

HISTORY OF CHINA AND JAPAN FROM 1900 TO 1976 A.D

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Washington Conference

The **Washington Conference** was a [disarmament](#) conference called by the United States and held in [Washington, DC](#) from November 12, 1921 to February 6, 1922. It was conducted outside the auspices of the [League of Nations](#). It was attended by nine nations (the United States, Japan, China, France, Britain, Italy, Belgium, Netherlands, and Portugal)^{[1][2]} regarding interests in the Pacific Ocean and [East Asia](#). Germany was not invited to the conference, as it had already been disarmed under the terms of the [Versailles Treaty](#). [Soviet Russia](#) was also not invited to the conference. It was the first [arms control](#) conference in history, and is still studied by political scientists as a model for a successful disarmament movement.

Held at [Memorial Continental Hall](#), in [Downtown Washington](#),^[3] it resulted in three major treaties: [Four-Power Treaty](#), [Five-Power Treaty](#) (more commonly known as the **Washington Naval Treaty**), the [Nine-Power Treaty](#), and a number of smaller agreements. These treaties

preserved the peace during the 1920s but were not renewed in the increasingly hostile world of the [Great Depression](#).



The world's popular mood was peace and disarmament throughout the 1920s. Women had just [won the right to vote](#) in many countries, and they helped convince politicians that money could be saved, votes won, and future wars avoided by stopping the arms race.^[4] Across the world, leaders of the women's suffrage movement formed international organizations such as the [International Council of Women](#) and the [International Woman Suffrage Alliance](#). Historian [Martin Pugh](#) writes that they achieved the greatest influence in the 1920s, "when they helped to promote women's contribution to the anti-war movement throughout the Western world."^[5] In the United States, practically all the [major Protestant denominations](#) and highly-visible Protestant spokesmen were strong supporters of international peace efforts. They collaborated to work to educate their local congregations on the need for peace and disarmament.^[6]

At the end of [World War I](#), the British still had the largest navy afloat, but its big ships were becoming obsolete, and the Americans and the Japanese were rapidly building expensive new warships. Britain and Japan were [allies in a treaty](#) that was due to expire in 1922. Although there were no immediate dangers, observers increasingly pointed to the [American-Japanese rivalry](#) for

control of the Pacific Ocean as a long-term threat to world peace. By then, the British decided that it was better for them to cast their lot with Washington than [Tokyo](#). To stop a needless, expensive, and possibly dangerous arms race, the major countries signed a series of naval disarmament agreements.^[7]

Meeting[[edit](#)]

The American delegation, led by [Secretary of State Charles Evans Hughes](#), included [Elihu Root](#), [Henry Cabot Lodge](#) and [Oscar Underwood](#),^{[1][2]} the last being the Democratic minority leader in the Senate. The conference's primary objective was to restrain Japanese naval expansion in the waters of the [West Pacific](#), especially with regard to fortifications on strategically-valuable islands. Its secondary objectives were intended to obtain an ultimate limit Japanese to expansion and also an alleviation of concerns over possible antagonism with the British. They were to eliminate Anglo-American tension by abrogating the Anglo-Japanese alliance, to agree upon a favorable naval ratio vis-à-vis Japan, and to have the Japanese officially accept a continuation of the Open Door Policy in China.

The British, however, took a more cautious and tempered approach. Indeed, the British officials brought certain general desires to the conference: to achieve peace and stability in the West Pacific; avoid a naval arms race with the United States; thwart Japanese encroachment into areas under their influence; and preserve the security of [Singapore](#), [Hong Kong](#),

and [Dominion](#) countries, but they did not enter the conference with a specific laundry list of demands. Rather, they brought with them a vague vision of what the West Pacific should look like after an agreement.

Japanese officials were more focused on specifics than the British, and they approached the conference with two primary goals: to sign a naval treaty with Britain and the United States and to obtain official recognition of Japan's special interests in [Manchuria](#) and [Mongolia](#). Japanese officials also brought other issues to the conference: a strong demand to remain in control of [Yap](#), [Siberia](#), and [Tsingtao](#) as well as more general concerns about the growing presence of American fleets in the Pacific.

The American hand was strengthened by the [interception and decryption of secret instructions from the Japanese government](#) to its delegation. The message revealed the lowest naval ratio that would be acceptable to [Tokyo](#); US negotiators used that knowledge to push the Japanese. This success, one of the first in the US government's budding eavesdropping and cryptology efforts, led eventually to the growth of such agencies.^[3]

The head of the Japanese delegation to the Washington Naval Conference was [Prince Iyesato Tokugawa](#), who during the first four decades of the twentieth century led a political movement in Japan that promoted democracy and international goodwill with the U.S., Europe and Asia. His

influence was significant in the negotiations and ratification of the Washington Naval Treaty.^[8] ^[9]

Agreements^[edit]

US President [Warren Harding](#) called the Washington Conference a deal that all countries thought best for themselves.^[10] To resolve technical disputes about the quality of warships, the conferees adopted a standard based on the [tonnage](#) displacement, a simple measure of the size of a ship. A ten-year agreement fixed the ratio of battleships at 5:5:3: 525,000 tons for the US, 525,000 tons for Britain, and 315,000 tons for Japan. Smaller limits with a ratio of 1.67 applied to France and Italy.^[11] Battleships, the dominant weapons systems of the era, could be no larger than 35,000 tons. The major powers allowed themselves 135,000:135,000:81,000 tons for the newly-developed [aircraft carriers](#).

The Washington Conference exactly captured the worldwide popular demand for peace and disarmament. Without it, the US, Britain and Japan would have engaged in an expensive buildup, with each fearing the other two getting too powerful. However, even with the restrictions, the agreement solidified Japan's position as a [great power](#); it got parity in the Pacific with the two leading global navies, was allowed to maintain a larger naval force than France and Italy and was treated as a colonial power with equal diplomatic interests, a first for a non-Western

nation.^[12] The agreements forced the US to scrap 15 old battleships and 2 new ones, along with [13 ships under construction](#).

The naval treaty was concluded on February 6, 1922. Ratifications of the treaty were exchanged in Washington on August 17, 1923, and it was registered in *League of Nations Treaty Series* on April 16, 1924.^[13]

Japan agreed to revert [Shandong](#) to Chinese control by an agreement concluded on February 4, 1922. Ratifications of the agreement were exchanged in [Beijing](#) on June 2, 1922, and it was registered in *League of Nations Treaty Series* on July 7, 1922.^{[14][15]}

Results[[edit](#)]

The Washington Naval Treaty led to an effective end to building new battleship fleets, and the few ships that were built were limited in size and armament. Many existing capital ships were scrapped. Some ships under construction were turned into [aircraft carriers](#) instead.

Even with the treaty, the major navies remained suspicious of one another and briefly (1927–1930) engaged in a race to build [heavy cruisers](#), which had been limited in size (10,000 tons) but not numbers.^[16] That oversight was resolved on value of cruisers by the [London Naval Treaty](#) of 1930, which specified a 10:10:7 ratio for cruisers and destroyers. For the first time, submarines were also limited, with Japan given parity with the US and Britain, at 53,000 tons each. (Submarines typically displaced 1,000-2,000 tons each.) The US Navy maintained an active

building program that replaced obsolescent warships with technically more sophisticated new models in part because its construction yards were important sources of political patronage and so were well protected by Congress. During the [New Deal](#), relief funds were used to build more warships. "The naval program was wholly mine," President [Franklin Roosevelt](#) boasted.^[17]

apanese invasion of Manchuria

The **Japanese invasion of Manchuria** began on 18 September 1931, when the [Kwantung Army](#) of the [Empire of Japan](#) invaded [Manchuria](#) immediately following the [Mukden Incident](#). At war's end in February of 1932, the Japanese established the [puppet state](#) of [Manchukuo](#). Their occupation lasted until the success of the [Soviet Union](#) and [Mongolia](#) with the [Manchurian Strategic Offensive Operation](#) in mid-August of 1945.

The [South Manchuria Railway Zone](#) and the [Korean Peninsula](#) were already under the control of the Japanese Empire since the [Russo-Japanese War](#) of 1904-1905. Japan's ongoing industrialization and militarization ensured their growing dependence on oil and metal imports from the US.^[2] The US sanctions which prevented trade with the United States (which had occupied the [Philippines](#) around the same time) resulted in Japan furthering their expansion in the territory of China and Southeast Asia.^[3] The invasion is sometimes cited as an alternative

starting date for [World War II](#), in contrast with the more commonly accepted one of September 1939.^[4]

With the invasion having attracted great international attention, the [League of Nations](#) produced the [Lytton Commission](#) (headed by [British](#) politician [Victor Bulwer-Lytton](#)) to evaluate the situation, with the organization delivering its findings in October 1932. The label of the invasion as ethically illegitimate prompted the Japanese government to withdraw from the League entirely.



The Chinese–Japanese dispute in July 1931 known as the [Wanpaoshan Incident](#) was followed by the [Mukden Incident](#). On 18 September 1931 the Japanese [Imperial General Headquarters](#), which had decided upon a policy of localizing the incident, communicated its decision to the [Kwantung Army](#) command. However, Kwantung Army [commander-in-chief](#) General [Shigeru Honjō](#) instead ordered his forces to proceed to expand operations all along the [South Manchuria Railway](#). Under orders from Lieutenant General [Jirō Tamon](#), troops of the [2nd Division](#) moved up the rail line and captured virtually every city along its 730-mile length in a matter of days.

Likewise on 19 September, in response to General Honjō's request, the Joseon army in [Korea](#) under General [Senjūrō Hayashi](#) ordered the [20th Infantry Division](#) to split its force, forming the [39th Mixed Brigade](#), which departed on that day for Manchuria without

authorization from the [Emperor](#). On September 19th, the Japanese occupied [Yingkou](#), [Liaoyang](#), [Shenyang](#), [Fushun](#), [Dandong](#), [Siping](#), [Jilin](#), and [Changchun](#). On 21st September, the Japanese captured [Jilin City](#). On 23rd September, the Japanese took [Jiaohe](#), [Jilin](#) and [Dunhua](#). On 1st October, [Zhang Haipeng](#) surrendered the [Taonan](#) area. Sometime in October, Ji Xing (吉興) surrendered the [Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture](#) area ^[5] and on 17th October, [Yu Zhishan](#) surrendered Eastern Liaoning to the Japanese.

Tokyo was shocked by the news of the Army acting without orders from the central government. The Japanese civilian government was thrown into disarray by this act of "[gekokujō](#)" [insubordination](#), but as reports of one quick victory after another began to arrive, it felt powerless to oppose the Army, and its decision was to immediately send three more [infantry divisions](#) from Japan, beginning with the 14th Mixed Brigade of the [IJA 7th Division](#).^[when?] During this era, the elected government could be held hostage by the Army and Navy, since Army and Navy members were [constitutionally necessary](#) for the formation of cabinets. Without their support, the government would collapse.

Secession movements[[edit](#)]

After the Liaoning Provincial government fled Mukden, it was replaced by a "Peoples Preservation Committee" which declared the [secession](#) of Liaoning province from the [Republic of China](#). Other secessionist movements were organized in Japanese-occupied Kirin by

General [Xi Qia](#) head of the "[New Kirin](#)" Army, and at Harbin, by General [Chang Ching-hui](#). In early October, at [Taonan](#) in northwest Liaoning province, General [Zhang Haipeng](#) declared his district independent of China, in return for a shipment of a large number of military supplies by the Japanese Army.

On 13 October, General Chang Hai-peng ordered three regiments of the [Hsingan Reclamation Army](#) under General [Xu Jinglong](#) north to take the capital of Heilongjiang province at [Qiqihar](#). Some elements in the city offered to peacefully surrender the old walled town, and Chang advanced cautiously to accept. However his advance guard was attacked by General [Dou Lianfang](#)'s troops, and in a savage fight with an engineering company defending the north bank, were sent fleeing with heavy losses. During this fight, the Nenjiang railroad bridge was dynamited by troops loyal to General [Ma Zhanshan](#) to prevent its use.

Resistance to the Japanese invasion[[edit](#)]

Main articles: [Resistance at Nenjiang Bridge](#) and [Jiangqiao Campaign](#)

Using the repair of the Nen River Bridge as the pretext, the Japanese sent a repair party in early November under the protection of Japanese troops. Fighting erupted between the Japanese forces and troops loyal to the acting governor of Heilongjiang province Muslim General Ma Zhanshan, who chose to disobey the Kuomintang government's ban on further resistance to the Japanese invasion.

Despite his failure to hold the bridge, General Ma Zhanshan became a national hero in China for his resistance at Nenjiang Bridge, which was widely reported in the Chinese and international press. The publicity inspired more volunteers to enlist in the [Anti-Japanese Volunteer Armies](#).

The repaired bridge made possible the further advance of Japanese forces and their armored trains. Additional troops from Japan, notably the [4th Mixed Brigade](#) from the [8th Division](#), were sent in November.

On 15 November 1931, despite having lost more than 400 men and 300 left wounded since 5 November, General Ma declined a Japanese ultimatum to surrender Qiqihar. On 17 November, in subzero weather, 3,500 Japanese troops, under the command of General [Jirō Tamon](#), mounted an attack, forcing General Ma from Qiqihar by 19 November.

Operations in Southern Northeast China[[edit](#)]

Main article: [Jinzhou Operation](#)

In late November 1931, General Honjō dispatched 10,000 soldiers in 13 armored trains, escorted by a squadron of bombers, in an advance on [Chinchow](#) from Mukden. This force had advanced to within 30 kilometres (19 mi) of Chinchow when it received an order to withdraw. The operation was cancelled by [Japanese War Minister](#) General [Jirō Minami](#), due to the acceptance of modified form of a [League of Nations](#) proposal for a "neutral zone" to be established as a

buffer zone between [China proper](#) and Manchuria pending a future Chinese-Japanese peace conference by the civilian government of [Prime Minister](#) Baron [Wakatsuki](#) in Tokyo.

However, the two sides failed to reach a lasting agreement. The Wakatsuki government soon fell and was replaced by a new cabinet led by Prime Minister [Inukai Tsuyoshi](#). Further negotiations with the [Kuomintang](#) government failed, the Japanese government authorized the reinforcement of troops in Manchuria. In December, the rest of 20th Infantry Division, along with the 38th Mixed Brigade from the [19th Infantry Division](#) were sent into Manchuria from Korea while the 8th Mixed Brigade from the [10th Infantry Division](#) was sent from Japan. The total strength of the Kwantung Army was thus increased to around 60,450 men.

With this stronger force, the Japanese Army announced on 21 December the beginning of large-scale [anti-bandit operations](#) in Manchuria to quell a growing resistance movement by the local Chinese population in Liaoning and Kirin provinces.

On 28 December, a new government was formed in China after all members of the old Nanjing government resigned. This threw the military command into turmoil, and the Chinese army retreated to the south of the [Great Wall](#) into [Hebei](#) province, a humiliating move which lowered China's international image.^[6] Japanese forces occupied Chinchow on 3 January 1932, after the Chinese defenders retreated without giving combat.

Occupation of northeast China[[edit](#)]

Main article: [Defense of Harbin](#)

With southern Manchuria secure, the Japanese turned north to complete the occupation of Manchuria. As negotiations with Generals Ma Zanshan and Ting Chao to defect to the pro-Japanese side had failed, in early January Colonel [Kenji Doihara](#) requested collaborationist General Qia Xi to advance his forces and take Harbin.

The last major Chinese regular force in northern Manchuria was led by General Ting Chao who organized the defense of Harbin successfully against General Xi until the arrival of the [IJA 2nd Division](#) under General [Jirō Tamon](#). Japanese forces took Harbin on 4 February 1932.

By the end of February Ma had sought terms and joined the newly formed [Manchukuo](#) government as governor of Heilongjiang province and Minister of War.

On 27 February 1932, Ting offered to cease hostilities, ending official Chinese resistance in Manchuria, although combat by [guerrilla](#) and irregular forces continued as Japan spent many years in their [campaign to pacify Manchukuo](#).

Homefront, Japan[[edit](#)]

The conquest of Manchuria, a land rich in natural resources, was widely seen as an economic "lifeline" to save Japan from the effects of the [Great Depression](#), generating much public

support.^[7] The American historian Louise Young described Japan from September 1931 to the spring of 1933 as gripped by "war fever" as the conquest of Manchuria proved to be an extremely popular war.^[8] The metaphor of a "lifeline" suggested that Manchuria was crucial to the functioning of the Japanese economy, which explains why the conquest of Manchuria was so popular and why afterwards Japanese public opinion was so hostile towards any suggestion of letting Manchuria go.^[9] At the time, censorship in Japan was nowhere near as stringent as it later became, and Young noted: "Had they wished, it would have been possible in 1931 and 1932 for journalists and editors to express anti-war sentiments".^[10] The liberal journal *Kaizō* criticized the war with the journalist Gotō Shinobu in the November 1931 edition accusing the Kwangtung Army of a "two-fold coup d'état" against both the government in Tokyo and against the government of China.^[10] Voices like *Kaizō* were a minority as mainstream newspapers like the *Asahi* soon discovered that an anti-war editorial position hurt sales, and so switched over to an aggressively militaristic editorial position as the best way to increase sales.^[10] Japan's most famous pacifist, the poet *Akiko Yosano* had caused a sensation in 1904 with her anti-war poem "Brother Do Not Give Your Life", addressed to her younger brother serving in the Imperial Army that called the war with Russia stupid and senseless.^[11] Such was the extent of "war fever" in Japan in 1931 that even Akiko succumbed, writing a poem in 1932 praising *bushidō*, urging the Kwantung Army to "smash the sissified dreams of compromise" and declared that to die for the Emperor in battle was the "purest" act a Japanese man could perform.^[11]

External effect[[edit](#)]

The Western media reported on the events with accounts of atrocities such as bombing civilians or firing upon shell-shocked survivors.^[12] It aroused considerable antipathy to Japan, which lasted until the end of World War II.^[12]

When the [Lytton Commission](#) issued a report on the invasion, despite its statements that China had to a certain extent provoked Japan, and China's sovereignty over Manchuria was not absolute, Japan took it as an unacceptable rebuke and withdrew from the already declining [League of Nations](#), which also helped create international isolation.^[13]

The Manchurian Crisis had a significant negative effect on the moral strength and influence of the League of Nations. As critics had predicted, the League was powerless if a strong nation decided to pursue an aggressive policy against other countries, allowing a country such as Japan to commit blatant aggression without serious consequences. [Adolf Hitler](#) and [Benito Mussolini](#) were also aware of this, and ultimately both followed Japan's example in aggression against their neighbors: in the case of [Italy, against Abyssinia](#); and [Germany, against Czechoslovakia](#) and [Poland](#).^[14]

Course of the war[[edit](#)]

1937: Full-scale invasion of China[[edit](#)]

On the night of 7 July 1937, Chinese and Japanese troops exchanged fire in the vicinity of the Marco Polo (or Lugou) Bridge, a crucial access-route to [Beijing](#). What began as confused, sporadic skirmishing soon escalated into a [full-scale battle](#) in which Beijing and its port city of Tianjin fell to Japanese forces (July–August 1937). On 29 July, some 5,000 troops of the 1st and 2nd Corps of the East Hopei Army mutinied, turning against the Japanese garrison. In addition to Japanese military personnel, some 260 civilians living in Tongzhou in accordance with the [Boxer Protocol](#) of 1901, were killed in the uprising (predominantly Japanese including the police force and also some ethnic Koreans). The Chinese then set fire to and destroyed much of the city. Only around 60 Japanese civilians survived, who provided both journalists and later historians with firsthand witness accounts. As a result of the violence of the mutiny against Japanese civilians, the [Tungchow mutiny](#) strongly shook public opinion within Japan.

Battle of Shanghai[\[edit\]](#)

Main article: [Battle of Shanghai](#)

The [Imperial General Headquarters](#) (GHQ) in Tokyo, content with the gains acquired in northern China following the Marco Polo Bridge Incident, initially showed reluctance to escalate the conflict into full-scale war. The KMT, however, determined that the "breaking point" of Japanese aggression had been reached. [Chiang Kai-shek](#) quickly mobilized the central

government's army and [air force](#), placed them under his direct command, and laid siege to the Japanese area of [Shanghai International Settlement](#), where 30,000 Japanese civilians lived with 30,000 troops on 12 August 1937.

On 13 August 1937, [Kuomintang](#) soldiers and warplanes attacked [Japanese Marine](#) positions in Shanghai, leading to the [Battle of Shanghai](#). On 14 August, Kuomintang planes accidentally bombed the [Shanghai International Settlement](#), which led to more than 3,000 civilian deaths.^[63] In the three days from 14 August through 16, 1937, the [Imperial Japanese Navy](#) (IJN) sent many [sorties](#) of the then-advanced long-ranged [G3M](#) medium-heavy land-based bombers and assorted [carrier-based aircraft](#) with the expectation of destroying the [Chinese Air Force](#). However, the Imperial Japanese Navy encountered unexpected resistance from the defending Chinese [Curtiss Hawk II/Hawk III](#) and [P-26/281 Peashooter](#) fighter squadrons; suffering heavy (50%) losses from the defending Chinese pilots (14 August was subsequently commemorated by the KMT as China's *Air Force Day*).^{[64][65]}

The skies of China had become a testing zone for advanced [biplane](#) and new-generation [monoplane](#) combat-aircraft designs. The introduction of the advanced [A5M](#) "Claude" fighters into the Shanghai-Nanjing theater of operations, beginning on 18 September 1937, helped the Japanese achieve a certain level of [air superiority](#).^{[66][67]} However the few experienced

Chinese veteran pilots, as well as several Chinese-American volunteer fighter pilots, including Maj. [Art Chin](#), Maj. [John Wong Pan-yang](#), and Capt. Chan Kee-Wong, even in their older and slower biplanes,^{[68][69]} proved more than able to hold their own against the sleek A5Ms in [dogfights](#), and it also proved to be a [battle of attrition](#) against the Chinese Air Force.^{[70][71]} At the start of the battle, the local strength of the NRA was around five divisions, or about 70,000 troops, while local Japanese forces comprised about 6,300 marines.^[72] On 23 August, the Chinese Air Force attacked Japanese troop landings at Wusongkou in northern Shanghai with Hawk III fighter-attack planes and P-26/281 fighter escorts, and the Japanese intercepted most of the attack with [A2N](#) and [A4N](#) fighters from the aircraft carriers *Hosho* and *Ryujo*, shooting down several of the Chinese planes while losing a single A4N in the dogfight with Lt. [Huang Xinrui](#) in his P-26/281; the Japanese Army reinforcements succeeded in landing in northern Shanghai.^{[73][74]} The [Imperial Japanese Army](#) (IJA) ultimately committed over 200,000 troops, along with numerous naval vessels and aircraft, to capture the city. After more than three months of intense fighting, their casualties far exceeded initial expectations.^[75] On 26 October, the Japanese Army captured Dachang, an important strong-point within Shanghai, and on 5 November, additional reinforcements of Japan landed from Hangzhou Bay. Finally, on 9 November, the NRA began a general retreat.

Battle of Nanjing and Nanjing Massacre[\[edit\]](#)

Building on the hard-won victory in Shanghai, the IJA captured the KMT capital city of Nanjing (December 1937) and Northern Shanxi (September–November 1937). These campaigns involved approximately 350,000 Japanese soldiers, and considerably more Chinese.

Historians estimate that between 13 December 1937, and late January 1938, Japanese forces killed or wounded an estimated 40,000 to 300,000 Chinese (mostly civilians) in the "Nanjing Massacre" (also known as the "Rape of Nanjing"), after its fall. However, historian David Askew of Japan's Ritsumeikan University argued that less than 32,000 civilians and soldiers died and no more than 250,000 civilians could have remained in Nanjing, the vast majority of whom had taken refuge in the Nanjing Safety Zone, a foreign-established safety zone led by John Rabe who was a Nazi party official.^[76] More than 75% of Nanjing's civilian population had already fled Nanjing before the battle commenced while most of the remainder took refuge in Nanking Safety Zone, leaving only destitute pariah classes like Tanka people and Duo people behind.^[citation needed]

In 2005, a history textbook prepared by the Japanese Society for History Textbook Reform which had been approved by the government in 2001, sparked huge outcry and protests in China and Korea. It referred to the Nanjing Massacre and other atrocities such as the Manila massacre as an "incident", glossed over the issue of comfort women, and made only brief references to the death of Chinese soldiers and civilians in Nanjing.^[77] A copy of the 2005 version of a junior high school textbook titled *New History Textbook* found that there is no mention of the "Nanjing Massacre" or the "Nanjing Incident". Indeed, the only one sentence that

referred to this event was: "they [the Japanese troops] occupied that city in December".^[78] As of 2015, some right-wing Japanese [negationists](#) [deny](#) that the massacre occurred, and have successfully lobbied for revision and exclusion of information in Japanese schoolbooks.^[79]

1938[\[edit\]](#)

At the start of 1938, the leadership in Tokyo still hoped to limit the scope of the conflict to occupy areas around Shanghai, Nanjing and most of northern China. They thought this would preserve strength for an anticipated showdown with the Soviet Union, but by now the Japanese government and GHQ had effectively lost control of the Japanese army in China. With many victories achieved, Japanese field generals [escalated the war in Jiangsu](#) in an attempt to wipe out Chinese resistance, but were defeated at the [Battle of Taierzhuang](#) (March–April 1938). Afterwards the IJA changed its strategy and deployed almost all of its existing armies in China to attack the city of [Wuhan](#), which had become the political, economic and military center of rump China, in hopes of destroying the fighting strength of the [NRA](#) and of forcing the KMT government to negotiate for peace.^[80] On 6 June, they captured Kaifeng, the capital of Henan, and threatened to take Zhengzhou, the junction of the Pinghan and Longhai railways. To prevent Japanese advances in western and southern China, Chiang Kai-shek, at the suggestion of Chen Guofu, ordered the opening of the dikes on the Yellow River near Zhengzhou. The original plan was to destroy the dike in Zhaokou, but due to difficulties in that place, the Huayuankou dike on the south bank was destroyed on 5 June and 7 June by excavation, with flood waters over eastern

Henan, central Anhui, and north central Jiangsu. The floods covered and destroyed thousands of square kilometers of agricultural land and displaced the mouth of the Yellow River hundreds of miles to the south. Thousands of villages were flooded or destroyed and several million villagers were forced to evacuate from their homes. 400,000 people including Japanese soldiers drowned and an additional 10 million became refugees. Rivers were filled with corpses as Tanka boat dwellers drowned from boat capsizes. Damage to plantations also affected the population which generated later hunger. Despite this, the Japanese captured Wuhan on 27 October 1938, forcing the KMT to retreat to Chongqing (Chungking), but Chiang Kai-shek still refused to negotiate, saying he would only consider talks if Japan agreed to withdraw to the pre-1937 borders. In 1937, the Japanese Imperial Army quickly marched into the heart of Chinese territory.

With Japanese casualties and costs mounting, the Imperial General Headquarters attempted to break Chinese resistance by ordering the air branches of their navy and army to launch the war's first massive air raids on civilian targets. Japanese raiders hit the Kuomintang's newly established provisional capital of Chongqing and most other major cities in unoccupied China, leaving many people either dead, injured, or homeless.

1939–40: Chinese counterattack and stalemate

From the beginning of 1939, the war entered a new phase with the unprecedented defeat of the Japanese at Battle of Suixian–Zaoyang, 1st Battle of Changsha, Battle of South

Guangxi and Battle of Zaoyi. These outcomes encouraged the Chinese to launch their first large-scale counter-offensive against the IJA in early 1940; however, due to its low military-industrial capacity and limited experience in modern warfare, this offensive was defeated. Afterwards Chiang could not risk any more all-out offensive campaigns given the poorly trained, under-equipped, and disorganized state of his armies and opposition to his leadership both within the Kuomintang and in China in general. He had lost a substantial portion of his best trained and equipped troops in the Battle of Shanghai and was at times at the mercy of his generals, who maintained a high degree of autonomy from the central KMT government.

During the offensive, Hui forces in Suiyuan under generals Ma Hongbin and Ma Buqing routed the Imperial Japanese Army and their puppet Inner Mongol forces and prevented the planned Japanese advance into northwest China. Ma Hongbin's father Ma Fulu had fought against Japanese in the Boxer Rebellion. General Ma Biao led Hui, Salar and Dongxiang cavalry to defeat the Japanese at the Battle of Huaiyang.^{[81][82][83][84][85][86][87][88][89]} Ma Biao fought against the Japanese in the Boxer Rebellion.

After 1940, the Japanese encountered tremendous difficulties in administering and garrisoning the seized territories, and tried to solve their occupation problems by implementing a strategy of creating friendly puppet governments favorable to Japanese interests in the territories conquered,

most prominently the [Nanjing Nationalist Government](#) headed by former KMT premier [Wang Jingwei](#). However, [atrocities](#) committed by the Imperial Japanese Army, as well as Japanese refusal to delegate any real power, left the puppets very unpopular and largely ineffective. The only success the Japanese had was to recruit a large [Collaborationist Chinese Army](#) to maintain public security in the occupied areas.

Japanese expansion[\[edit\]](#)

as of China and Vietnam, but [guerrilla](#) fighting continued in these occupied areas. Japan had suffered high casualties from unexpectedly stubborn Chinese resistance, and neither side could make any swift progress in the manner of [Nazi Germany](#) in [Western Europe](#).

By 1943, Guangdong had experienced famine. As the situation worsened, [New York](#) Chinese compatriots received a letter stating that 600,000 people were killed in [Siyi](#) by starvation.^[90]

Chinese resistance strategy[\[edit\]](#)

The basis of Chinese strategy before the entrance of the Western [Allies](#) can be divided into two periods as follows:

- **First Period:** 7 July 1937 ([Battle of Lugou Bridge](#)) – 25 October 1938 (end of the [Battle of Wuhan](#) with the fall of the city).

- **Second Period:** 25 October 1938 (following the Fall of Wuhan) – December 1941 (before the Allies' [declaration of war](#) on Japan).

First period (July 1937 – October 1938)[\[edit\]](#)

Unlike Japan, China was unprepared for [total war](#) and had little military-industrial strength, no [mechanized divisions](#), and few [armoured forces](#).^[91] Up until the mid-1930s, China had hoped that the [League of Nations](#) would provide countermeasures to Japan's aggression. In addition, the [Kuomintang](#) (KMT) government was mired in a civil war against the [Communist Party of China](#) (CPC), as [Chiang Kai-shek](#) was quoted: "the Japanese are a disease of the skin, the Communists are a disease of the heart". The [Second United Front](#) between the KMT and CPC was never truly unified, as each side was preparing for a showdown with the other once the Japanese were driven out.

Even under these extremely unfavorable circumstances, Chiang realized that to win support from the United States and other foreign nations, China had to prove it was capable of fighting. Knowing a hasty retreat would discourage foreign aid, Chiang resolved to make a stand [at Shanghai](#), using the best of his [German-trained divisions](#) to defend China's largest and most [industrialized](#) city from the Japanese. The battle lasted over three months, saw heavy casualties on both sides, and ended with a Chinese retreat towards Nanjing, but proved that

China would not be easily defeated and showed its determination to the world. The battle became an enormous morale booster for the Chinese people, as it decisively refuted the Japanese boast that Japan could conquer Shanghai in three days and China in three months.

Afterwards, China began to adopt the **Fabian strategy** of "trading space for time" (simplified Chinese: 以空间换取时间; traditional Chinese: 以空間換取時間). The Chinese army would put up fights to delay the Japanese advance to northern and eastern cities, allowing the **home front**, with its professionals and key industries, to retreat west into **Chongqing**. As a result of Chinese troops' **scorched earth** strategies, **dams** and **levees** were intentionally sabotaged to **create massive flooding**, which caused thousands of deaths and many more to seek refuge.

Second period (October 1938 – December 1941)

During this period, the main Chinese objective was to drag out the war for as long as possible in a **war of attrition**, thereby exhausting Japanese resources while building up Chinese military capacity. American general **Joseph Stilwell** called this strategy "winning by outlasting". The NRA adopted the concept of "magnetic warfare" to attract advancing Japanese troops to definite points where they were subjected to ambush, flanking attacks, and encirclements in major engagements. The most prominent example of this tactic was the successful defense of **Changsha** in **1939** (and again in **1941**), in which heavy casualties were inflicted on the IJA.

Local Chinese [resistance forces](#), organized separately by both the communists and KMT, continued their resistance in occupied areas to pester the enemy and make their administration over the vast land area of China difficult. In 1940, the [Chinese Red Army](#) launched a [major offensive](#) in north China, destroying railways and a major coal mine. These constant harassment and sabotage operations deeply frustrated the Imperial Japanese Army and led them to employ the "[Three Alls Policy](#)" (kill all, loot all, burn all) ([三光政策](#), [Hanyu Pinyin](#): *Sānguāng Zhèngcè*, [Japanese On](#): *Sankō Seisaku*). It was during this period that the bulk of [Japanese war crimes](#) were committed.

By 1941, Japan had occupied much of north and coastal China, but the KMT central government and military had retreated to the western interior to continue their resistance, while the Chinese communists remained in control of base areas in [Shaanxi](#). In the occupied areas, Japanese control was mainly limited to railroads and major cities ("points and lines"). They did not have a major military or administrative presence in the vast Chinese countryside, where Chinese guerrillas roamed freely.

The United States strongly supported China starting in 1937 and warned Japan to get out.^[92] However, the United States continued to support Japan with petroleum and scrap metal exports until the [Japanese invasion of French Indochina](#) which forced the U.S. to impose the [scrap metal and oil embargo against Japan](#) (and freezing of Japanese assets) in the summer of

1941.^{[93][94]} As the Soviets prepared for war against Nazi Germany in June 1941, and all new Soviet combat aircraft now destined to that war-front, Chiang Kai-shek sought American support through the Lend-Lease Act that was promised in March 1941.^{[95][96][97]}

After the Lend-Lease Act was passed, American financial and military aid began to flow.^[98] Claire Lee Chennault commanded the 1st American Volunteer Group (nicknamed the Flying Tigers), with American pilots flying American warplanes painted with the Chinese flag to attack the Japanese. He headed both the volunteer group and the uniformed U.S. Army Air Forces units that replaced it in 1942.^[99] However, it was the Soviets that provided the greatest material help for China's war of resistance against the imperial Japanese invasion from 1937 into 1941, with fighter aircraft for the Nationalist Chinese Air Force and artillery and armour for the Chinese Army through the Sino-Soviet Treaty; Operation Zet also provided for a group of Soviet volunteer combat aviators to join the Chinese Air Force in the fight against the Japanese occupation from late 1937 through 1939. The United States cut off Japan's main oil supplies in 1941 to pressure Japan to compromise regarding China, but Japan instead attacked American, British and Dutch possessions in the western Pacific.^[100]

Chiang Kai-shek

Chiang Kai-shek (31 October 1887 – 5 April 1975),^[3] also known as **Chiang Chung-cheng** and romanized via Mandarin as **Chiang Chieh-shih** and **Jiang Jieshi**, was a Chinese Nationalist politician, revolutionary and military leader who served as the leader of the Republic of China between 1928 and 1975, first in mainland China until 1949 and then in Taiwan until his death.

Born in Chekiang (Zhejiang) Province, Chiang was a member of the Kuomintang (KMT) and a lieutenant of Sun Yat-sen in the revolution to overthrow the Beiyang government and reunify China. With help from the Soviets and the Communist Party of China (CPC, commonly known as the Chinese Communist Party or CCP), Chiang organized the military for Sun's Canton Nationalist Government and headed the Whampoa Military Academy. Commander in chief of the National Revolutionary Army (from which he came to be known as Generalissimo), he led the Northern Expedition from 1926 to 1928, before defeating a coalition of warlords and nominally reunifying China under a new Nationalist government. Midway through the campaign, the KMT–CPC alliance broke down and Chiang purged the communists inside the party, triggering a civil war with the CPC, which he eventually lost in 1949.

As leader of the Republic of China in the Nanjing decade, Chiang sought to strike a difficult balance between modernizing China while also devoting resources to defending the nation against the impending Japanese threat. Trying to avoid a war with Japan while hostilities with CPC continued, he was kidnapped in the Xi'an Incident and obliged to form an Anti-Japanese

[United Front](#) with the CPC. Following the [Marco Polo Bridge Incident](#) in 1937, he mobilized China for the [Second Sino-Japanese War](#). For eight years he led the war of resistance against a vastly superior enemy, mostly from the wartime capital [Chongqing](#). As the leader of a major [Allied power](#), Chiang met with [British Prime Minister Winston Churchill](#) and [U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt](#) in the [Cairo Conference](#) to discuss terms for [Japanese surrender](#). No sooner had the [Second World War](#) ended than the [Civil War](#) with the communists, by then led by [Mao Zedong](#), resumed. Chiang's nationalists were mostly defeated in a few decisive battles in 1948.

In 1949 Chiang's government and army [retreated to Taiwan](#), where Chiang imposed [martial law](#) and persecuted critics during the [White Terror](#). Presiding over a period of [social reforms](#) and [economic prosperity](#), Chiang won five elections to six-year terms as [President of the Republic of China](#) and was Director-General of the Kuomintang until his death in 1975, three years into his fifth term as President and just one year before [Mao's death](#).

One of the longest-serving non-royal heads of state in the 20th century, Chiang was the [longest-serving non-royal ruler of China](#) having held the post for 46 years. Like [Mao](#), he is regarded as a controversial figure. Supporters credit him with playing a major part in unifying the nation and leading the Chinese resistance against Japan, as well as with countering [Soviet-communist](#) encroachment. Detractors and critics denounce him as a dictator at the front of an [authoritarian](#) regime who suppressed opponents.

□ Like many other Chinese historical figures, Chiang used several names throughout his life. The name inscribed in the [genealogical records of his family](#) is Chiang Chou-t'ai ([Chinese](#): 蔣周泰; [pinyin](#): *Jiǎng Zhōutài*; [Wade-Giles](#): *Chiang³ Chou¹-t'ai⁴*). This so-called "register name" (譜名) is the one under which his extended relatives knew him, and the one he used in formal occasions, such as when he got married. In deference to tradition, family members did not use the [register name](#) in conversation with people outside of the family. The concept of a "real" or original name is/was not as clear-cut in China as it is in the Western world. In honor of tradition, Chinese families waited a number of years before officially naming their children. In the meantime, they used a "[milk name](#)" (乳名), given to the infant shortly after his birth and known only to the close family, thus the actual name that Chiang received at birth was Chiang Jui-yüan^{[5]:6} ([Chinese](#): 蔣瑞元; [pinyin](#): *Jiǎng Ruìyuán*).

In 1903, the 16-year-old Chiang went to [Ningbo](#) to be a student, and he chose a "[school name](#)" (學名). This was actually the formal name of a person, used by older people to address him, and the one he would use the most in the first decades of his life (as the person grew older, younger generations would have to use one of the [courtesy names](#) instead). Colloquially, the school name is called "big name" (大名), whereas the "milk name" is known as the "small name" (小名). The school name that Chiang chose for himself was Zhiqing ([Chinese](#): 志清; [Wade-Giles](#): *Chi-ch'ing*, which means "purity of aspirations"). For the next fifteen years or so, Chiang was known

as Jiang Zhiqing ([Wade-Giles](#): Chiang Chi-ch'ing). This is the name under which [Sun Yat-sen](#) knew him when Chiang joined the republicans in [Kwangtung](#) in the 1910s.

In 1912, when Jiang Zhiqing was in Japan, he started to use the name Chiang Kai-shek ([Chinese](#): 蔣介石; [pinyin](#): *Jiǎng Jièshí*; [Wade-Giles](#): *Chiang³ Chieh⁴-shih²*) as a pen name for the articles that he published in a Chinese magazine he founded: *Voice of the Army* (軍聲). *Jieshi* is the [Pinyin](#) romanization of this name, based on [Mandarin](#), but the most recognized romanized rendering is *Kai-shek* which is in [Cantonese](#)^{[5]:6} romanization. As the republicans were based in Canton (a Cantonese speaking area, now known as [Guangdong](#)), Chiang became known by Westerners under the Cantonese romanization of his courtesy name, while the family name as known in English seems to be the Mandarin pronunciation of his Chinese family name, transliterated in [Wade-Giles](#).

"Kai-shek"/"Jieshi" soon became Chiang's [courtesy name](#) (字). Some think the name was chosen from the classic Chinese book the [I Ching](#); "介于石"; "[he who is] firm as a rock", is the beginning of line 2 of [Hexagram 16](#), "豫". Others note that the first character of his courtesy name is also the first character of the courtesy name of his brother and other male relatives on the same generation line, while the second character of his courtesy name *shi* (石—meaning "stone") suggests the second character of his "register name" *tai* (泰—the famous [Mount Tai](#)). Courtesy names in China often bore a connection with the personal name of the person. As the courtesy

name is the name used by people of the same generation to address the person, Chiang soon became known under this new name.

Sometime in 1917 or 1918, as Chiang became close to [Sun Yat-sen](#), he changed his name from Jiang Zhiqing to Chiang Chung-cheng^[1] ([Chinese](#): 蔣中正; [Wade-Giles](#): *Chiang³ Chung¹-cheng⁴*). By adopting the name Chung-cheng ("central uprightness"), he was choosing a name very similar to the name of Sun Yat-sen, who was (and still is) known among Chinese as Zhongshan (中山—meaning "central mountain"), thus establishing a link between the two. The meaning of uprightness, rectitude, or orthodoxy, implied by his name, also positioned him as the [legitimate](#) heir of Sun Yat-sen and his ideas. It was readily accepted by members of the [Chinese Nationalist Party](#) and is the name under which Chiang Kai-shek is still commonly known in Taiwan. However, the name was often rejected by the Chinese Communists^{[[citation needed](#)]} and is not as well known in [mainland China](#). Often the name is shortened to "Chung-cheng" only ("Zhongzheng" in [Pinyin](#)). Many public places in Taiwan are named [Chungcheng](#) after Chiang. For many years passengers arriving at the [Chiang Kai-shek International Airport](#) were greeted by signs in Chinese welcoming them to the "Chung Cheng International Airport". Similarly, the monument erected to Chiang's memory in Taipei, known in English as [Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall](#), was literally named "Chung Cheng Memorial Hall" in Chinese. In Singapore, [Chung Cheng High School](#) was named after him.

His name is also written in Taiwan as "The Late President Honorable Chiang" (先總統 蔣公), where the one-character-wide space in front of his name known as [nuo tai](#) shows respect. He is often called *Honorable Chiang* (蔣公) (without the title or space), or his name Chiang Chung-cheng, in Taiwan.^[1]

In this context, his name "Chiang Kai-shek" in this article is spelled using the [Wade-Giles](#) system of transliteration for Standard Chinese as opposed to [Hanyu Pinyin](#) (which is spelled as "Jiang Jieshi")^[6] though the latter was adopted by the ROC government in 2009 as its official romanization.

Early life^[edit]

Chiang was born on October 31, 1887 in [Xikou](#) (Chikow, Ch'i-k'ou), a town in [Fenghua](#) (Fenghwa), [Zhejiang](#) (Chekiang), China,^{[5]:4} about 30 kilometers (19 mi) west of central [Ningbo](#). He was born into a family of [Wu Chinese-speaking people](#) with their [ancestral home](#)—a concept important in [Chinese society](#)—in Heqiao (和橋鎮), a town in [Yixing](#), Jiangsu, about 38 km (24 mi) southwest of central [Wuxi](#) and 10 km (6.2 mi) from the shores of [Lake Tai](#). He was the third child and second son of his father [Chiang Chao-Tsung](#) ^[zh] (also Chiang Su-an,^{[5]:5} 1842–1895;^{[5]:8} 蔣肇聰) and the first child of his father's third^{[5]:6} wife [Wang Tsai-yu](#) ^[zh] (1863–1921,^{[5]:5} 王采玉) who were members of a prosperous family of [salt merchants](#). Chiang lost his father when he was eight, and he wrote of his mother as the "embodiment

of [Confucian virtues](#)". The young Chiang was inspired throughout his youth by the realisation that the reputation of an honored family rested upon his shoulders. He was a naughty child.^{[5]:6-7}

¹⁷ At a young age he was interested in war.^{[5]:7-8} As he grew older, Chiang became more aware of the issues that surrounded him and in his speech to the Kuomintang in 1945 said:

As you all know I was an orphan boy in a poor family. Deprived of any protection after the death of her husband, my mother was exposed to the most ruthless exploitation by neighbouring ruffians and the local gentry. The efforts she made in fighting against the intrigues of these family intruders certainly endowed her child, brought up in such environment, with an indomitable spirit to fight for justice. I felt throughout my childhood that mother and I were fighting a helpless lone war. We were alone in a desert, no available or possible assistance could we look forward to. But our determination was never shaken, nor hope abandoned.^[7]

In early 1906, Chiang cut off his [queue](#), the required hairstyle of men during the [Qing Dynasty](#), and had it sent home from school, shocking the people in his hometown.^{[5]:17}

Education in Japan[[edit](#)]

Chiang grew up at a time in which military defeats, natural disasters, famines, revolts, [unequal treaties](#) and civil wars had left the [Manchu](#)-dominated [Qing dynasty](#) destabilized and in debt. Successive demands of the [Western powers](#) and [Japan](#) since the [Opium War](#) had left China owing millions of [taels](#) of silver. During his first visit to Japan to pursue a military career from

April 1906 to later that year, he describes himself having strong nationalistic feelings with a desire among other things to, 'expel the Manchu Qing and to restore China'.^[8] In a 1969 speech, Chiang related a story about his boat trip to Japan at nineteen years old. Another passenger on the ship, a Chinese fellow student who was in the habit of spitting on the floor, was chided by a Chinese sailor who said that Japanese people did not spit on the floor, but instead would spit into a handkerchief. Chiang used the story as an example of how the common man in 1969 Taiwan had not developed the spirit of public sanitation that Japan had.^[9] Chiang decided to pursue a military career. He began his military training at the [Baoding Military Academy](#) in 1906, the same year Japan left its bimetallic currency standard, devaluing its [yen](#). He left for [Tokyo Shinbu Gakko](#), a preparatory school for the [Imperial Japanese Army Academy](#) intended for Chinese students, in 1907. There, he came under the influence of compatriots to support the revolutionary movement to overthrow the [Manchu](#)-dominated [Qing dynasty](#) and to set up a [Han](#)-dominated Chinese republic. He befriended [Chen Qimei](#), and in 1908 Chen brought Chiang into the [Tongmenghui](#), an important revolutionary brotherhood of the era. Finishing his military schooling at Tokyo Shinbu Gakko, Chiang served in the [Imperial Japanese Army](#) from 1909 to 1911.

Returning to China[[edit](#)]

After learning of the [Wuchang Uprising](#), Chiang returned to China in 1911, intending to fight as an artillery officer. He served in the revolutionary forces, leading a regiment in Shanghai under his friend and mentor [Chen Qimei](#), as one of Chen's chief lieutenants.^{[5]:24} In early 1912 a dispute arose between Chen and [Tao Chen-chang](#), an influential member of the Revolutionary Alliance who opposed both Sun Yat-sen and Chen. Tao sought to avoid escalating the quarrel by hiding in a hospital but Chiang discovered him there. Chen dispatched assassins. Chiang may not have taken part in the act, but would later assume responsibility to help Chen avoid trouble. Chen valued Chiang despite Chiang's already legendary temper, regarding such bellicosity as useful in a military leader.^[10]

Chiang's friendship with Chen Qimei signaled an association with Shanghai's [criminal syndicate](#) (the [Green Gang](#) headed by [Du Yuesheng](#) and [Huang Jinrong](#)). During Chiang's time in Shanghai, the [Shanghai International Settlement police](#) observed him and eventually charged him with various felonies. These charges never resulted in a trial, and Chiang was never jailed.^[11]

Chiang became a founding member of the KMT after the success (February 1912) of the [1911 Revolution](#). After the takeover of the Republican government by [Yuan Shikai](#) and the failed [Second Revolution](#) in 1913, Chiang, like his KMT comrades, divided his time between exile in Japan and the havens of the [Shanghai International Settlement](#). In Shanghai, Chiang cultivated ties with the city's underworld gangs, which were dominated by the notorious Green

Gang and its leader Du Yuesheng. On 18 May 1916, agents of Yuan Shikai assassinated Chen Qimei. Chiang then succeeded Chen as leader of the [Chinese Revolutionary Party](#) in Shanghai. Sun Yat-sen's political career reached its lowest point during this time when most of his old Revolutionary Alliance comrades refused to join him in the exiled Chinese Revolutionary Party.^[12]

Establishing the Kuomintang's position[[edit](#)]

In 1917 Sun Yat-sen moved his base of operations to [Canton](#) (now known as Guangzhou), and Chiang joined him in 1918. At this time Sun remained largely sidelined – without arms or money, he was soon expelled from Kwangtung and exiled again to Shanghai. He was restored to Kwangtung with mercenary help in 1920. After his return to Kwangtung, a rift developed between Sun, who sought to militarily unify China under the KMT, and Guangdong Governor [Chen Jiongming](#), who wanted to [implement a federalist system](#) with Guangdong as a model province. On 16 June 1922 [Ye Ju](#), a general of Chen's whom Sun had attempted to exile, led an assault on [Kwangtung's Presidential Palace](#).^[13] Sun had already fled to the naval yard^[14] and boarded the SS *Haiqi*,^[15] but [his wife](#) narrowly evaded [shelling](#) and rifle-fire as she fled.^[16] They met on the [SS Yongfeng](#), where Chiang joined them as swiftly as he could return from [Shanghai](#), where he was ritually mourning his mother's death.^[17] For about 50 days,^[18] Chiang stayed with Sun, protecting and caring for him and earning his lasting trust.

They abandoned their attacks on Chen on 9 August, taking a British ship to [Hong Kong](#)^[17] and traveling to Shanghai by steamer.^[18]

Sun regained control of Kwangtung in early 1923, again with the help of mercenaries from [Yunnan](#) and of the [Comintern](#). Undertaking a reform of the KMT, he established a revolutionary government aimed at unifying China under the KMT. That same year Sun sent Chiang to spend three months in Moscow studying the Soviet [political](#) and military system. During his trip in Russia, Chiang met [Leon Trotsky](#) and other Soviet leaders, but quickly came to the conclusion that the Russian model of government was not suitable for China. Chiang later sent his eldest son, Ching-kuo, to study in Russia. After his father's split from the [First United Front](#) in 1927, Ching-kuo was forced^[by whom?] to stay there, as a hostage, until 1937. Chiang wrote in his diary, "It is not worth it to sacrifice the interest of the country for the sake of my son."^{[19][20]} Chiang even refused to negotiate a prisoner swap for his son in exchange for the [Chinese Communist Party](#) leader.^[21] His attitude remained consistent, and he continued to maintain, by 1937, that "I would rather have no offspring than sacrifice our nation's interests." Chiang had absolutely no intention of ceasing the war against the Communists.^[22]

Chiang Kai-shek returned to Kwangtung and in 1924 Sun appointed him [Commandant](#) of the [Whampoa Military Academy](#). Chiang resigned from the office after one month in disagreement with Sun's extremely close cooperation with the Comintern, but returned at Sun's

demand. The early years at Whampoa allowed Chiang to cultivate a cadre of young officers loyal both to the KMT and to himself.

Throughout his rise to power, Chiang also benefited from membership within the nationalist [Tiandihui](#) fraternity, to which Sun Yat-sen also belonged, and which remained a source of support during his leadership of the Kuomintang.^[23]

Competition with Wang Jingwei^[edit]

[Sun Yat-sen](#) died on 12 March 1925,^[24] creating a power vacuum in the [Kuomintang](#). A contest ensued among [Wang Jingwei](#), [Liao Zhongkai](#), and [Hu Hanmin](#). In August, Liao was assassinated and Hu arrested for his connections to the murderers. Wang Jingwei, who had succeeded Sun as chairman of the Kwangtung regime, seemed ascendant but was forced into exile by Chiang following the [Canton Coup](#). The SS *Yongfeng*, renamed the [Zhongshan](#) in Sun's honour, had appeared off [Changzhou](#)^[25]—the location of the [Whampoa Academy](#)—on apparently falsified orders^[26] and amid a series of unusual phone calls trying to ascertain Chiang's location.^[27] He initially considered fleeing Kwangtung and even booked passage on a Japanese steamer, but then decided to use his military connections to declare martial law on 20 March 1926, and crack down on Communist and Soviet influence over the [NRA](#), the military academy, and the party.^[26] The right wing of the party supported him and [Stalin](#)—anxious to maintain Soviet influence in the area—had his lieutenants agree to Chiang's demands^[28] regarding a reduced Communist

presence in the KMT leadership in exchange for certain other concessions.^[26] The rapid replacement of leadership enabled Chiang to effectively end civilian oversight of the military after 15 May, though his authority was somewhat limited^[28] by the army's own regional composition and divided loyalties. On 5 June 1926, he was named [commander-in-chief](#) of the [National Revolutionary Army](#)^[29] and, on 27 July, he finally launched Sun's long-delayed [Northern Expedition](#), aimed at conquering the northern warlords and bringing China together under the KMT.

The NRA branched into three divisions: to the west was the returned Wang Jingwei, who led a column to take [Wuhan](#); [Bai Chongxi](#)'s column went east to take Shanghai; Chiang himself led in the middle route, planning to take [Nanjing](#) before pressing ahead to capture Beijing. However, in January 1927, Wang Jingwei and his KMT leftist allies took the city of Wuhan amid much popular mobilization and fanfare. Allied with a number of [Chinese Communists](#) and advised by Soviet agent [Mikhail Borodin](#), Wang declared the National Government as having moved to Wuhan. Having taken Nanjing in March (and briefly visited Shanghai, now under the control of his close ally Bai Chongxi), Chiang halted his campaign and prepared a violent break with Wang's leftist elements, which he believed threatened his control of the KMT.^[citation needed]

Now with an established national government in Nanjing, and supported by conservative allies including [Hu Hanmin](#), Chiang's expulsion of the Communists and their Soviet advisers led to the beginning of the [Chinese Civil War](#). Wang Jingwei's National Government was weak militarily,

and was soon ended by Chiang with the support of a local warlord ([Li Zongren](#) of [Guangxi](#)). Eventually, Wang and his leftist party surrendered to Chiang and joined him in Nanjing. In the [Central Plains War](#), Beijing was taken on June 1928, from an alliance of the warlords [Feng Yuxiang](#) and [Yan Xishan](#). In December, the [Manchurian](#) warlord [Zhang Xueliang](#) pledged allegiance to Chiang's government, completing Chiang's nominal unification of China and ending the [Warlord Era](#).^{[\[citation needed\]](#)}

In 1927, when he was setting up the Nationalist government in Nanjing, he was preoccupied with "the elevation of our leader Dr. Sun Yat-sen to the rank of 'Father of our Chinese Republic'. Dr. Sun worked for 40 years to lead our people in the Nationalist cause, and we cannot allow any other personality to usurp this honored position". He asked [Chen Guofu](#) to purchase a photograph that had been taken in Japan around 1895 or 1898. It showed members of the Revive China Society with [Yeung Kui-wan](#) (楊衢雲 or 杨衢云, [pinyin](#) Yáng Qúyún) as President, in the place of honor, and Sun, as secretary, on the back row, along with members of the Japanese Chapter of the Revive China Society. When told that it was not for sale, Chiang offered a million dollars to recover the photo and its negative. "The party must have this picture and the negative at any price. They must be destroyed as soon as possible. It would be embarrassing to have our Father of the Chinese Republic shown in a subordinate position".^{[\[30\]](#)} Chiang never obtained either the photo or its negative.^{[\[citation needed\]](#)}

Chiang made great efforts to gain recognition as the official successor of Sun Yat-sen. In a pairing of great political significance, Chiang was Sun's brother-in-law: he had married [Soong Mei-ling](#), the younger sister of [Soong Ching-ling](#), Sun's widow, on 1 December 1927. Originally rebuffed in the early 1920s, Chiang managed to ingratiate himself to some degree with Soong Mei-ling's mother by first divorcing his wife and concubines and promising to sincerely study the precepts of Christianity. He read the copy of the Bible that May-ling had given him twice before making up his mind to become a Christian, and three years after his marriage he was baptized in the Soong's [Methodist](#) church. Although some observers felt that he adopted Christianity as a political move, studies of his recently opened diaries suggest that his faith was strong and sincere and that he felt that Christianity reinforced Confucian moral teachings.^[31]

Upon reaching Beijing, Chiang paid homage to Sun Yat-sen and had his body moved to the new capital of Nanjing to be enshrined in a mausoleum, the [Sun Yat-sen Mausoleum](#).

Rising power[[edit](#)]

In the West and in the [Soviet Union](#), Chiang Kai-shek was known as the "Red General".^[4] Movie theaters in the Soviet Union showed [newsreels](#) and clips of Chiang. At Moscow, Sun Yat-sen University portraits of Chiang were hung on the walls; and, in the Soviet May Day Parades that year, Chiang's portrait was to be carried along with the portraits of [Karl Marx](#), [Friedrich Engels](#), [Vladimir Lenin](#), [Joseph Stalin](#), [Mao Zedong](#), [Ho Chi Minh](#) and other Communist

leaders.^[32] The United States consulate and other Westerners in Shanghai were concerned about the approach of "Red General" Chiang as his army was seizing control of large areas of the country in the Northern Expedition.^{[33][34]}

On 12 April 1927, Chiang carried out a purge of thousands of suspected Communists and dissidents in Shanghai, and began large-scale massacres across the country collectively known as the "White Terror". During April, more than 12,000 people were killed in Shanghai. The killings drove most Communists from urban cities and into the rural countryside, where the KMT was less powerful.^[35] In the year after April 1927, over 300,000 people died across China in anti-Communist suppression campaigns, executed by the KMT. One of the most famous quotes from Chiang (during that time) was that he would rather mistakenly kill 1,000 innocent people rather than allow one Communist to escape.^[36] Some estimates claim the White Terror in China took millions of lives, most of them in the rural areas. No concrete number can be verified.^[37] Chiang allowed Soviet agent and advisor Mikhail Borodin and Soviet general Vasily Blücher (Galens) to "escape" to safety after the purge.^[38]

Rule[edit]

Having gained control of China, Chiang's party remained surrounded by "surrendered" warlords who remained relatively autonomous within their own regions. On 10 October 1928, Chiang was named director of the State Council, the equivalent to President of the country, in addition to his

other titles.^[39] As with his predecessor Sun Yat-sen, the Western media dubbed him "Generalissimo".^[29]

According to Sun Yat-sen's plans, the Kuomintang (KMT) was to rebuild China in three steps: military rule, political tutelage, and constitutional rule. The ultimate goal of the KMT revolution was democracy, which was not considered to be feasible in China's fragmented state. Since the KMT had completed the first step of revolution through seizure of power in 1928, Chiang's rule thus began a period of what his party considered to be "political tutelage" in Sun Yat-sen's name. During this so-called Republican Era, many features of a modern, functional Chinese state emerged and developed.

From 1928 to 1937, a time period known as the Nanjing decade, some aspects of foreign imperialism, concessions and privileges^[clarification needed] in China were moderated through diplomacy. The government acted to modernize the legal and penal systems, attempted to stabilize prices, amortize debts, reform the banking and currency systems, build railroads and highways, improve public health facilities, legislate against traffic in narcotics, and augment industrial and agricultural production. Not all of these projects were successfully completed. Efforts were made towards improving education standards, and in an effort to unify Chinese society, the New Life Movement was launched to encourage Confucian moral values and personal discipline. Guoyu ("national language") was promoted as a standard tongue, and the establishment of communications facilities (including radio) were used to encourage a sense

of [Chinese nationalism](#) in a way that was not possible when the nation lacked an effective central government.

Any successes that the Nationalists did make, however, were met with constant political and military upheavals. While much of the urban areas were now under the control of the KMT, much of the countryside remained under the influence of weakened yet undefeated [warlords](#) and Communists. Chiang often resolved issues of warlord obstinacy through military action, but such action was costly in terms of men and material. The 1930 [Central Plains War](#) alone nearly bankrupted the Nationalist government and caused almost 250,000 casualties on both sides. In 1931, [Hu Hanmin](#), Chiang's old supporter, publicly voiced a popular concern that Chiang's position as both premier and president flew in the face of the democratic ideals of the Nationalist government. Chiang had Hu put under [house arrest](#), but he was released after national condemnation, after which he left Nanjing and supported a rival government in [Canton](#). The split resulted in a military conflict between Hu's Kwangtung government and Chiang's Nationalist government. Chiang only won the campaign against Hu after a shift in allegiance by [Zhang Xueliang](#), who had previously supported Hu Hanmin.

Throughout his rule, complete eradication of the [Communists](#) remained Chiang's dream. After assembling his forces in [Jiangxi](#), Chiang led his armies against the newly established [Chinese Soviet Republic](#). With help from foreign military advisers, Chiang's [Fifth Campaign](#) finally surrounded the [Chinese Red Army](#) in 1934. The Communists, tipped off that a Nationalist

offensive was imminent, retreated in the [Long March](#), during which [Mao Zedong](#) rose from a mere military official to the most influential leader of the Chinese Communist Party.

Chiang, as a [nationalist](#) and a Confucianist, was against the [iconoclasm](#) of the [May Fourth Movement](#). Motivated by his sense of nationalism, he viewed some [Western ideas](#) as foreign, and he believed that the great introduction of Western ideas and [literature](#) that the [May Fourth Movement](#) promoted was not beneficial to China. He and Dr. Sun criticized the May Fourth intellectuals as corrupting the morals of China's youth.^[40]

Contrary to [Communist propaganda](#) that he was [pro-capitalism](#), Chiang antagonized the capitalists of Shanghai, often attacking them and confiscating their capital and assets for the use of the government. Chiang confiscated the wealth of capitalists even while he denounced and fought against communists.^[41] Chiang crushed pro-communist worker and peasant organizations and rich Shanghai capitalists at the same time. Chiang continued the [anti-capitalist](#) ideology of Sun Yat-sen, directing Kuomintang media to openly attack capitalists and capitalism, while demanding [government controlled industry](#) instead.^[42]

Chiang has often been interpreted as being pro-capitalism, but this conclusion may be problematic. Shanghai capitalists did briefly support him out of fear of communism in 1927, but this support eroded in 1928 when Chiang turned his tactics of intimidation on them. The relationship between Chiang Kai-shek and Chinese capitalists remained poor throughout the

period of his administration.^[43] Chiang blocked Chinese capitalists from gaining any political power or voice within his regime. Once Chiang Kai-shek was done with his [White Terror](#) on pro-communist laborers, he proceeded to turn on the capitalists. [Gangster connections](#) allowed Chiang to attack them in the International Settlement, successfully forcing capitalists to back him up with their assets for his military expeditions.^[43]

Chiang viewed all of the foreign [great powers](#) with suspicion, writing in a letter that they "all have it in their minds to promote the interests of their own respective countries at the cost of other nations" and seeing it as hypocritical for any of them to condemn each other's foreign policy.^{[44][45]} He utilized diplomatic persuasion on the [United States](#), [Germany](#), and the [Soviet Union](#) to regain lost Chinese territories as he viewed all foreign powers as [imperialists](#) who were attempting to curtail and suppress China's power and national resurrection.^[46]

Mass deaths under Nationalist rule[\[edit\]](#)

Some sources attribute Chiang Kai-shek with responsibility for millions of deaths^{[47][48]} in scattered mass death events caused by the [Nationalist Government](#) of China. He has been deemed partially responsible for the man-made [1938 Yellow River flood](#), which killed hundreds of thousands of Chinese civilians in order to fend off a Japanese advance.^[49] This accusation is usually sourced from [Rudolph Rummel](#) who was referring to the Nationalist regime as whole rather than Chiang Kai-Shek in particular. Regardless, the Nationalist government of China has

been accused by Rummel of mass killings; he alleged that, based on various claims, the Nationalist government of China was responsible for between 6 and 18.5 million deaths. He attributes this death toll to a few major causes, for example:^[50]

- thousands of communists and [communist sympathizers](#) killed in the year after the [Shanghai massacre](#).
- 1.75 to 2.5 million [Henan civilians starved to death due to grain being confiscated](#) and sold to other peasants for the profit of [Nationalist Government](#) officials.
- 4,212,000 mostly ethnic minority Chinese perishing at the start of both the Civil War and the Second Sino-Japanese War, [starving to death or dying from disease during conscription campaigns](#).
- 440,000 to 500,000 Chinese civilians [perishing from malnutrition, famine or Nationalist caused flooding](#) to stop Japanese advance.

First phase of the Chinese Civil War[\[edit\]](#)

Nationalist government of Nanking – nominally ruling over entire China in 1930s

In [Nanjing](#), on April 1931, Chiang Kai-shek attended a national leadership conference with [Zhang Xueliang](#) and General [Ma Fuxiang](#), in which Chiang and Zhang dauntlessly upheld that Manchuria was part of China in the face of the Japanese invasion.^[51] After the [Japanese invasion of Manchuria](#) in 1931, Chiang resigned as Chairman of the National Government. He

returned shortly afterwards, adopting the slogan "first internal pacification, then external resistance". However, this policy of avoiding a frontal war against the [Japanese](#) was widely unpopular. In 1932, while Chiang was seeking first to defeat the [Communists](#), Japan launched an [advance](#) on Shanghai and bombarded [Nanjing](#). This disrupted Chiang's [offensives against the Communists](#) for a time, although it was the northern factions of [Hu Hanmin's Kwangtung](#) government (notably the [19th Route Army](#)) that primarily led the offensive against the Japanese during this skirmish. Brought into the [Nationalist army](#) immediately after the battle, the 19th Route Army's career under Chiang would be cut short after it was disbanded for demonstrating socialist tendencies.

In December 1936, Chiang flew to [Xi'an](#) to coordinate a major assault on the [Red Army](#) and the Communist Republic that had retreated into [Yan'an](#). However, Chiang's allied commander [Zhang Xueliang](#), whose forces were used in his attack and whose homeland of [Manchuria](#) had been recently invaded by the Japanese, did not support the attack on the Communists. On 12 December, Zhang and several other Nationalist generals headed by Yang Hucheng of Shaanxi kidnapped Chiang for two weeks in what is known as the [Xi'an Incident](#). They forced Chiang into making a "[Second United Front](#)" with the Communists against Japan. After releasing Chiang and returning to Nanjing with him, Zhang was placed under house arrest and the generals who had assisted him were executed. Chiang's commitment to the Second United Front was nominal at best, and it was all but broken up in 1941.

Second Sino-Japanese War[\[edit\]](#)

The [Second Sino-Japanese War](#) broke out in July 1937, and in August of that year Chiang sent 600,000 of his best-trained and equipped soldiers to [defend Shanghai](#). With over 200,000 Chinese casualties, Chiang lost the political cream of his [Whampoa](#)-trained officers. Although Chiang lost militarily, the battle dispelled Japanese claims that it could conquer China in three months and demonstrated to the Western powers that the Chinese would continue the fight. By December, the capital city of Nanjing had fallen to the Japanese resulting in the [Nanking Massacre](#). Chiang moved the government inland, first to [Wuhan](#) and later to [Chongqing](#).

Having lost most of China's economic and industrial centers, Chiang withdrew into the hinterlands, stretching the Japanese [supply lines](#) and bogging down Japanese soldiers in the vast Chinese interior. As part of a policy of protracted resistance, Chiang authorized the use of [scorched earth](#) tactics, resulting in many civilian deaths. During the Nationalists' retreat from [Zhengzhou](#), the dams around the city were deliberately destroyed by the [Nationalist army](#) in order to delay the Japanese advance, killing 500,000 people in the subsequent [1938 Yellow River flood](#).

After heavy fighting, the Japanese occupied [Wuhan](#) in the fall of 1938 and the Nationalists retreated farther inland, to Chongqing. While en route to Chongqing, the Nationalist army intentionally started the ["fire of Changsha"](#), as a part of the scorched earth policy. The fire

destroyed much of the city, killed twenty thousand civilians, and left hundreds of thousands of people [homeless](#). Due to an organizational error (it was claimed), the fire was begun without any warning to the residents of the city. The Nationalists eventually blamed three local commanders for the fire and executed them. Newspapers across China blamed the fire on (non-KMT) arsonists, but the blaze contributed to a nationwide loss of support for the KMT.^[52]

In 1939 [Muslim](#) leaders [Isa Yusuf Alptekin](#) and Ma Fuliang were sent by Chiang to several Middle Eastern countries, including [Egypt](#), [Turkey](#), and [Syria](#), to gain support for the [Chinese War against Japan](#), and to express his support for Muslims.^[53]

The Japanese, controlling the [puppet-state](#) of [Manchukuo](#) and much of China's eastern seaboard, appointed [Wang Jingwei](#) as a [Quisling](#)-ruler of the occupied Chinese territories around Nanjing. Wang named himself President of the [Executive Yuan](#) and Chairman of the [National Government](#) (not the same 'National Government' as Chiang's), and led a surprisingly large^[quantify] minority of anti-Chiang/anti-Communist Chinese against his old comrades. He died in 1944, within a year of the end of World War II.

The Hui Muslim [Xidaotang](#) sect pledged allegiance to the Kuomintang after their rise to power and Hui Muslim General [Bai Chongxi](#) acquainted Chiang Kaishek with the Xidaotang jiaozhu Ma Mingren in 1941 in [Chongqing](#).^[54]

In 1942 Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek went on tour in northwestern China in [Xinjiang](#), Gansu, [Ningxia](#), Shaanxi, and [Qinghai](#), where he met both Muslim Generals [Ma Buqing](#) and [Ma Bufang](#).^[55] He also met the Muslim Generals [Ma Hongbin](#) and [Ma Hongkui](#) separately.

Chiang with [Franklin D. Roosevelt](#) and [Winston Churchill](#) in [Cairo, Egypt](#), November 1943

A [border crisis](#) erupted with [Tibet](#) in 1942. Under orders from Chiang, [Ma Bufang](#) repaired Yushu airport to prevent [Tibetan separatists](#) from seeking independence.^[56] Chiang also ordered Ma Bufang to put his [Muslim](#) soldiers on alert for an invasion of Tibet in 1942.^[57] Ma Bufang complied and moved several thousand troops to the border with Tibet.^[58] Chiang also threatened the Tibetans with [aerial bombardment](#) if they worked with the Japanese. Ma Bufang attacked the Tibetan [Buddhist](#) Tsang monastery in 1941.^[59] He also constantly attacked the [Labrang monastery](#).^[60]

With the [attack on Pearl Harbor](#) and the opening of the [Pacific War](#), China became one of the [Allied Powers](#). During and after World War II, Chiang and his American-educated wife [Soong Mei-ling](#), known in the United States as "Madame Chiang", held the support of the [China Lobby](#) in the United States, which saw in them the hope of a Christian and democratic China. Chiang was even named the Supreme Commander of Allied forces in the China war zone. He was appointed [Knight Grand Cross of the Order of the Bath](#) in 1942.^[61]

General [Joseph Stilwell](#), an American [military adviser](#) to Chiang during World War II, strongly criticized Chiang and his generals for what he saw as their incompetence and corruption.^[62] In 1944, the [United States Army Air Corps](#) commenced [Operation Matterhorn](#) in order to bomb Japan's steel industry from bases to be constructed in mainland China. This was meant to fulfill President Roosevelt's promise to Chiang Kai-shek to begin bombing operations against Japan by November 1944. However, Chiang Kai-shek's subordinates refused to take airbase construction seriously until enough capital had been delivered to permit embezzlement on a massive scale. Stilwell estimated that at least half of the \$100 million spent on construction of airbases was embezzled by Nationalist party officials.^[63]

Chiang played the Soviets and Americans against each other during the war. He first told the Americans that they would be welcome in talks between the Soviet Union and China, then secretly told the Soviets that the Americans were unimportant and that their opinions would not be considered. Chiang also used American support and military power in China against the ambitions of the Soviet Union to dominate the talks, stopping the Soviets from taking full advantage of the situation in China with the threat of American military action against the Soviets.^[64]

French Indochina[\[edit\]](#)

U.S. President [Franklin D. Roosevelt](#), through General Stilwell, privately made it clear that they preferred that the French not reacquire [French Indochina](#) (modern day [Vietnam](#), [Cambodia](#) and [Laos](#)) after the war was over. Roosevelt offered Chiang control of all of [Indochina](#). It was said that Chiang replied: "Under no circumstances!"^[65]

After the war, 200,000 Chinese troops under General [Lu Han](#) were sent by Chiang Kai-shek to northern Indochina (north of the 16th parallel) to accept the surrender of Japanese occupying forces there, and remained in Indochina until 1946, when the French returned.^{[66][67]} The Chinese used the [VNQDD](#), the Vietnamese branch of the Chinese [Kuomintang](#), to increase their influence in Indochina and to put pressure on their opponents.^[68] Chiang Kai-shek threatened the French with war in response to maneuvering by the French and [Ho Chi Minh](#)'s forces against each other, forcing them to come to a peace agreement. In February 1946 he also forced the French to surrender all of their concessions in China and to renounce their extraterritorial privileges in exchange for the Chinese withdrawing from northern Indochina and allowing French troops to reoccupy the region. Following France's agreement to these demands, the withdrawal of Chinese troops began in March 1946.^{[69][70][71][72]}

Ryukyus^[edit]

During the [Cairo Conference](#) in 1943, Chiang said that Roosevelt asked him whether China would like to claim the [Ryukyu Islands](#) from Japan in addition to retaking Taiwan,

the [Pescadores](#), and [Manchuria](#). Chiang claims that he said he was in favor of an international presence on the islands.^[73] However, the U.S. became the sole protector of the Ryukyus in 1945, and reverted it to the Japanese in 1972 while securing US military presence there.

Second phase of the Chinese Civil War[\[edit\]](#)

In 1945, when [Japan surrendered](#), Chiang's [Chongqing](#) government was ill-equipped and ill-prepared to reassert its authority in formerly [Japanese-occupied China](#), and it asked the Japanese to postpone their surrender until Kuomintang (KMT) authority could arrive to take over. American troops and weapons soon bolstered KMT forces, allowing them to reclaim cities. The countryside, however, remained largely under Communist control.

For over a year after the Japanese surrender, rumors circulated throughout China that the Japanese had entered into a secret agreement with Chiang, in which the Japanese would assist the Nationalists in fighting the Communists in exchange for the protection of Japanese persons and property there. Many top nationalist generals, including Chiang, had studied and trained in Japan before the Nationalists had returned to the mainland in the 1920s, and maintained close personal friendships with top Japanese officers. The Japanese general in charge of all forces in China, General [Yasuji Okamura](#), had personally trained officers who later became generals in Chiang's staff. Reportedly, General Okamura, before surrendering command of all Japanese military forces in Nanjing, offered Chiang control of all 1.5 million Japanese military and civilian support

staff then present in China. Reportedly, Chiang seriously considered accepting this offer, but declined only in the knowledge that the United States would certainly be outraged by the gesture. Even so, armed Japanese troops remained in China well into 1947, with some noncommissioned officers finding their way into the Nationalist officer corps.^[74] That the Japanese in China came to regard Chiang as a magnanimous figure to whom many Japanese owed their lives and livelihoods was a fact attested by both Nationalist and Communist sources.^[75]

Conditions during the Chinese Civil War[\[edit\]](#)

Chiang Kai-shek and [Mao Zedong](#) in 1945

[Westad](#) says the Communists won the Civil War because they made fewer military mistakes than Chiang Kai-Shek, and because in his search for a powerful centralized government, Chiang antagonized too many interest groups in China. Furthermore, his party was weakened in the war against Japan. Meanwhile, the Communists told different groups, such as peasants, exactly what they wanted to hear, and cloaked themselves in the cover of Chinese Nationalism.^[76]

Following the war, the United States encouraged peace talks between Chiang and Communist leader Mao Zedong in Chongqing. Due to concerns about widespread and well-documented corruption in Chiang's government throughout his rule, the U.S. government limited aid to Chiang for much of the period of 1946 to 1948, in the midst of fighting against the [People's](#)

[Liberation Army](#) led by [Mao Zedong](#). Alleged infiltration of the U.S. government by Chinese Communist agents may have also played a role in the suspension of American aid.^[77]

Chiang's right-hand man, the secret police Chief [Dai Li](#), was both anti-American and anti-Communist.^[78] Dai ordered Kuomintang agents to spy on American officers.^[79] Earlier, Dai had been involved with the [Blue Shirts Society](#), a fascist-inspired paramilitary group within the Kuomintang, which wanted to expel Western and Japanese imperialists, crush the Communists, and eliminate [feudalism](#).^[80] Dai Li died in a plane crash, which was suspected to be an assassination orchestrated by Chiang.^[81]

Although Chiang had achieved status abroad as a world leader, his government deteriorated as the result of corruption and inflation. In his diary on June 1948, Chiang wrote that the KMT had failed, not because of external enemies but because of rot from within.^[82] The war had severely weakened the Nationalists, while the Communists were strengthened by their popular land-reform policies,^[83] and by a rural population that supported and trusted them. The Nationalists initially had superiority in arms and men, but their lack of popularity, infiltration by Communist agents, low morale, and disorganization soon allowed the Communists to gain the upper hand in the civil war.

Competition with Li Zongren[\[edit\]](#)

A new [Constitution](#) was promulgated in 1947, and Chiang was elected by the [National Assembly](#) as the first term [President of the Republic of China](#) on 20 May 1948. This marked the beginning of what was termed the "democratic constitutional government" period by the KMT political orthodoxy, but the Communists refused to recognize the new Constitution, and its government, as legitimate. Chiang resigned as President on 21 January 1949, as KMT forces suffered terrible losses and defections to the Communists. After Chiang's resignation the vice-president of the ROC, [Li Zongren](#), became China's acting president.^[84]

Shortly after Chiang's resignation the Communists halted their advances and attempted to negotiate the virtual surrender of the ROC. Li attempted to negotiate milder terms that would have ended the civil war, but without success. When it became clear that Li was unlikely to accept Mao's terms, the Communists issued an ultimatum in April 1949, warning that they would resume their attacks if Li did not agree within five days. Li refused.^[85]

Li's attempts to carry out his policies faced varying degrees of opposition from Chiang's supporters, and were generally unsuccessful. Chiang especially antagonized Li by taking possession of (and moving to Taiwan) US\$200 million of gold and US dollars belonging to the central government that Li desperately needed to cover the government's soaring expenses. When the Communists captured the Nationalist capital of Nanjing in April 1949, Li refused to accompany the central government as it fled to [Guangdong](#), instead expressing his dissatisfaction with Chiang by retiring to Guangxi.^[86]

njing only one month before, quickly insinuated himself within the Li-Chiang rivalry, attempting to have Li and Chiang reconcile their differences in the effort to resist the Communists. At Chiang's request Yan visited Li in order to convince Li not to withdraw from public life. Yan broke down in tears while talking of the loss of his home province of Shanxi to the Communists, and warned Li that the Nationalist cause was doomed unless Li went to Guangdong. Li agreed to return under the condition that Chiang surrender most of the gold and US dollars in his possession that belonged to the central government, and that Chiang stop overriding Li's authority. After Yan communicated these demands and Chiang agreed to comply with them, Li departed for Guangdong.^[86]

In Guangdong, Li attempted to create a new government composed of both Chiang supporters and those opposed to Chiang. Li's first choice of premier was Chu Cheng, a veteran member of the Kuomintang who had been virtually driven into exile due to his strong opposition to Chiang. After the Legislative Yuan rejected Chu, Li was obliged to choose Yan Xishan instead. By this time Yan was well known for his adaptability and Chiang welcomed his appointment.^[86]

Conflict between Chiang and Li persisted. Although he had agreed to do so as a prerequisite of Li's return, Chiang refused to surrender more than a fraction of the wealth that he had sent to Taiwan. Without being backed by gold or foreign currency, the money issued by Li and Yan quickly declined in value until it became virtually worthless.^[87]

Although he did not hold a formal executive position in the government, Chiang continued to issue orders to the army, and many officers continued to obey Chiang rather than Li. The inability of Li to coordinate KMT military forces led him to put into effect a plan of defense that he had contemplated in 1948. Instead of attempting to defend all of southern China, Li ordered what remained of the Nationalist armies to withdraw to Guangxi and Guangdong, hoping that he could concentrate all available defenses on this smaller, and more easily defensible, area. The object of Li's strategy was to maintain a foothold on the Chinese mainland in the hope that the United States would eventually be compelled to enter the war in China on the Nationalist side.^[87]

Final Communist advance^[edit]

Chiang opposed Li's plan of defense because it would have placed most of the troops still loyal to Chiang under the control of Li and Chiang's other opponents in the central government. To overcome Chiang's intransigence Li began ousting Chiang's supporters within the central government. Yan Xishan continued in his attempts to work with both sides, creating the impression among Li's supporters that he was a "stooge" of Chiang, while those who supported Chiang began to bitterly resent Yan for his willingness to work with Li. Because of the rivalry between Chiang and Li, Chiang refused to allow Nationalist troops loyal to him to aid in the defense of Kwangsi and Canton, with the result that Communist forces occupied Canton in October 1949.^[88]

After Canton fell to the Communists, Chiang relocated the government to [Chongqing](#), while Li effectively surrendered his powers and flew to New York for treatment of his chronic [duodenum](#) illness at the Hospital of [Columbia University](#). Li visited the President of the United States, [Harry S. Truman](#), and denounced Chiang as a dictator and an usurper. Li vowed that he would "return to crush" Chiang once he returned to China. Li remained in exile, and did not return to Taiwan.^[89]

In the early morning of 10 December 1949, Communist troops laid siege to [Chengdu](#), the last KMT-controlled city in mainland China, where Chiang Kai-shek and his son [Chiang Ching-kuo](#) directed the defense at the Chengtu Central Military Academy. Flying out of [Chengdu Fenghuangshan Airport](#), Chiang Kai-shek, father and son, were evacuated to Taiwan via Guangdong on an aircraft called *May-ling* and arrived the same day. Chiang Kai-shek would never return to the mainland.^[90]

Chiang did not re-assume the presidency until 1 March 1950. On January 1952, Chiang commanded the [Control Yuan](#), now in Taiwan, to impeach Li in the "Case of Li Zongren's Failure to carry out Duties due to Illegal Conduct" (李宗仁違法失職案). Chiang relieved Li of the position as vice-president in the [National Assembly](#) in March 1954.

On Taiwan

Chiang moved the government to [Taipei](#), Taiwan, where he resumed his duties as [President of the Republic of China](#) on 1 March 1950.^[91] Chiang was reelected by the [National Assembly](#) to be the President of the [Republic of China](#) (ROC) on 20 May 1954, and again in 1960, 1966, and 1972. He continued to claim sovereignty over all of China, including the territories held by his government and the [People's Republic](#), as well as territory the latter ceded to foreign governments, such as [Tuva](#) and [Outer Mongolia](#). In the context of the [Cold War](#), most of the Western world recognized this position and the ROC represented China [in the United Nations](#) and other international organizations until the 1970s.

During his presidency on Taiwan, Chiang continued making preparations in order to take back mainland China. He developed the ROC army in order to prepare for an invasion of the mainland, and to defend Taiwan in case of an attack by the Communist forces. He also financed armed groups in mainland China, such as Muslim soldiers of the ROC Army left in Yunnan under [Li Mi](#), who continued to fight. It was not until the 1980s that these troops were finally airlifted to Taiwan.^[92] He promoted the Uyghur [Yulbars Khan](#) to Governor during the [Islamic insurgency on the mainland](#) for resisting the Communists, even though the government had already evacuated to Taiwan.^[93] He planned an [invasion of the mainland](#) in 1962.^[94] In the 1950s Chiang's airplanes dropped supplies to Kuomintang Muslim insurgents in [Amdo](#).^[95]

Regime[\[edit\]](#)

Despite the democratic constitution, the government under Chiang was a [one-party state](#), consisting almost completely of [mainlanders](#); the "[Temporary Provisions Effective During the Period of Communist Rebellion](#)" greatly enhanced [executive powers](#), and the goal of [retaking mainland China](#) allowed the KMT to maintain a monopoly on power and the prohibition of [opposition parties](#). The government's official line for these martial law provisions stemmed from the claim that emergency provisions were necessary, since the Communists and KMT were still in a state of war. Seeking to promote [Chinese nationalism](#), Chiang's government actively ignored and suppressed local cultural expression, even forbidding the use of local languages in mass media broadcasts or during class sessions. As a result of Taiwan's anti-government uprising in 1947, known as the [February 28 incident](#), the KMT-led political repression resulted in the death or disappearance of over 30,000 Taiwanese intellectuals, activists, and people suspected of opposition to the KMT.^[96]

The first decades after the Nationalists moved the seat of government to the province of Taiwan are associated with the organized effort to resist Communism known as the "[White Terror](#)", during which about 140,000 Taiwanese were imprisoned for their real or perceived opposition to the Kuomintang.^[97] Most of those prosecuted were labeled by the Kuomintang as "bandit spies" (匪諜), meaning spies for Chinese Communists, and punished as such.^[citation needed]

Under Chiang, the government recognized limited [civil liberties](#), [economic freedoms](#), [property rights](#) ([personal](#)^{[[citation needed](#)]} and [intellectual](#)) and other liberties. Despite these restrictions, free debate within the confines of the legislature was permitted. Under the pretext that new elections could not be held in Communist-occupied constituencies, the [National Assembly](#), [Legislative Yuan](#), and [Control Yuan](#) members held their posts indefinitely. The Temporary Provisions also allowed Chiang to remain as president beyond the two-term limit in the Constitution. He was reelected by the National Assembly as president four times—doing so in 1954, 1960, 1966, and 1972.^{[[citation needed](#)]}

Believing that corruption and a lack of morals were key reasons that the KMT lost mainland China to the Communists, Chiang attempted to purge corruption by dismissing members of the KMT accused of graft. Some major figures in the previous mainland Chinese government, such as Chiang's brothers-in-law [H. H. Kung](#) and [T. V. Soong](#), exiled themselves to the United States. Although politically authoritarian and, to some extent, dominated by government-owned industries, Chiang's new Taiwanese state also encouraged [economic development](#), especially in the export sector. A popular sweeping [Land Reform Act](#), as well as [American foreign aid](#) during the 1950s, laid the foundation for Taiwan's economic success, becoming one of the [Four Asian Tigers](#).^{[[citation needed](#)]}

Chiang personally had the power to review the rulings of all military tribunals which during the martial law period tried civilians as well. In 1950 Lin Pang-chun and two other men were

arrested on charges of financial crimes and sentenced to 3–10 years in prison. Chiang reviewed the sentences of all three and ordered them executed instead. In 1954 Changhua monk Kao Chih-te and two others were sentenced to 12 years in prison for providing aid to accused communists, Chiang sentenced them to death after reviewing the case. This control over the decision of military tribunals violated the ROC constitution.^[98]

After Chiang's death, the next president, his son, [Chiang Ching-kuo](#), and Chiang Ching-kuo's successor, [Lee Teng-hui](#), a [native Taiwanese](#), would in the 1980s and 1990s increase native Taiwanese representation in the government and loosen the many authoritarian controls of the early era of ROC control in Taiwan.^[citation needed]

Relationship with Japan^[edit]

In 1971, the [Australian Opposition Leader Gough Whitlam](#), who [became Prime Minister in 1972](#) and [swiftly relocated the Australian mission from Taipei to Beijing](#), visited Japan. After meeting with the Japanese Prime Minister, [Eisaku Sato](#), Whitlam observed that the reason Japan at that time was hesitant to withdraw recognition from the Nationalist government was "the presence of a treaty between the Japanese government and that of Chiang Kai-shek". Sato explained that the continued recognition of Japan towards the Nationalist government was due largely to the personal relationship that various members of the Japanese government felt towards Chiang. This relationship was rooted largely in the generous and lenient treatment

of [Japanese prisoners-of-war](#) by the Nationalist government in the years immediately following the Japanese surrender in 1945, and was felt especially strongly as a bond of personal obligation by the most senior members then in power.^[99]

Although Japan recognized the People's Republic in 1972, shortly after [Kakuei Tanaka](#) succeeded Sato as Prime Minister of Japan, the memory of this relationship was strong enough to be reported by *The New York Times* (15 April 1978) as a significant factor inhibiting trade between Japan and the mainland. There is speculation that a clash between Communist forces and a Japanese warship in 1978 was caused by Chinese anger after Prime Minister [Takeo Fukuda](#) attended Chiang's funeral. Historically, Japanese attempts to normalize their [relationship with the People's Republic](#) were met with accusations of ingratitude in Taiwan.^[99]

Relationship with the United States[\[edit\]](#)

Chiang was suspicious that [covert operatives of the United States](#) plotted a [coup](#) against him.

In 1950, Chiang Ching-kuo became director of the [secret police \(Bureau of Investigation and Statistics\)](#), which he remained until 1965. Chiang was also suspicious of politicians who were overly friendly to the United States, and considered them his enemies. In 1953, seven days after surviving an assassination attempt, [Wu Kuo-chen](#) lost his position as governor of Taiwan Province to [Chiang Ching-kuo](#). After fleeing to United States the same year, he became a vocal critic of Chiang's family and government.^[100]

Chiang Ching-kuo, educated in the Soviet Union, initiated [Soviet-style military organization](#) in the [Republic of China Military](#). He reorganized and [Sovietized](#) the [political officer corps](#), and propagated [Kuomintang ideology](#) throughout the military. [Sun Li-jen](#), who was educated at the American [Virginia Military Institute](#), was opposed to this.^[101]

Chiang Ching-kuo orchestrated the controversial [court-martial](#) and arrest of General [Sun Li-jen](#) in August 1955, for plotting a coup d'état with the American [Central Intelligence Agency](#) (CIA) against his father Chiang Kai-shek and the Kuomintang. The CIA allegedly wanted to help Sun take control of Taiwan and declare its independence.^{[100][102]}

Death[\[edit\]](#)

In 1975, 26 years after Chiang came to Taiwan, he died in [Taipei](#) at the age of 87. He had suffered a [heart attack](#) and [pneumonia](#) in the foregoing months and died from [renal failure](#) aggravated with advanced cardiac failure on 5 April. Chiang's funeral was held on April 16.^[103]

A month of mourning was declared. Chinese music composer [Hwang Yau-tai](#) wrote the [Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Song](#). In mainland China, however, Chiang's death was met with little apparent mourning and Communist state-run newspapers gave the brief headline "Chiang Kai-shek Has Died." Chiang's body was put in a copper coffin and temporarily interred at his favorite residence in [Cihu](#), [Daxi](#), [Taoyuan](#). His funeral was attended by dignitaries from many nations,

including American Vice President [Nelson Rockefeller](#), South Korean Prime Minister [Kim Jong-pil](#) and two former Japanese prime ministers : [Nobusuke Kishi](#) and [Eisaku Sato](#). [Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Day](#) ([蔣公逝世紀念日](#)) was established on April 5. The memorial day was disestablished in 2007.

When his son [Chiang Ching-kuo](#) died in 1988, he was entombed in a separate mausoleum in nearby [Touliiao](#) ([頭寮](#)). The hope was to have both buried at their birthplace in Fenghua if and when it was possible. In 2004, [Chiang Fang-liang](#), the widow of Chiang Ching-kuo, asked that both father and son be buried at [Wuzhi Mountain Military Cemetery](#) in [Xizhi, Taipei County](#) (now New Taipei City). Chiang's ultimate funeral ceremony became a political battle between the wishes of the state and the wishes of his family.

Chiang was succeeded as President by Vice President [Yen Chia-kan](#) and as Kuomintang party ruler by his son [Chiang Ching-kuo](#), who retired Chiang Kai-shek's title of Director-General and instead assumed the position of Chairman. Yen's presidency was interim; Chiang Ching-kuo, who was the [Premier](#), became President after Yen's term ended three years later.

Mao Zedong

Mao Zedong (/ˈmaʊˈdzɛˈdoʊ/^[1] [Chinese](#): [毛泽东](#); December 26, 1893 – September 9, 1976), also known as **Chairman Mao**, was a Chinese [communist revolutionary](#) who was the [founder](#) of the [People's Republic of China](#) (PRC), which he ruled as the [chairman of the Communist Party](#)

[of China](#) from its [establishment](#) in 1949 until his [death](#) in 1976. Ideologically a [Marxist–Leninist](#), his theories, military strategies, and political policies are collectively known as [Maoism](#).

Mao was the son of a prosperous peasant in [Shaoshan, Hunan](#). He had a [Chinese nationalist](#) and an [anti-imperialist](#) outlook early in his life, and was particularly influenced by the events of the [Xinhai Revolution](#) of 1911 and [May Fourth Movement](#) of 1919. He later adopted Marxism–Leninism while working at [Peking University](#), and became a founding member of the [Communist Party of China](#) (CPC), leading the [Autumn Harvest Uprising](#) in 1927. During the [Chinese Civil War](#) between the [Kuomintang](#) (KMT) and the CPC, Mao helped to found the [Chinese Workers' and Peasants' Red Army](#), led the [Jiangxi Soviet's](#) radical land policies, and ultimately became head of the CPC during the [Long March](#). Although the CPC temporarily allied with the KMT under the [United Front](#) during the [Second Sino-Japanese War](#) (1937–1945), China's civil war resumed after [Japan's surrender](#) and in 1949 Mao's forces defeated the [Nationalist government](#), which withdrew to [Taiwan](#).

On October 1, 1949, Mao [proclaimed the foundation of the PRC](#), a [single-party state](#) controlled by the CPC. In the following years he solidified his control through [campaigns against landlords, suppression of "counter-revolutionaries"](#), "[Three-anti and Five-anti Campaigns](#)" and through a psychological victory in the [Korean War](#), which altogether resulted in the deaths of several million Chinese. From 1953 to 1958, Mao played an important role in enforcing [planned economy](#) in China, constructing the [first Constitution of the PRC](#), launching the [industrialisation](#)

[program](#), and initiating the "[Two Bombs, One Satellite](#)" project. In 1955–1957, Mao launched the [Sufan movement](#) and the [Anti-Rightist Campaign](#), with at least 550,000 people persecuted in the latter, most of whom were intellectuals and dissidents. In 1958, he launched the [Great Leap Forward](#) that aimed to rapidly transform China's economy from [agrarian](#) to [industrial](#), which led to the [deadliest famine in history](#) and the deaths of 15–55 million people between 1958 and 1962. In 1963, Mao launched the [Socialist Education Movement](#), and in 1966 he initiated the [Cultural Revolution](#), a program to remove "counter-revolutionary" elements in Chinese society which lasted 10 years and was marked by violent [class struggle](#), widespread destruction of cultural artifacts, and an unprecedented elevation of [Mao's cult of personality](#). Tens of millions of people were persecuted during the Revolution, while the estimated number of deaths ranges from hundreds of thousands to millions, including [Liu Shaoqi](#), the [2nd Chairman of the PRC](#). After years of ill health, Mao suffered a series of heart attacks in 1976 and died at the age of 82. During Mao's era, China's population grew from around 550 million to over 900 million while the government did not strictly enforce its [family planning policy](#).

A controversial figure, Mao is regarded as one of the most important individuals in the twentieth century. He is also known as a political intellect, theorist, military strategist, and poet. During Mao's era, China was involved in the [Korean War](#), the [Sino-Soviet split](#), the [Vietnam War](#), and the rise of [Khmer Rouge](#). Supporters credit him with driving [imperialism](#) out of China, modernising the nation and building it into a [world power](#), promoting the status of women,

improving education and health care, as well as increasing [life expectancy](#) of average Chinese. Conversely, his regime has been called autocratic and [totalitarian](#), and condemned for bringing about mass repression and destroying religious and cultural artifacts and sites.^{[2][3]} It was additionally responsible for vast numbers of deaths with estimates ranging from 40 to 80 million victims through starvation, persecution, [prison labour](#) and mass executions.^{[3][4][5][6][7]}



During Mao's lifetime, the English-language media universally rendered his name as **Mao Tse-tung**, using the [Wade-Giles](#) system of transliteration for Standard Chinese though with the circumflex accent in the syllable "Tsê" dropped. Due to its recognizability, the spelling was used widely, even by the Foreign Ministry of the PRC after pinyin (*[Hanyu Pinyin](#)*) became the PRC's official romanization system for [Mandarin Chinese](#) in 1958. For example, the well-known booklet of Mao's political statements, *[The Little Red Book](#)*, was officially entitled *Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-tung* in English translations. While the pinyin-derived spelling "Mao Zedong" is increasingly common, the Wade-Giles-derived spelling "Mao Tse-tung" continues to be used in modern publications to some extent.^[8]

Early life

Main article: [Early life of Mao Zedong](#)

Youth and the Xinhai Revolution: 1893–1911

Mao Zedong was born on December 26, 1893 in [Shaoshan](#) village, [Hunan](#).^[9] His father, [Mao Yichang](#), was a formerly impoverished peasant who had become one of the wealthiest farmers in Shaoshan. Growing up in rural Hunan, Mao described his father as a stern disciplinarian, who would beat him and his three siblings, the boys [Zemin](#) and [Zetan](#), as well as an adopted girl, [Zejian](#).^[10] Mao's mother, [Wen Qimei](#), was a devout [Buddhist](#) who tried to temper her husband's strict attitude.^[11] Mao too became a Buddhist, but abandoned this faith in his mid-teenage years.^[11] At age 8, Mao was sent to Shaoshan Primary School. Learning the value systems of [Confucianism](#), he later admitted that he did not enjoy the [classical Chinese texts](#) preaching Confucian morals, instead favouring popular novels like [Romance of the Three Kingdoms](#) and [Water Margin](#).^[12] At age 13, Mao finished primary education, and his father united him in an [arranged marriage](#) to the 17-year-old [Luo Yixiu](#), thereby uniting their land-owning families. Mao refused to recognise her as his wife, becoming a fierce critic of arranged marriage and temporarily moving away. Luo was locally disgraced and died in 1910.^[13]

While working on his father's farm, Mao read voraciously^[14] and developed a "political consciousness" from [Zheng Guanying](#)'s booklet which lamented the deterioration of Chinese power and argued for the adoption of [representative democracy](#).^[15] Interested in history, Mao was inspired by the military prowess and nationalistic fervour of [George Washington](#) and [Napoleon Bonaparte](#).^[16] His political views were shaped by [Gelaohui](#)-led

protests which erupted following a famine in [Changsha](#), the capital of Hunan; Mao supported the protesters' demands, but the armed forces suppressed the dissenters and executed their leaders.^[17] The famine spread to Shaoshan, where starving peasants seized his father's grain. He disapproved of their actions as morally wrong, but claimed sympathy for their situation.^[18] At age 16, Mao moved to a higher primary school in nearby Dongshan,^[19] where he was bullied for his peasant background.^[20]

In 1911, Mao began middle school in Changsha.^[21] Revolutionary sentiment was strong in the city, where there was widespread animosity towards Emperor [Puyi's absolute monarchy](#) and many were advocating [republicanism](#). The republicans' figurehead was [Sun Yat-sen](#), an American-educated Christian who led the [Tongmenghui](#) society.^[22] In Changsha, Mao was influenced by Sun's newspaper, *The People's Independence (Minli bao)*,^[23] and called for Sun to become president in a school essay.^[24] As a symbol of rebellion against the [Manchu](#) monarch, Mao and a friend cut off their [queue](#) pigtails, a sign of subservience to the emperor.^[25]

Inspired by Sun's republicanism, the army rose up across southern China, sparking the [Xinhai Revolution](#). Changsha's governor fled, leaving the city in republican control.^[26] Supporting the revolution, Mao joined the rebel army as a [private soldier](#), but was not involved in fighting. The northern provinces remained loyal to the emperor, and hoping to avoid a civil war, Sun—proclaimed "provisional president" by his supporters—compromised with the monarchist general [Yuan Shikai](#). The monarchy was abolished, creating the [Republic of China](#), but the

monarchist Yuan became president. The revolution over, Mao resigned from the army in 1912, after six months as a soldier.^[27] Around this time, Mao discovered [socialism](#) from a newspaper article; proceeding to read pamphlets by [Jiang Kanghu](#), the student founder of the Chinese Socialist Party, Mao remained interested yet unconvinced by the idea.^[28]

Fourth Normal School of Changsha: 1912–19

Over the next few years, Mao Zedong enrolled and dropped out of a police academy, a soap-production school, a law school, an economics school, and the government-run Changsha Middle School.^[29] Studying independently, he spent much time in Changsha's library, reading core works of [classical liberalism](#) such as [Adam Smith's *The Wealth of Nations*](#) and [Montesquieu's *The Spirit of the Laws*](#), as well as the works of western scientists and philosophers such as [Darwin](#), [Mill](#), [Rousseau](#), and [Spencer](#).^[30] Viewing himself as an intellectual, years later he admitted that at this time he thought himself better than working people.^[31] He was inspired by [Friedrich Paulsen](#), whose liberal emphasis on individualism led Mao to believe that strong individuals were not bound by moral codes but should strive for the greater good, and that the "end justifies the means" conclusion of [Consequentialism](#).^[32] His father saw no use in his son's intellectual pursuits, cut off his allowance and forced him to move into a hostel for the destitute.^[33]

Mao desired to become a teacher and enrolled at the Fourth Normal School of Changsha, which soon merged with the First Normal School of Changsha, widely seen as the best in Hunan.^[34] Befriending Mao, professor [Yang Changji](#) urged him to read a radical newspaper, [New Youth](#) (*Xin qingnian*), the creation of his friend [Chen Duxiu](#), a dean at [Peking University](#). Although a [Chinese nationalist](#), Chen argued that China must look to the west to cleanse itself of superstition and autocracy.^[35] Mao published his first article in *New Youth* in April 1917, instructing readers to increase their physical strength to serve the revolution.^[36] He joined the Society for the Study of Wang Fuzhi (*Chuan-shan Hsüeh-she*), a revolutionary group founded by Changsha literati who wished to emulate the philosopher [Wang Fuzhi](#).^[37]

In his first school year, Mao befriended an older student, [Xiao Zisheng](#); together they went on a walking tour of Hunan, begging and writing literary couplets to obtain food.^[38] A popular student, in 1915 Mao was elected secretary of the Students Society. He organized the Association for Student Self-Government and led protests against school rules.^[39] In spring 1917, he was elected to command the students' volunteer army, set up to defend the school from marauding soldiers.^[40] Increasingly interested in the techniques of war, he took a keen interest in [World War I](#), and also began to develop a sense of solidarity with workers.^[41] Mao undertook feats of physical endurance with Xiao Zisheng and [Cai Hesen](#), and with other young revolutionaries they formed the Renovation of the People Study Society in April 1918 to debate Chen Duxiu's ideas. Desiring personal and societal transformation, the Society gained 70–80

members, many of whom would later join the Communist Party.^[42] Mao graduated in June 1919, ranked third in the year.^[43]

Early revolutionary activity

Main article: [Early revolutionary activity of Mao Zedong](#)

Beijing, Anarchism, and Marxism: 1917–19

Mao moved to Beijing, where his mentor Yang Changji had taken a job at Peking University.^[44] Yang thought Mao exceptionally "intelligent and handsome",^[45] securing him a job as assistant to the university librarian [Li Dazhao](#), who would become an early Chinese Communist.^[46] Li authored a series of *New Youth* articles on the [October Revolution](#) in Russia, during which the Communist [Bolshevik Party](#) under the leadership of [Vladimir Lenin](#) had seized power. Lenin was an advocate of the socio-political theory of [Marxism](#), first developed by the German sociologists [Karl Marx](#) and [Friedrich Engels](#), and Li's articles added Marxism to the doctrines in Chinese revolutionary movement.^[47] Becoming "more and more radical", Mao was initially influenced by [Peter Kropotkin's anarchism](#), which was the most prominent radical doctrine of the day. [Chinese anarchists](#), such as [Cai Yuanpei](#), Chancellor of Peking University, called for complete social revolution in social relations, family structure, and women's equality, rather than the simple change in the form of government called for by earlier revolutionaries. He joined Li's Study Group and "developed rapidly toward Marxism" during the winter of 1919.^[48]

Paid a low wage, Mao lived in a cramped room with seven other Hunanese students, but believed that Beijing's beauty offered "vivid and living compensation".^[49] At the university, Mao was snubbed by other students due to his rural Hunanese accent and lowly position. He joined the university's Philosophy and Journalism Societies and attended lectures and seminars by the likes of [Chen Duxiu](#), [Hu Shih](#), and [Qian Xuantong](#).^[50] Mao's time in Beijing ended in the spring of 1919, when he travelled to Shanghai with friends who were preparing to leave for France.^[51] He did not return to Shaoshan, where his mother was terminally ill. She died in October 1919 and her husband died in January 1920.^[52]

New Culture and political protests, 1919–20

On May 4, 1919, students in Beijing gathered at the Gate of Heavenly Peace to protest the Chinese government's weak resistance to Japanese expansion in China. Patriots were outraged at the influence given to Japan in the [Twenty-One Demands](#) in 1915, the complicity of [Duan Qirui's Beiyang Government](#), and the betrayal of China in the [Treaty of Versailles](#), wherein Japan was allowed to [receive territories in Shandong](#) which had been surrendered by [Germany](#). These demonstrations ignited the nationwide [May Fourth Movement](#) and fueled the [New Culture Movement](#) which blamed China's diplomatic defeats on social and cultural backwardness.^[53]

In Changsha, Mao had begun teaching history at the Xiuye Primary School^[54] and organizing protests against the pro-Duan Governor of Hunan Province, [Zhang Jingyao](#), popularly known as

"Zhang the Venomous" due to his corrupt and violent rule.^[55] In late May, Mao co-founded the Hunanese Student Association with [He Shuheng](#) and [Deng Zhongxia](#), organizing a student strike for June and in July 1919 began production of a weekly radical magazine, *Xiang River Review* (*Xiangjiang pinglun*). Using vernacular language that would be understandable to the majority of China's populace, he advocated the need for a "Great Union of the Popular Masses", strengthened trade unions able to wage non-violent revolution.^[clarification needed] His ideas were not Marxist, but heavily influenced by Kropotkin's concept of [mutual aid](#).^[56]

Zhang banned the Student Association, but Mao continued publishing after assuming editorship of the liberal magazine *New Hunan* (*Xin Hunan*) and offered articles in popular local newspaper *Justice* (*Ta Kung Po*). Several of these advocated [feminist](#) views, calling for the liberation of women in Chinese society; Mao was influenced by his forced arranged-marriage.^[57] In December 1919, Mao helped organise a general strike in Hunan, securing some concessions, but Mao and other student leaders felt threatened by Zhang, and Mao returned to Beijing, visiting the terminally ill Yang Changji.^[58] Mao found that his articles had achieved a level of fame among the revolutionary movement, and set about soliciting support in overthrowing Zhang.^[59] Coming across newly translated Marxist literature by Thomas Kirkup, [Karl Kautsky](#), and Marx and Engels—notably [The Communist Manifesto](#)—he came under their increasing influence, but was still eclectic in his views.^[60]

Mao visited Tianjin, [Jinan](#), and [Qufu](#),^[61] before moving to Shanghai, where he worked as a laundryman and met [Chen Duxiu](#), noting that Chen's adoption of Marxism "deeply impressed me at what was probably a critical period in my life". In Shanghai, Mao met an old teacher of his, [Yi Peiji](#), a revolutionary and member of the [Kuomintang](#) (KMT), or Chinese Nationalist Party, which was gaining increasing support and influence. Yi introduced Mao to General [Tan Yankai](#), a senior KMT member who held the loyalty of troops stationed along the Hunanese border with Guangdong. Tan was plotting to overthrow Zhang, and Mao aided him by organizing the Changsha students. In June 1920, Tan led his troops into Changsha, and Zhang fled. In the subsequent reorganization of the provincial administration, Mao was appointed headmaster of the junior section of the First Normal School. Now receiving a large income, he married Yang Kaihui in the winter of 1920.^[62]

Founding the Communist Party of

The [Communist Party of China](#) was founded by [Chen Duxiu](#) and [Li Dazhao](#) in the [French concession](#) of Shanghai in 1921 as a study society and informal network. Mao set up a Changsha branch, also establishing a branch of the Socialist Youth Corps and a Cultural Book Society which opened a bookstore to propagate revolutionary literature throughout Hunan.^[63] He was involved in the movement for Hunan autonomy, in the hope that a Hunanese constitution would increase [civil liberties](#) and make his revolutionary activity easier. When the movement was successful in establishing provincial autonomy under a new warlord, Mao forgot his

involvement.^[64] By 1921, small Marxist groups existed in Shanghai, Beijing, Changsha, Wuhan, Guangzhou, and Jinan; it was decided to hold a central meeting, which began in Shanghai on July 23, 1921. The first session of the [National Congress of the Communist Party of China](#) was attended by 13 delegates, Mao included. After the authorities sent a police spy to the congress, the delegates moved to a boat on South Lake near [Jiaying](#), in Zhejiang, to escape detection. Although Soviet and [Comintern](#) delegates attended, the first congress ignored Lenin's advice to accept a temporary alliance between the Communists and the "bourgeois democrats" who also advocated national revolution; instead they stuck to the orthodox Marxist belief that only the urban proletariat could lead a socialist revolution.^[65]

Mao was now party secretary for Hunan stationed in Changsha, and to build the party there he followed a variety of tactics.^[66] In August 1921, he founded the Self-Study University, through which readers could gain access to revolutionary literature, housed in the premises of the Society for the Study of [Wang Fuzhi](#), a Qing dynasty Hunanese philosopher who had resisted the Manchus.^[66] He joined the [YMCA](#) Mass Education Movement to fight illiteracy, though he edited the textbooks to include radical sentiments.^[67] He continued organizing workers to strike against the administration of Hunan Governor [Zhao Hengti](#).^[68] Yet labor issues remained central. The successful and famous [Anyuan coal mines strikes](#) (contrary to later Party historians) depended on both "proletarian" and "bourgeois" strategies. [Liu Shaoqi](#) and [Li Lisan](#) and Mao not

only mobilised the miners, but formed schools and cooperatives and engaged local intellectuals, gentry, military officers, merchants, Red Gang dragon heads and even church clergy.^[69]

Mao claimed that he missed the July 1922 Second Congress of the Communist Party in Shanghai because he lost the address. Adopting Lenin's advice, the delegates agreed to an alliance with the "bourgeois democrats" of the KMT for the good of the "national revolution". Communist Party members joined the KMT, hoping to push its politics leftward.^[70] Mao enthusiastically agreed with this decision, arguing for an alliance across China's socio-economic classes. Mao was a vocal anti-imperialist and in his writings he lambasted the governments of Japan, UK and US, describing the latter as "the most murderous of hangmen".^[71]

Collaboration with the Kuomintang: 1922–27

Mao giving speeches to the masses

At the Third Congress of the Communist Party in Shanghai in June 1923, the delegates reaffirmed their commitment to working with the KMT. Supporting this position, Mao was elected to the Party Committee, taking up residence in Shanghai.^[72] At the First KMT Congress, held in [Guangzhou](#) in early 1924, Mao was elected an alternate member of the KMT Central Executive Committee, and put forward four resolutions to decentralise power to urban and rural

bureaus. His enthusiastic support for the KMT earned him the suspicion of Li Li-san, his Hunan comrade.^[73]

In late 1924, Mao returned to Shaoshan, perhaps to recuperate from an illness. He found that the peasantry were increasingly restless and some had seized land from wealthy landowners to found communes. This convinced him of the revolutionary potential of the peasantry, an idea advocated by the KMT leftists but not the Communists.^[74] He returned to [Guangzhou](#) to run the 6th term of the KMT's [Peasant Movement Training Institute](#) from May to September 1926.^{[75][76]} The Peasant Movement Training Institute under Mao trained cadre and prepared them for militant activity, taking them through military training exercises and getting them to study basic left-wing texts.^[77] In the winter of 1925, Mao fled to [Guangzhou](#) after his revolutionary activities attracted the attention of Zhao's regional authorities.^[78]

When party leader Sun Yat-sen died in May 1925, he was succeeded by [Chiang Kai-shek](#), who moved to marginalise the left-KMT and the Communists.^[79] Mao nevertheless supported Chiang's [National Revolutionary Army](#), who embarked on the [Northern Expedition](#) attack in 1926 on warlords.^[80] In the wake of this expedition, peasants rose up, appropriating the land of the wealthy landowners, who were in many cases killed. Such uprisings angered senior KMT figures, who were themselves landowners, emphasizing the growing class and ideological divide within the revolutionary movement.^[81]

In March 1927, Mao appeared at the Third Plenum of the KMT Central Executive Committee in Wuhan, which sought to strip General Chiang of his power by appointing [Wang Jingwei](#) leader. There, Mao played an active role in the discussions regarding the peasant issue, defending a set of "Regulations for the Repression of Local Bullies and Bad Gentry", which advocated the death penalty or life imprisonment for anyone found guilty of [counter-revolutionary](#) activity, arguing that in a revolutionary situation, "peaceful methods cannot suffice".^{[82][83]} In April 1927, Mao was appointed to the KMT's five-member Central Land Committee, urging peasants to refuse to pay rent. Mao led another group to put together a "Draft Resolution on the Land Question", which called for the confiscation of land belonging to "local bullies and bad gentry, corrupt officials, militarists and all counter-revolutionary elements in the villages". Proceeding to carry out a "Land Survey", he stated that anyone owning over 30 *mou* (four and a half acres), constituting 13% of the population, were uniformly counter-revolutionary. He accepted that there was great variation in revolutionary enthusiasm across the country, and that a flexible policy of land redistribution was necessary.^[84] Presenting his conclusions at the Enlarged Land Committee meeting, many expressed reservations, some believing that it went too far, and others not far enough. Ultimately, his suggestions were only partially implemented.^[85]

Civil War

Fresh from the success of the Northern Expedition against the warlords, Chiang turned on the Communists, who by now numbered in the tens of thousands across China. Chiang ignored the orders of the Wuhan-based left KMT government and marched on Shanghai, a city controlled by Communist militias. As the Communists awaited Chiang's arrival, he loosed the [White Terror](#), massacring 5000 with the aid of the [Green Gang](#).^{[83][86]} In Beijing, 19 leading Communists were killed by [Zhang Zuolin](#).^{[87][88]} That May, tens of thousands of Communists and those suspected of being communists were killed, and the CPC lost approximately 15,000 of its 25,000 members.^[88]

The CPC continued supporting the Wuhan KMT government, a position Mao initially supported,^[88] but by the time of the CPC's Fifth Congress he had changed his mind, deciding to stake all hope on the peasant militia.^[89] The question was rendered moot when the Wuhan government expelled all Communists from the KMT on July 15.^[89] The CPC founded the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army of China, better known as the "[Red Army](#)", to battle Chiang.

A battalion led by General [Zhu De](#) was ordered to take the city of [Nanchang](#) on August 1, 1927, in what became known as the [Nanchang Uprising](#). They were initially successful, but were forced into retreat after five days, marching south to [Shantou](#), and from there they were driven into the wilderness of [Fujian](#).^[89] Mao was appointed commander-in-chief of the Red Army and led four regiments against Changsha in the [Autumn Harvest Uprising](#), in the hope of sparking peasant uprisings across Hunan. On the eve of the attack, Mao composed a poem—the earliest of his to survive—titled "Changsha". His plan was to attack the KMT-held city from three

directions on September 9, but the Fourth Regiment deserted to the KMT cause, attacking the Third Regiment. Mao's army made it to Changsha, but could not take it; by September 15, he accepted defeat and with 1000 survivors marched east to the [Jinggang Mountains](#) of [Jiangxi](#).^{[90][91]}

Jung Chang and Jon Halliday claim that the uprising was in fact sabotaged by Mao to allow him to prevent a group of KMT soldiers from defecting to any other CPC leader.^[92] Chang and Halliday also claim that Mao talked the other leaders (including Russian diplomats at the Soviet consulate in Changsha who, Chang and Halliday claim, had been controlling much of the CPC activity) into striking only at Changsha, then abandoning it. Chang and Halliday report a view sent to Moscow by the secretary of the Soviet Consulate in Changsha that the retreat was "the most despicable treachery and cowardice."^[92]

Base in Jinggangshan: 1927–1928

The CPC Central Committee, hiding in Shanghai, expelled Mao from their ranks and from the Hunan Provincial Committee, as punishment for his "military opportunism", for his focus on rural activity, and for being too lenient with "bad gentry". They nevertheless adopted three policies he had long championed: the immediate formation of [Workers' councils](#), the confiscation of all land without exemption, and the rejection of the KMT. Mao's response was to ignore them.^[93] He established a base in [Jinggangshan City](#), an area of the Jinggang Mountains, where

he united five villages as a self-governing state, and supported the confiscation of land from rich landlords, who were "re-educated" and sometimes executed. He ensured that no massacres took place in the region, and pursued a more lenient approach than that advocated by the Central Committee.^[94] He proclaimed that "Even the lame, the deaf and the blind could all come in useful for the revolutionary struggle", he boosted the army's numbers,^[95] incorporating two groups of bandits into his army, building a force of around 1,800 troops.^[96] He laid down rules for his soldiers: prompt obedience to orders, all confiscations were to be turned over to the government, and nothing was to be confiscated from poorer peasants. In doing so, he molded his men into a disciplined, efficient fighting force.^[95]

Revolution is not a dinner party, nor an essay, nor a painting, nor a piece of embroidery; it cannot be so refined, so leisurely and gentle, so temperate, kind, courteous, restrained and magnanimous. A revolution is an insurrection, an act of violence by which one class overthrows another.

In spring 1928, the Central Committee ordered Mao's troops to southern Hunan, hoping to spark peasant uprisings. Mao was skeptical, but complied. They reached Hunan, where they were attacked by the KMT and fled after heavy losses. Meanwhile, KMT troops had invaded Jinggangshan, leaving them without a base.^[100] Wandering the countryside, Mao's forces came

across a CPC regiment led by General [Zhu De](#) and [Lin Biao](#); they united, and attempted to retake Jinggangshan. They were initially successful, but the KMT counter-attacked, and pushed the CPC back; over the next few weeks, they fought an entrenched guerrilla war in the mountains.^{[98][101]} The Central Committee again ordered Mao to march to south Hunan, but he refused, and remained at his base. Contrastingly, Zhu complied, and led his armies away. Mao's troops fended the KMT off for 25 days while he left the camp at night to find reinforcements. He reunited with the decimated Zhu's army, and together they returned to Jinggangshan and retook the base. There they were joined by a defecting KMT regiment and [Peng Dehuai](#)'s Fifth Red Army. In the mountainous area they were unable to grow enough crops to feed everyone, leading to food shortages throughout the winter.^{[102][103]}

Jiangxi Soviet Republic of China: 1929–1934

In January 1929, Mao and Zhu evacuated the base with 2,000 men and a further 800 provided by Peng, and took their armies south, to the area around [Tonggu](#) and [Xinfeng](#) in Jiangxi.^[104] The evacuation led to a drop in morale, and many troops became disobedient and began thieving; this worried [Li Lisan](#) and the Central Committee, who saw Mao's army as *lumpenproletariat*, that were unable to share in proletarian [class consciousness](#).^{[105][106]} In keeping with orthodox Marxist thought, Li believed that only the urban proletariat could lead a successful revolution, and saw little need for Mao's peasant guerrillas; he ordered Mao to disband his army into units to be sent out to spread the revolutionary message. Mao replied that while he concurred with Li's

theoretical position, he would not disband his army nor abandon his base.^{[106][107]} Both Li and Mao saw the Chinese revolution as the key to [world revolution](#), believing that a CPC victory would spark the overthrow of global imperialism and capitalism. In this, they disagreed with the official line of the Soviet government and Comintern. Officials in Moscow desired greater control over the CPC and removed Li from power by calling him to Russia for an inquest into his errors.^{[108][109][110]} They replaced him with Soviet-educated Chinese Communists, known as the "[28 Bolsheviks](#)", two of whom, [Bo Gu](#) and [Zhang Wentian](#), took control of the Central Committee. Mao disagreed with the new leadership, believing they grasped little of the Chinese situation, and he soon emerged as their key rival.^{[109][111]}

In February 1930, Mao created the Southwest Jiangxi Provincial Soviet Government in the region under his control.^[112] In November, he suffered emotional trauma after his wife and sister were captured and beheaded by KMT general He Jian.^{[103][109][113]} Mao then married [He Zizhen](#), an 18-year-old revolutionary who bore him five children over the following nine years.^{[110][114]} Facing internal problems, members of the Jiangxi Soviet accused him of being too moderate, and hence anti-revolutionary. In December, they tried to overthrow Mao, resulting in the [Futian incident](#), during which Mao's loyalists tortured many and executed between 2000 and 3000 dissenters.^{[115][116][117]} The CPC Central Committee moved to Jiangxi which it saw as a secure area. In November it proclaimed Jiangxi to be the [Soviet Republic of China](#), an independent Communist-governed state. Although he was proclaimed Chairman of the Council

of People's Commissars, Mao's power was diminished, as his control of the Red Army was allocated to [Zhou Enlai](#). Meanwhile, Mao recovered from [tuberculosis](#).^{[118][119]}

The KMT armies adopted a policy of [encirclement and annihilation](#) of the Red armies. Outnumbered, Mao responded with guerrilla tactics influenced by the works of ancient military strategists like [Sun Tzu](#), but Zhou and the new leadership followed a policy of open confrontation and conventional warfare. In doing so, the Red Army successfully defeated [the first and second encirclements](#).^{[120][121]} Angered at his armies' failure, Chiang Kai-shek personally arrived to lead the operation. He too faced setbacks and retreated to deal with the [further Japanese incursions into China](#).^{[118][122]} As a result of the KMT's change of focus to the defence of China against Japanese expansionism, the Red Army was able to expand its area of control, eventually encompassing a population of 3 million.^[121] Mao proceeded with his land reform program. In November 1931 he announced the start of a "land verification project" which was expanded in June 1933. He also orchestrated education programs and implemented measures to increase female political participation.^[123] Chiang viewed the Communists as a greater threat than the Japanese and returned to Jiangxi, where he initiated the [fifth encirclement campaign](#), which involved the construction of a concrete and barbed wire "wall of fire" around the state, which was accompanied by aerial bombardment, to which Zhou's tactics proved ineffective. Trapped inside, morale among the Red Army dropped as food and medicine became scarce. The leadership decided to evacuate.^[124]

The Long March: 1934–1935

On October 14, 1934, the Red Army broke through the KMT line on the Jiangxi Soviet's southwest corner at Xinfeng with 85,000 soldiers and 15,000 party cadres and embarked on the "[Long March](#)". In order to make the escape, many of the wounded and the ill, as well as women and children, were left behind, defended by a group of guerrilla fighters whom the KMT massacred.^{[125][126]} The 100,000 who escaped headed to southern Hunan, first crossing the [Xiang River](#) after heavy fighting,^{[126][127]} and then the [Wu River](#), in [Guizhou](#) where they took [Zunyi](#) in January 1935. Temporarily resting in the city, they [held a conference](#); here, Mao was elected to a position of leadership, becoming Chairman of [the Politburo](#), and *de facto* leader of both Party and Red Army, in part because his candidacy was supported by Soviet Premier [Joseph Stalin](#). Insisting that they operate as a guerrilla force, he laid out a destination: the Shensi Soviet in [Shaanxi](#), Northern China, from where the Communists could focus on fighting the Japanese. Mao believed that in focusing on the anti-imperialist struggle, the Communists would earn the trust of the Chinese people, who in turn would renounce the KMT.^[128]

From Zunyi, Mao led his troops to [Loushan Pass](#), where they faced armed opposition but successfully crossed the river. Chiang flew into the area to lead his armies against Mao, but the Communists outmanoeuvred him and crossed the [Jinsha River](#).^[129] Faced with the more difficult task of crossing the [Tatu River](#), they managed it by fighting a battle over the [Luding Bridge](#) in May, taking [Luding](#).^[130] Marching through the mountain ranges around [Ma'anshan](#),^[131] in

Moukung, Western Szechuan, they encountered the 50,000-strong CPC Fourth Front Army of [Zhang Guotao](#), and together proceeded to Maoerkai and then [Gansu](#). Zhang and Mao disagreed over what to do; the latter wished to proceed to Shaanxi, while Zhang wanted to retreat east to [Tibet](#) or [Sikkim](#), far from the KMT threat. It was agreed that they would go their separate ways, with [Zhu De](#) joining Zhang.^[132] Mao's forces proceeded north, through hundreds of kilometres of [Grasslands](#), an area of quagmire where they were attacked by [Manchu tribesman](#) and where many soldiers succumbed to famine and disease.^{[133][134]} Finally reaching [Shaanxi](#), they fought off both the KMT and an Islamic cavalry militia before crossing the [Min Mountains](#) and Mount Liupan and reaching the Shenshi Soviet; only 7,000–8000 had survived.^{[134][135]} The Long March cemented Mao's status as the dominant figure in the party. In November 1935, he was named chairman of the Military Commission. From this point onward, Mao was the Communist Party's undisputed leader, even though he would not become party chairman until 1943.^[136]

Jung Chang and Jon Halliday offered an alternative account on many events during this period in their book [Mao: The Unknown Story](#).^[137] For example, there was no battle at Luding and the CPC crossed the bridge unopposed, the Long March was not a strategy of the CPC but devised by Chiang Kai-shek, and Mao and other top CPC leaders did not walk the Long March but were carried on litters.^[138] However, although well received in the popular press, Chang and Halliday's work has been highly criticized by professional historians.^[139]

Alliance with the Kuomintang: 1935–1940

Mao's troops arrived at the [Yan'an](#) Soviet during October 1935 and settled in Pao An, until spring 1936. While there, they developed links with local communities, redistributed and farmed the land, offered medical treatment, and began literacy programs.^{[134][140][141]} Mao now commanded 15,000 soldiers, boosted by the arrival of [He Long](#)'s men from Hunan and the armies of Zhu De and Zhang Guotao returned from Tibet.^[140] In February 1936, they established the North West Anti-Japanese Red Army University in Yan'an, through which they trained increasing numbers of new recruits.^[142] In January 1937, they began the "anti-Japanese expedition", that sent groups of guerrilla fighters into Japanese-controlled territory to undertake sporadic attacks.^{[143][144]} In May 1937, a Communist Conference was held in Yan'an to discuss the situation.^[145] Western reporters also arrived in the "Border Region" (as the Soviet had been renamed); most notable were [Edgar Snow](#), who used his experiences as a basis for *[Red Star Over China](#)*, and [Agnes Smedley](#), whose accounts brought international attention to Mao's cause.^[146]

On the Long March, Mao's wife He Zizhen had been injured by a shrapnel wound to the head. She traveled to Moscow for medical treatment; Mao proceeded to divorce her and marry an actress, [Jiang Qing](#).^{[114][147]} Mao moved into a cave-house and spent much of his time reading, tending his garden and theorizing.^[148] He came to believe that the Red Army alone was unable to defeat the Japanese, and that a Communist-led "government of national defence" should be formed with the KMT and other "bourgeois nationalist" elements to achieve this

goal.^[149] Although despising Chiang Kai-shek as a "traitor to the nation",^[150] on May 5, he telegraphed the Military Council of the Nanking National Government proposing a military alliance, a course of action advocated by Stalin.^[151] Although Chiang intended to ignore Mao's message and continue the civil war, he was arrested by one of his own generals, [Zhang Xueliang](#), in [Xi'an](#), leading to the [Xi'an Incident](#); Zhang forced Chiang to discuss the issue with the Communists, resulting in the formation of a [United Front](#) with concessions on both sides on December 25, 1937.^[152]

The Japanese had taken both Shanghai and [Nanking \(Nanjing\)](#)—resulting in the [Nanking Massacre](#), an atrocity Mao never spoke of all his life—and was pushing the Kuomintang government inland to [Chungking](#).^[153] The Japanese's brutality led to increasing numbers of Chinese joining the fight, and the Red Army grew from 50,000 to 500,000.^{[154][155]} In August 1938, the Red Army formed the [New Fourth Army](#) and the [Eighth Route Army](#), which were nominally under the command of Chiang's [National Revolutionary Army](#).^[156] In August 1940, the Red Army initiated the [Hundred Regiments Campaign](#), in which 400,000 troops attacked the Japanese simultaneously in five provinces. It was a military success that resulted in the death of 20,000 Japanese, the disruption of railways and the loss of a coal mine.^{[155][157]} From his base in Yan'an, Mao authored several texts for his troops, including *Philosophy of Revolution*, which offered an introduction to the Marxist theory of knowledge; *Protracted Warfare*, which dealt

with guerilla and mobile military tactics; and *New Democracy*, which laid forward ideas for China's future.^[158]

Resuming civil war: 1940–1949

In 1944, the Americans sent a special diplomatic envoy, called the [Dixie Mission](#), to the Communist Party of China. According to Edwin Moise, in *Modern China: A History 2nd Edition*:

Most of the Americans were favourably impressed. The CPC seemed less corrupt, more unified, and more vigorous in its resistance to Japan than the KMT. United States fliers shot down over North China ... confirmed to their superiors that the CPC was both strong and popular over a broad area. In the end, the contacts which the USA developed with the CPC led to very little.

After the end of World War II, the U.S. continued their military assistance to Chiang Kai-shek and his KMT government forces against the [People's Liberation Army](#) (PLA) led by Mao Zedong during the [civil war](#). Likewise, the [Soviet Union](#) gave quasi-covert support to Mao by their occupation of north east China, which allowed the PLA to move in en masse and take large supplies of arms left by the Japanese's [Kwantung Army](#).^[citation needed]

To enhance the Red Army's military operations, Mao as the Chairman of the Communist Party of China, named his close associate General [Zhu De](#) to be its Commander-in-Chief.

In 1948, under direct orders from Mao, the People's Liberation Army starved out the Kuomintang forces occupying the city of [Changchun](#). At least 160,000 civilians are believed to have perished during [the siege](#), which lasted from June until October. PLA lieutenant colonel Zhang Zhenglu, who documented the siege in his book *[White Snow, Red Blood](#)*, compared it to [Hiroshima](#): "The casualties were about the same. Hiroshima took nine seconds; Changchun took five months."^[159] On January 21, 1949, Kuomintang forces suffered great losses in decisive battles against Mao's forces.^[160] In the early morning of December 10, 1949, PLA troops laid siege to [Chongqing](#) and [Chengdu](#) on [mainland China](#), and Chiang Kai-shek fled from the mainland to [Formosa](#) (Taiwan).^{[160][161]}

Leadership of China

Mao proclaimed the establishment of The People's Republic of China from the [Gate of Heavenly Peace](#) (Tian'anmen) on October 1, 1949, and later that week declared "The Chinese people have stood up" (中国人民从此站起来了).^[162] Mao went to Moscow for long talks in the winter of 1949–50. Mao initiated the talks which focused on the political and economic revolution in China, foreign policy, railways, naval bases, and Soviet economic and technical aid. The resulting treaty reflected Stalin's dominance and his willingness to help Mao.^{[163][164]}

Mao pushed the Party to organize campaigns to reform society and extend control. These campaigns were given urgency in October 1950, when Mao made the decision to send

the [People's Volunteer Army](#), a special unit of the [People's Liberation Army](#), into the [Korean War](#) and fight as well as to reinforce the armed forces of North Korea, the [Korean People's Army](#), which had been in full retreat. The United States placed a trade embargo on the People's Republic as a result of its involvement in the [Korean War](#), lasting until [Richard Nixon's](#) improvements of relations. At least 180 thousand Chinese troops died during the war.^[165]

Mao directed operations to the minutest detail. As the Chairman of the Central Military Commission (CMC), he was also the Supreme Commander in Chief of the PLA and the People's Republic and Chairman of the Party. Chinese troops in Korea were under the overall command of then newly installed Premier [Zhou Enlai](#), with General [Peng Dehuai](#) as field commander and political commissar.^[166]

During the [land reform campaigns](#), large numbers of landlords and rich peasants were beaten to death at mass meetings organised by the Communist Party as land was taken from them and given to poorer peasants, which significantly reduced [economic inequality](#).^{[167][168]} The [Campaign to Suppress Counter-revolutionaries](#)^[169] targeted and publicly executed former Kuomintang officials, businessmen accused of "disturbing" the market, former employees of Western companies and intellectuals whose loyalty was suspect.^[170] In 1976, the [U.S. State department](#) estimated as many as a million were killed in the land reform, and 800,000 killed in the counter-revolutionary campaign.^[171]

Mao himself claimed that a total of 700,000 people were killed in attacks on "counter-revolutionaries" during the years 1950–1952.^[172] However, because there was a policy to select "at least one landlord, and usually several, in virtually every village for public execution",^[173] the number of deaths range between 2 million^{[173][174][175]} and 5 million.^{[176][177]} In addition, at least 1.5 million people,^[178] perhaps as many as 4 to 6 million,^[179] were sent to "[reform through labour](#)" camps where many perished.^[179] Mao played a personal role in organizing the mass repressions and established a system of execution quotas,^[180] which were often exceeded.^[169] He defended these killings as necessary for the securing of power.^[181]

The Mao government is generally credited with eradicating both consumption and production of [opium](#) during the 1950s using unrestrained repression and social reform.^[citation needed] Ten million addicts were forced into compulsory treatment, dealers were executed, and opium-producing regions were planted with new crops. Remaining opium production shifted south of the Chinese border into the [Golden Triangle](#) region.^[182]

Starting in 1951, Mao initiated two successive movements in an effort to rid urban areas of corruption by targeting wealthy capitalists and political opponents, known as the [three-anti/five-anti campaigns](#). Whereas the three-anti campaign was a focused purge of government, industrial and party officials, the five-anti campaign set its sights slightly broader, targeting capitalist elements in general.^[183] Workers denounced their bosses, spouses turned on their spouses, and children informed on their parents; the victims were often humiliated at [struggle sessions](#), where

a targeted person would be verbally and physically abused until they confessed to crimes. Mao insisted that minor offenders be criticised and reformed or sent to labour camps, "while the worst among them should be shot". These campaigns took several hundred thousand additional lives, the vast majority via suicide.^[184]

In Shanghai, suicide by jumping from tall buildings became so commonplace that residents avoided walking on the pavement near skyscrapers for fear that suicides might land on them.^[185] Some biographers have pointed out that driving those perceived as enemies to suicide was a common tactic during the Mao-era. For example, in his biography of Mao, [Philip Short](#) notes that in the [Yan'an Rectification Movement](#), Mao gave explicit instructions that "no cadre is to be killed", but in practice allowed security chief [Kang Sheng](#) to drive opponents to suicide and that "this pattern was repeated throughout his leadership of the People's Republic".^[186]

Following the consolidation of power, Mao launched the First [Five-Year Plan](#) (1953–1958), which aimed to end Chinese dependence upon agriculture in order to become a world power. With the [Soviet Union](#)'s assistance, new industrial plants were built and agricultural production eventually fell^[clarification needed] to a point where industry was beginning to produce enough capital that China no longer needed the USSR's support.^[citation needed] The declared success of the First-Five Year Plan was to encourage Mao to instigate the Second [Five-Year Plan](#) in 1958. Mao also launched a phase of rapid [collectivization](#). The CPC introduced price controls as well as

a [Chinese character simplification](#) aimed at increasing literacy. Large-scale industrialization projects were also undertaken.

Programs pursued during this time include the [Hundred Flowers Campaign](#), in which Mao indicated his supposed willingness to consider different opinions about how China should be governed. Given the freedom to express themselves, liberal and intellectual Chinese began opposing the Communist Party and questioning its leadership. This was initially tolerated and encouraged. After a few months, however, Mao's government reversed its policy and persecuted those who had criticised the party, totaling perhaps 500,000,^[187] as well as those who were merely alleged to have been critical, in what is called the [Anti-Rightist Movement](#). Authors such as [Jung Chang](#) have alleged that the Hundred Flowers Campaign was merely a ruse to root out "dangerous" thinking.^[188]

Li Zhisui, Mao's physician, suggested that Mao had initially seen the policy as a way of weakening opposition to him within the party and that he was surprised by the extent of criticism and the fact that it came to be directed at his own leadership.^[189] It was only then that he used it as a method of identifying and subsequently persecuting those critical of his government. The Hundred Flowers movement led to the condemnation, silencing, and death of many citizens, also linked to Mao's Anti-Rightist Movement, resulting in deaths possibly in the millions.^[citation needed]

Great Leap Forward

In January 1958, Mao launched the second [Five-Year Plan](#), known as the [Great Leap Forward](#), a plan intended to turn China from an agrarian nation to an industrialized one^[190] and as an alternative model for economic growth to the Soviet model focusing on heavy industry that was advocated by others in the party. Under this economic program, the relatively small agricultural collectives that had been formed to date were rapidly merged into far larger [people's communes](#), and many of the peasants were ordered to work on massive infrastructure projects and on the production of iron and steel. Some private food production was banned, and livestock and farm implements were brought under collective ownership.

Under the Great Leap Forward, Mao and other party leaders ordered the implementation of a variety of unproven and unscientific new agricultural techniques by the new communes. The combined effect of the diversion of labour to steel production and infrastructure projects, and cyclical [natural disasters](#) led to an approximately 15% drop in grain production in 1959 followed by a further 10% decline in 1960 and no recovery in 1961.^[191]

In an effort to win favour with their superiors and avoid being purged, each layer in the party hierarchy exaggerated the amount of grain produced under them. Based upon the fabricated success, party cadres were ordered to requisition a disproportionately high amount of that fictitious harvest for state use, primarily for use in the cities and urban areas but also for export. The result, compounded in some areas by drought and in others by floods, was that rural peasants were left with little food for themselves and many millions starved to death in the [Great Chinese](#)

[Famine](#). The people of urban areas in China were given food stamps each month, but the people of rural areas were expected to grow their own crops and give some of the crops back to the government. The death count in rural parts of China surpassed the deaths in the urban centers. Additionally, the Chinese government continued to export food that could have potentially been allocated to the country's starving citizens. These factors led to the deaths of an estimated 52 million citizens.^[192] The famine was a direct cause of the death of some 30 million Chinese peasants between 1959 and 1962.^[193] Furthermore, many children who became emaciated and malnourished during years of hardship and struggle for survival died shortly after the Great Leap Forward came to an end in 1962.^[191]

The extent of Mao's knowledge of the severity of the situation has been disputed. Mao's physician believed that he may have been unaware of the extent of the famine, partly due to a reluctance to criticise his policies, and the willingness of his staff to exaggerate or outright fake reports regarding food production.^[194] Upon learning of the extent of the starvation, Mao vowed to stop eating meat, an action followed by his staff.^[195]

Hong Kong-based historian [Frank Dikötter](#),^[196] challenged the notion that Mao did not know about the famine throughout the country until it was too late:

The idea that the state mistakenly took too much grain from the countryside because it assumed that the harvest was much larger than it was is largely a myth—at most partially true for the

autumn of 1958 only. In most cases the party knew very well that it was starving its own people to death. At a secret meeting in the Jinjiang Hotel in Shanghai dated March 25, 1959, Mao specifically ordered the party to procure up to one third of all the grain, much more than had ever been the case. At the meeting he announced that "To distribute resources evenly will only ruin the Great Leap Forward. When there is not enough to eat, people starve to death. It is better to let half of the people die so that the other half can eat their fill."^{[197][198]}

Professor Emeritus Thomas P. Bernstein of [Columbia University](#) offered his view on Mao's statement on starvation in the March 25, 1959, meeting:

Some scholars believe that this shows Mao's readiness to accept mass death on an immense scale. My own view is that this is an instance of Mao's use of hyperbole, another being his casual acceptance of death of half the population during a nuclear war. In other contexts, Mao did not in fact accept mass death. Zhou's Chronology shows that in October 1958, Mao expressed real concern that 40,000 people in Yunnan had starved to death (p. 173). Shortly after the March 25 meeting, he worried about 25.2 million people who were at risk of starvation.^[199] But from late summer on, Mao essentially forgot about this issue, until, as noted, the "Xinyang Incident" came to light in October 1960.^[200]

In the article "Mao Zedong and the Famine of 1959–1960: A Study in Wilfulness", published in 2006 in [*The China Quarterly*](#), Professor Thomas P. Bernstein also discussed Mao's change of attitudes during different phases of the Great Leap Forward:

In late autumn 1958, Mao Zedong strongly condemned widespread practices of the Great Leap Forward (GLF) such as subjecting peasants to exhausting labour without adequate food and rest, which had resulted in epidemics, starvation and deaths. At that time Mao explicitly recognized that anti-rightist pressures on officialdom were a major cause of "production at the expense of livelihood." While he was not willing to acknowledge that only abandonment of the GLF could solve these problems, he did strongly demand that they be addressed. After the July 1959 [clash at Lushan](#) with [Peng Dehuai](#), Mao revived the GLF in the context of a new, extremely harsh anti-rightist campaign, which he relentlessly promoted into the spring of 1960 together with the radical policies that he previously condemned. Not until spring 1960 did Mao again express concern about abnormal deaths and other abuses, but he failed to apply the pressure needed to stop them. Given what he had already learned about the costs to the peasants of GLF extremism, the Chairman should have known that the revival of GLF radicalism would exact a similar or even bigger price. Instead, he wilfully ignored the lessons of the first radical phase for the sake of achieving extreme ideological and developmental goals.^[199]

In *[Hungry Ghosts: Mao's Secret Famine](#)*, [Jasper Becker](#) notes that Mao was dismissive of reports he received of food shortages in the countryside and refused to change course, believing that peasants were lying and that rightists and [kulaks](#) were hoarding grain. He refused to open state granaries,^[203] and instead launched a series of "anti-grain concealment" drives that resulted in numerous purges and suicides.^[204] Other violent campaigns followed in which party leaders went from village to village in search of hidden food reserves, and not only grain, as Mao issued quotas for pigs, chickens, ducks and eggs. Many peasants accused of hiding food were tortured and beaten to death.^[205]

Whatever the cause of the disaster, Mao lost esteem among many of the top party cadres. He was eventually forced to abandon the policy in 1962, and he lost political power to moderate party leaders such as [Liu Shaoqi](#) and [Deng Xiaoping](#). Mao, however, supported by national propaganda, claimed that he was only partly to blame for the famine. As a result, Mao was forced to step down as President of the Communist Party of China on April 27, 1959, but was able to remain in his top position as Chairman of the Communist Party, with the Presidency of the party and the state transferred to Liu Shaoqi.

The Great Leap Forward was a tragedy for the vast majority of the Chinese. Although the steel quotas were officially reached, almost all of the supposed steel made in the countryside was iron, as it had been made from assorted scrap metal in home-made furnaces with no reliable source of

fuel such as coal. This meant that proper [smelting](#) conditions could not be achieved. According to Zhang Rongmei, a geometry teacher in rural Shanghai during the Great Leap Forward:

We took all the furniture, pots, and pans we had in our house, and all our neighbours did likewise. We put everything in a big fire and melted down all the metal.

The worst of the famine was steered towards enemies of the state.^[206] As [Jasper Becker](#) explains:

The most vulnerable section of China's population, around five per cent, were those whom Mao called '[enemies of the people](#)'. Anyone who had in previous campaigns of repression been labeled a 'black element' was given the lowest priority in the allocation of food. Landlords, rich peasants, former members of the nationalist regime, religious leaders, rightists, counter-revolutionaries and the families of such individuals died in the greatest numbers.^[207]

At a large Communist Party conference in Beijing in January 1962, dubbed the "[Seven Thousand Cadres Conference](#)", State Chairman Liu Shaoqi denounced the Great Leap Forward, attributing the project to widespread famine in China.^[208] The overwhelming majority of delegates expressed agreement, but Defense Minister [Lin Biao](#) staunchly defended Mao.^[208] A brief period of liberalization followed while Mao and Lin plotted a comeback.^[208] Liu Shaoqi and [Deng Xiaoping](#) rescued the economy by disbanding the people's communes, introducing elements of private control of peasant smallholdings and importing grain from Canada and Australia to mitigate the worst effects of famine.^[209]

Consequences

At the [Lushan Conference](#) in July/August 1959, several ministers expressed concern that the Great Leap Forward had not proved as successful as planned. The most direct of these was Minister of Defence and [Korean War](#) veteran General [Peng Dehuai](#). Following Peng's criticism of the Great Leap Forward, Mao orchestrated a purge of Peng and his supporters, stifling criticism of the Great Leap policies. Senior officials who reported the truth of the famine to Mao were branded as "right opportunists."^[210] A campaign against right-wing opportunism was launched and resulted in party members and ordinary peasants being sent to prison labor camps where many would subsequently die in the famine. Years later the CPC would conclude that as many as six million people were wrongly punished in the campaign.^[211]

The number of deaths by starvation during the Great Leap Forward is deeply controversial. Until the mid-1980s, when official census figures were finally published by the Chinese Government, little was known about the scale of the disaster in the Chinese countryside, as the handful of Western observers allowed access during this time had been restricted to model villages where they were deceived into believing that the Great Leap Forward had been a great success. There was also an assumption that the flow of individual reports of starvation that had been reaching the West, primarily through Hong Kong and Taiwan, must have been localised or exaggerated as China was continuing to claim record harvests and was a net exporter of grain through the period. Because Mao wanted to pay back early to the Soviets debts totalling 1.973

billion [yuan](#) from 1960 to 1962,^[212] exports increased by 50%, and fellow Communist regimes in [North Korea](#), [North Vietnam](#) and [Albania](#) were provided grain free of charge.^[203]

Censuses were carried out in China in 1953, 1964 and 1982. The first attempt to analyse this data to estimate the number of famine deaths was carried out by American demographer Dr. Judith Banister and published in 1984. Given the lengthy gaps between the censuses and doubts over the reliability of the data, an accurate figure is difficult to ascertain. Nevertheless, Banister concluded that the official data implied that around 15 million excess deaths incurred in China during 1958–61, and that based on her modelling of Chinese demographics during the period and taking account of assumed under-reporting during the famine years, the figure was around 30 million. The official statistic is 20 million deaths, as given by [Hu Yaobang](#).^[213] [Yang Jisheng](#), a former [Xinhua News Agency](#) reporter who had privileged access and connections available to no other scholars, estimates a death toll of 36 million.^[212] Frank Dikötter estimates that there were at least 45 million premature deaths attributable to the Great Leap Forward from 1958 to 1962.^[214] Various other sources have put the figure at between 20 and 46 million.^{[215][216][217]}

Split from Soviet Union

On the international front, the period was dominated by the further isolation of China. The [Sino-Soviet split](#) resulted in [Nikita Khrushchev](#)'s withdrawal of all Soviet technical experts and aid from the country. The split concerned the leadership of [world communism](#). The USSR had a

network of Communist parties it supported; China now created its own rival network to battle it out for local control of the left in numerous countries.^[218] Lorenz M. Lüthi argues:

The Sino-Soviet split was one of the key events of the Cold War, equal in importance to the construction of the Berlin Wall, the Cuban Missile Crisis, the Second Vietnam War, and Sino-American rapprochement. The split helped to determine the framework of the Second Cold War in general, and influenced the course of the Second Vietnam War in particular.^[219]

The split resulted from [Nikita Khrushchev](#)'s more moderate Soviet leadership after the death of Stalin in March 1953. Only [Albania](#) openly sided with China, thereby forming an alliance between the two countries which would last until after Mao's death in 1976. Warned that the Soviets had nuclear weapons, Mao minimized the threat. Becker says that "Mao believed that the bomb was a 'paper tiger', declaring to Khrushchev that it would not matter if China lost 300 million people in a nuclear war: the other half of the population would survive to ensure victory".^[220]

Stalin had established himself as the successor of "correct" Marxist thought well before Mao controlled the [Communist Party of China](#), and therefore Mao never challenged the suitability of any Stalinist doctrine (at least while Stalin was alive). Upon the death of Stalin, Mao believed (perhaps because of seniority) that the leadership of Marxist doctrine would fall to him. The resulting tension between Khrushchev (at the head of a politically and militarily superior

government), and Mao (believing he had a superior understanding of Marxist ideology) eroded the previous patron-client relationship between the [Communist Party of the Soviet Union](#) and the CPC.^[citation needed] In China, the formerly favoured Soviets were now denounced as "revisionists" and listed alongside "American imperialism" as movements to oppose.^[citation needed]

Partly surrounded by hostile American military bases in South Korea, Japan, and [Taiwan](#), China was now confronted with a new threat from the Soviet Union north and west. Both the internal crisis and the external threat called for extraordinary statesmanship from Mao, but as China entered the new decade the statesmen of China were in hostile confrontation with each other.^[citation needed]

Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution

During the early 1960s, Mao became concerned with the nature of post-1959 China. He saw that the revolution and Great Leap Forward had replaced the old ruling elite with a new one. He was concerned that those in power were becoming estranged from the people they were to serve. Mao believed that a revolution of culture would unseat and unsettle the "ruling class" and keep China in a state of "perpetual revolution" that, theoretically, would serve the interests of the majority, rather than a tiny and privileged elite.^[221] State Chairman [Liu Shaoqi](#) and General Secretary [Deng Xiaoping](#) favoured the idea that Mao be removed from actual power as China's head of state and government but maintain his ceremonial and symbolic role as Chairman of the

Communist Party of China, with the party upholding all of his positive contributions to the revolution. They attempted to marginalise Mao by taking control of economic policy and asserting themselves politically as well. Many claim that Mao responded to Liu and Deng's movements by launching the [Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution](#) in 1966. Some scholars, such as Mobo Gao, claim the case for this is overstated.^[222] Others, such as [Frank Dikötter](#), hold that Mao launched the Cultural Revolution to wreak revenge on those who had dared to challenge him over the Great Leap Forward.^[223]

Believing that certain liberal bourgeois elements of society continued to threaten the socialist framework, groups of young people known as the [Red Guards](#) struggled against authorities at all levels of society and even set up their own tribunals. Chaos reigned in much of the nation, and millions were persecuted. During the Cultural Revolution, nearly all of the schools and universities in China were closed, and the young intellectuals living in cities were ordered to the countryside to be "re-educated" by the peasants, where they performed hard manual labour and other work.

The Cultural Revolution led to the destruction of much of China's traditional cultural heritage and the imprisonment of a huge number of Chinese citizens, as well as the creation of general economic and social chaos in the country. Millions of lives were ruined during this period, as the Cultural Revolution pierced into every part of Chinese life, depicted by such Chinese films as [To Live](#), [The Blue Kite](#) and [Farewell My Concubine](#). It is estimated that hundreds of thousands of

people, perhaps millions, perished in the violence of the Cultural Revolution.^[217] This included prominent figures such as Liu Shaoqi.^{[224][225][226]}

When Mao was informed of such losses, particularly that people had been driven to suicide, he is alleged to have commented: "People who try to commit suicide—don't attempt to save them! . . . China is such a populous nation, it is not as if we cannot do without a few people."^[227] The authorities allowed the Red Guards to abuse and kill opponents of the regime. Said [Xie Fuzhi](#), national police chief: "Don't say it is wrong of them to beat up bad persons: if in anger they beat someone to death, then so be it."^[228] As a result, in August and September 1966, there were a reported 1,772 people murdered by the Red Guards in Beijing alone.^[229]

It was during this period that Mao chose [Lin Biao](#), who seemed to echo all of Mao's ideas, to become his successor. Lin was later officially named as Mao's successor. By 1971, however, a divide between the two men had become apparent. Official history in China states that Lin was planning a military coup or an assassination attempt on Mao. Lin Biao died on September 13, 1971 in a plane crash over the air space of Mongolia, presumably as he fled China, probably anticipating his arrest. The CPC declared that Lin was planning to depose Mao and posthumously expelled Lin from the party. At this time, Mao lost trust in many of the top CPC figures. The highest-ranking Soviet Bloc intelligence defector, Lt. Gen. [Ion Mihai Pacepa](#) described his conversation with [Nicolae Ceaușescu](#), who told him about a plot to kill Mao Zedong with the help of Lin Biao organised by the [KGB](#).^[230]

Despite being considered a [feminist](#) figure by some and a supporter of women's rights, documents released by the [US Department of State](#) in 2008 show that Mao declared women to be a "nonsense" in 1973, in conversation with Kissinger, joking that "China is a very poor country. We don't have much. What we have in excess is women... Let them go to your place. They will create disasters. That way you can lessen our burdens."^[231] When Mao offered 10 million women, Kissinger replied by saying that Mao was "improving his offer".^[232] Mao and Kissinger then agreed that their comments on women be removed from public records, prompted by a Chinese official who feared that Mao's comments might incur public anger if released.^[233]

In 1969, Mao declared the Cultural Revolution to be over, although various historians in and outside of China mark the end of the Cultural Revolution—as a whole or in part—in 1976, following Mao's death and the arrest of the [Gang of Four](#).^[234] In the last years of his life, Mao was faced with declining health due to either [Parkinson's disease](#)^[235] or, according to his physician, [amyotrophic lateral sclerosis](#),^[236] as well as lung ailments due to smoking and heart trouble.^[237] Some also attributed Mao's decline in health to the betrayal of Lin Biao. Mao remained passive as various factions within the Communist Party mobilised for the power struggle anticipated after his death.

The Cultural Revolution is now officially regarded as a "severe setback" for the PRC.^[238] It is often looked at in all scholarly circles as a greatly disruptive period for China. While one-tenth of Chinese people—an estimated 100 million—did suffer during the period,^[239] some scholars,

such as Lee Feigon and Mobo Gao, claim there were many great advances, and in some sectors the Chinese economy continued to outperform the West.^[240] They hold that the Cultural Revolution period laid the foundation for the spectacular growth that continues in China. During the Cultural Revolution, China detonated its [first H-Bomb](#) (in 1967), launched the [Dong Fang Hong](#) satellite (on January 30, 1970), commissioned its first nuclear submarines and made various advances in science and technology. Healthcare was free, and living standards in the countryside continued to improve.^[240] In comparison, the Great Leap probably did cause a much larger loss of life with its flawed economic policies which encompassed even the peasants.^[239]

Estimates of the death toll during the Cultural Revolution, including civilians and Red Guards, vary greatly. An estimate of around 400,000 deaths is a widely accepted minimum figure, according to [Maurice Meisner](#).^[241] MacFarquhar and Schoenhals assert that in rural China alone some 36 million people were persecuted, of whom between 750,000 and 1.5 million were killed, with roughly the same number permanently injured.^[242] In [Mao: The Unknown Story](#), [Jung Chang](#) and [Jon Halliday](#) claim that as many as 3 million people died in the violence of the Cultural Revolution.^[243]

Historian Daniel Leese notes that in the 1950s Mao's personality was hardening:

The impression of Mao's personality that emerges from the literature is disturbing. It reveals a certain temporal development from a down-to-earth leader, who was amicable

when uncontested and occasionally reflected on the limits of his power, to an increasingly ruthless and self-indulgent dictator. Mao's preparedness to accept criticism decreased continuously.^[244]

State visits

During his leadership, Mao traveled outside China on only two occasions, both state visits to the Soviet Union. His first visit abroad was to celebrate the 71st birthday of Soviet leader [Joseph Stalin](#), which was also attended by East German Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers [Walter Ulbricht](#) and Mongolian communist [General Secretary Yumjaagiin Tsedenbal](#).^[245] The second visit to Moscow was a two-week [state visit](#) of which the highlights included Mao's attendance at the 40th anniversary ([Ruby Jubilee](#)) celebrations of the [October Revolution](#) (he attended the annual [military parade](#) of the Moscow Garrison on [Red Square](#) as well as a banquet in the [Moscow Kremlin](#)) and the [International Meeting of Communist and Workers Parties](#), where he met with other communist leaders such as North Korea's [Kim Il-Sung](#)^[246] and Albania's [Enver Hoxha](#). When Mao stepped down as head of state on April 27, 1959, further diplomatic state visits and travels abroad were undertaken by president [Liu Shaoqi](#) rather than Mao personally.

Death and aftermath

Mao's health declined in his last years, probably aggravated by his heavy chain-smoking.^[247] It became a state secret that he suffered from multiple lung and heart ailments during his later years.^[237] There are unconfirmed reports that he possibly had Parkinson's disease^[235] in addition to amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, also known as Lou Gehrig's disease.^[236] His final public appearance—and the last known photograph of him alive—had been on May 27, 1976, when he met the visiting Pakistani Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto.^[137] He suffered two major heart attacks, one in March and another in July, then a third on September 5, rendering him an invalid. He died nearly four days later, at 00:10 on September 9, 1976, at the age of 82. The Communist Party delayed the announcement of his death until 16:00, when a national radio broadcast announced the news and appealed for party unity.^[248]

Mao's embalmed body, draped in the CPC flag, lay in state at the Great Hall of the People for one week.^[249] One million Chinese filed past to pay their final respects, many crying openly or displaying sadness, while foreigners watched on television.^{[250][251]} Mao's official portrait hung on the wall with a banner reading: "Carry on the cause left by Chairman Mao and carry on the cause of proletarian revolution to the end".^[249] On 17 September the body was taken in a minibus to the 305 Hospital, where his internal organs were preserved in formaldehyde.^[249]

On September 18, guns, sirens, whistles and horns across China were simultaneously blown and a mandatory three-minute silence was observed.^[252] [Tiananmen Square](#) was packed with millions of people and a military band played "[The Internationale](#)". Hua Guofeng concluded the service with 20-minute-long eulogy atop Tiananmen Gate.^[253] Mao's body was later permanently interred in the [Mausoleum of Mao Zedong](#) in Beijing.