppet ruler China's last emperor, Puyi, who had appealed to Japan to help him get his throne back. Chiang Kaishek was slow to respond to further Japanese incursions, seemingly too distracted by his extermination campaigns against the communists. Therefore the CCP were credited with forging the Second United Front in 1937 to fight Japan, the common enemy. This followed the Xian Incident in 1936, in which Chiang Kaishek's second in command, Zhang Xueliang (张学良), refused orders to attack the communists and placed Chiang Kaishek under house arrest. Zhang had received a letter from Mao, Zhou Enlai and Zhu De (朱德), urging him to bring an end to the civil war and unite with the communists to defeat Japan. Chiang reluctantly agreed, but it would be the CCP that had established stronger nationalist credentials than the GMD.

ATL Thinking and communication skills

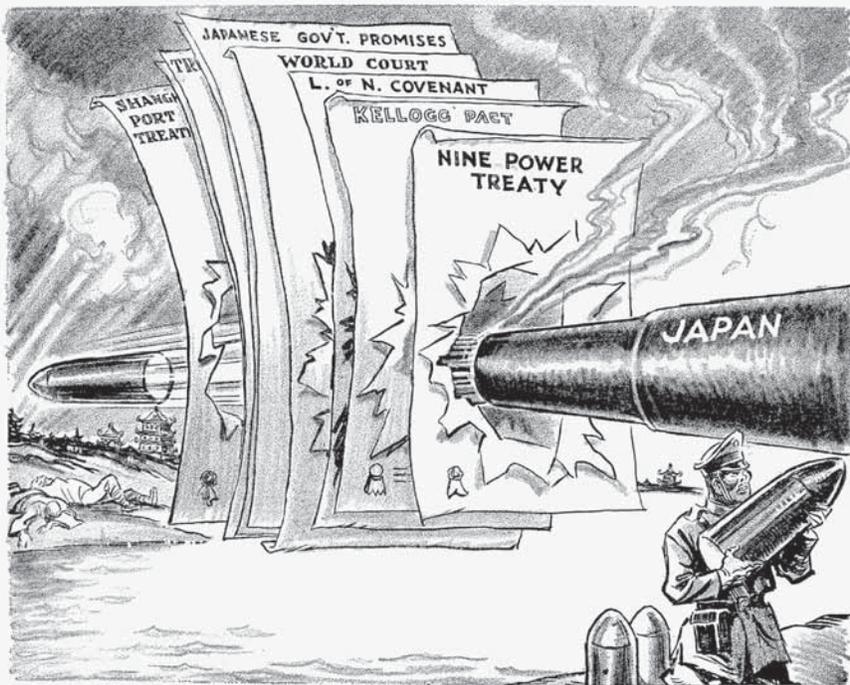
Draw a visual summary or spider diagram to show how Mao Zedong became leader of the CCP. Explore the themes of propaganda, violence, and Mao's military abilities, ideology, popular appeal, and policies. Then consider the significance of each factor.

Class discussion

How similar and how different is the story of Mao's rise to the leadership of the CCP compared to that of Stalin in the USSR?



Source skills



▲ Cartoon of Japan invading China

Question

What can you learn from this source about Japan's actions in the 1930s?

In 1937, Japan launched a full-scale invasion of China and set up a government in Nanjing. The entire eastern seaboard of China fell under Japanese control and this had a devastating impact on the Chinese. Although the nation was more united than ever, the Sino-Japanese war would play a crucial part in weakening the GMD and strengthening the position of Mao and the CCP.

In 1941, the GMD army turned on the communist armies in the south, which lost Chiang Kaishek vital support at home and abroad. Initially, the Soviet Union was the only country to give assistance to China but after 1941 the USA sent approximately \$500 million of military aid to China. A number of missions were sent to try and reinvigorate the Second United Front but Chiang was stubborn, and this widened the gulf between the GMD and the CCP.

Chiang Kaishek's GMD was weakened by corruption, but Chiang appeared to ignore the reports that GMD troops were selling food on the black market; often the rice sacks would be half full of sand. Conditions for the GMD soldiers were terrible. The peasants were particularly hit by conscription, and faced sickness and starvation. Many of the soldiers tried to flee to the CCP so some were tied up at night to prevent them deserting.

Chiang's leadership became increasingly dictatorial. He was titled Generalissimo and used his secret police to arrest, torture, and execute civilians. Expressions of discontent were repressed and many intellectuals turned to the communists. The economy was in decline,

The Rape of Nanjing, 1937–1938

The Rape of Nanjing, also known as the Nanjing Massacre, describes the mass murder and mass rape committed by Japanese troops during the Japanese occupation of Nanjing. Hundreds of thousands of people were killed and figures suggest that 30 000 to 80 000 rapes took place. The event is still a raw memory for many Chinese and it affects Sino-Japanese relations even today.

which damaged the main base of GMD support, the middle class in the cities. Inflation spiralled out of control, but Chiang's answer was simply to print more money, which led to hyperinflation. Some cities had different exchange rates. The government increased taxes, which were mostly levied on the peasants. All this gave Mao and his ideas, which he was promoting in Yanan, moral credibility over Chiang Kaishek.

Mao and the CCP could exploit the Japanese advance because the GMD was forced southwards and was spread too thinly to prevent the CCP from controlling much of the countryside and northern China. By the end of the Japanese war, the CCP controlled an area populated by 90 million Chinese. Mao later admitted that the Japanese occupation had saved the Chinese communists.

In 1945, after the dropping of two atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the Sino-Japanese war came to an abrupt end. China rejoiced in victory but any hopes that a GMD–CCP coalition would usher in an era of peace soon faded, as a new world emerged with the Cold War in Europe, which defined the increasingly hostile relationship between the USA and the USSR. These superpowers had conflicting aims in China. With the retreat of Japan, the USSR wanted to strip Manchuria of its industrial resources. The USA was concerned that Soviet influence in China would lead to China's dominance in Asia.

In 1946, President Truman sent Secretary of State George Marshall to China to try and broker a deal between the GMD and CCP. It was Truman's hope that political stability would ensure a non-communist-controlled China. A truce was agreed but by July, both sides had reverted to civil war.

The Chinese Civil War, 1945–1949

The odds of a CCP victory were initially very slim. The GMD armies outnumbered the CCP by four to one; it also had an air force and was better equipped for conventional battle. The GMD was recognized by other powers (including the Soviet Union) as the legitimate government. The USSR provided aid and military assistance and tried to curb Mao. The GMD controlled most of the larger cities and the railway network at the outset of the war, and by 1947 had taken Yanan from the communists.

By 1948 the direction of the war began to change as CCP troops used their guerrilla training to capitalize on their hold of northern China and the rural areas. The CCP had also received weapons from the former Russian occupation forces, taken from the Japanese armies. By June 1948 CCP troops were almost equal in number to the GMD. The CCP secured control of northern China and made incursions into the cities, despite Stalin's orders that the cities should be given to the GMD. The USA provided limited aid to the GMD, but had withdrawn support by 1948 when it became clear that the GMD cause was lost.

The CCP won popular support while the reputation of the GMD was in disrepute for corruption, inflation and repression. CCP troops were disciplined and Mao had used party propaganda to good effect. Mao and the CCP had a broad appeal among the peasants but atrocities were committed against those who did not conform. Anying (毛岸英), Mao's oldest son, was sent to the countryside to take part in the suppression

ATL Self-management skills

Summarise the role of each of the following factors in Mao's rise to power in a table: economic; social; the impact of war; the weakness of the political system; the role of key individuals.

ATL Thinking and research skills

- 1 Make a table to sum up the strengths and weaknesses of the GMD and the CCP throughout the Chinese Civil War. Consider leadership, territory, foreign powers, military strategy, and popular support.
- 2 Reflect on whether the CCP won or whether the GMD lost the civil war.

Discuss the significance of each factor in explaining Mao's rise to power.



of the peasantry and force them to fight for the CCP against the GMD. He described the CCP atrocities as worse than anything he had seen while studying in the Soviet Union. He wrote that the party cadres were “thugs” and “the dregs of society”.

Chiang Kaishek made some strategic mistakes that cost him the war. He sent his best troops to Manchuria before establishing control of northern and central China. Communication between his generals was not fluid and supply lines were poor. By 1948 the GMD had lost Manchuria. By then, Mao’s cult of leadership had reached epic proportions and inspired confidence in the CCP. GMD defectors providing them with weapons further bolstered them; and Lin Biao’s (林彪) military expertise was crucial in making the Red Army into a strong fighting force.

By January 1949, the CCP controlled Beijing, followed by the south and west. Realizing that defeat was imminent, Chiang Kaishek resigned the presidency and began to move his government base to **Taiwan**. Mao and the Communists proclaimed victory and focused on the next steps of their consolidation of power.

Taiwan

From 1945 until his death in 1975, Chiang ruled Taiwan, a group of islands to the east of China, as the Republic of China (ROC). Until 1971, many western nations and the UN recognized Taiwan as the only legitimate government of China with a seat on the Security Council.



▲ The stages of the Chinese Civil War, 1945–1949

ATL Self-management skills

Construct a case to explain Mao's rise to power, from different historical perspectives. You could copy and fill in a version of the following table. Some boxes have been started for you.

Historical perspectives on Mao's rise to power		
Perspectives of the historians	Likely ideas	Facts and ideas to support this perspective
Intentionalists explain events by focusing on the decisive impact of particular individuals or events.	Mao shaped the course of China's history. Mao's actions and ideas explain his rise.	Mao was a founding member of the CCP in 1921. Mao's ideology and strategy were crucial to the survival of the CCP in 1934 because of the Long March. Mao was also crucial to CCP success because ...
Structuralists (or Functionalists, as they are sometimes known) react against the intentionalist approach and build up a picture of what happened through meticulous research, often at the grassroots level.	China had a long history of political upheaval and this affected many different groups of people in China. The Revolution of 1911 did not achieve the desired effect. Peasant associations were crucial to CCP success.	
Marxists work from the standpoint that economic forces are the main causal factor in historical change and development.		
Revisionist approaches are relatively recent and challenge what had been up to then accepted as orthodox or even definitive interpretations. In China, the orthodox view of Mao's rise to power as a liberation from imperial aggression and civil conflict still prevails. In the West, orthodox views during the Cold War centered on Mao's rise being controlled by Moscow.	Historians can challenge orthodox views of Mao, which were developed during the Cold War. The end of the Cold War allowed archives (many held in the USSR) on Mao to be opened and viewed by scholars. Historians, especially those outside China, can look beyond propaganda and the official CCP party view.	Mao's rise was not orchestrated by Moscow ... Mao's guerilla tactics and military leadership were crucial ... Secret documents and accounts have revealed the importance of Mao's brutality against his opponents ...